

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE GOLDEN CHAIN: ROYAL SLAVERY,  
SOVEREIGNTY AND SERVITUDE IN EARLY  
MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE, 1550-1688

A.R. Bossert III, Doctor of Philosophy 2006

Dissertation directed by: Professor Theodore B. Leinwand, Department of English

Enchained kings, enthroned slaves, and enthralled subjects—these are the emblems of royal slavery abounding in early modern English literature. They express concerns over national identity and monarch-subject relationships, and they arise in debates regarding absolutism, constitutionalism, and imperialism between the years 1550 and 1688. Thus, my dissertation performs close readings of rhetorical tropes relating to two early modern debates: monarchy's function and servitude's nature. This research synthesizes work by David Norbrook, Rebecca Bushnell, and Constance Jordan regarding the influence of domestic politics on English literature with studies by Kim Hall, Ania Loomba, and Nabil Matar on English imperialism.

The introduction explores early modern depictions of Moses, whose self-denial advances nation-building. Three types of royal slavery emerge: 1) a slave who becomes a prince, 2) a slave who becomes a prince's property, or 3) a prince who becomes a slave. Moses experiences all three types, and serves as a model for other royal slaves and English leaders.

Chapter One examines enslavement to monarchs. Political rebels and love slaves in *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, accounts of Hercules, and the *Fairie Queene*

describe slavery to excuse disloyalty. However, these examples also blame subjects for enslaving themselves.

Chapter Two shows how images of enslaved kings appeal to pathos. Sympathetic royal slaves appear in Guevara's *Diall of Princes*, Owen Feltham's *Resolves*, and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Shakespeare's plays problematize sympathetic royal slave rhetoric, while *The Rape of Lucrece*'s royal slave images question the poem's republicanism. Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* uses royal slave figures as anti-monarchical invectives.

Chapter Three discusses slaves who become rulers who learn that true restoration is impossible. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the devils' utopia masks their vulnerability; Scudery's Briseis in *Several witty discourses* depicts an enslaved princess's false restoration. However, Scudery's Cariclia and Cartwright's protagonist in *The Royal Slave* suggest that patience yields rewards surpassing one's original state.

My conclusion argues that the slave revolt in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* fails because, like the English themselves, the slaves have a fractured national identity. Without commonwealth, the slaves surrender to private interests. Thus, Behn comments directly on colonial practice and metaphorically on English politics.

The Golden Chain:  
Royal Slavery, Sovereignty and Servitude in Early Modern English Literature, 1550-1688

by

A.R. Bossert III

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Ph.D.  
2006

Advisory Committee

Professor Theodore Leinwand, Chair  
Professor Ralph Bauer  
Professor Vincent Carretta  
Professor Donna Hamilton  
Professor Heather Nathans (Dean's Representative)

Copyright by  
A.R. Bossert III  
2006

*Because he that is mightie hath done great things to me: and holy is his name.  
And in his mercie from generatio[n] vnto generatio[n]s, to them that feare him.  
He hath shevved might in his arme: he hath dispersed the proude in the conceit of  
their hart.  
He hath deposed the mightie fro[m] their seate, & hath exalted the hu[m]ble.  
The hungrie he hath filled vvith good things: and the rich he hath sent avvay  
emptie.  
He hath receiued Israel his childe, being mindeful of his mercie,  
As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and his seede for euer.*

Luke 1.49-55, Douai Bible (1600)

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Theodore B. Leinwand, who shouldered the Atlantean burden of directing this seemingly all-encompassing dissertation. His honest and direct guidance on argumentation and prose was galvanizing and crucial to the endeavor. Furthermore, I offer my gratitude for his willingness to accept the mantle of director under highly unusual circumstances. I would also like to thank Ralph Bauer for enduring early draft chapters and for his assistance in focusing my analysis, Vincent Carretta and Donna B. Hamilton for their time and questions, and Heather Nathans for her thoroughly engaged responses and questions that went beyond the requirements of a Dean's representative. I extend thanks to William H. Sherman for his help at the beginning of the dissertation process. I also am grateful for the University of Maryland's Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, which enabled me to complete the dissertation before the age of retirement, and to the Graduate English directors Bob Levine and Theresa Coletti for their warm and unwavering support.

Appreciation also goes to Meg Pearson, as well as Brandi Adams, Erin Sadlack, and Stephanie Fitz, for serving as an audience from even the most primordial stages of the dissertation's evolution. And I would be remiss not to acknowledge Manju Suri of the Graduate English Office. Not a single Ph.D. candidate can hope to pass through the labyrinthine bureaucracy of graduate school without her patience and diligence. I also recall the late Tom Engram, whose indispensable service to the Freshman Writing Office made the burdens of graduate teaching lighter for us all.

Of course, my appreciation extends beyond the hallowed halls of academia. Anything I have achieved would have been impossible without the inestimable aid from my parents, whose generosity far surpassed any filial obligation. I thank my grandmothers, who frequently sent word and care from the homefront. And I express heartfelt appreciation to Melissa, Michael, and Emma Prushan for their encouragement these years.

The surrogate family I formed at University of Maryland's Catholic Student Center provided whatever I found missing in my distance from home. I am forever obliged to Fr. Bill Byrne, for his friendship and spiritual guidance (as well as his bravery in teaching me to drive). I also recognize Fr. Gareth Jones, whose refined wit and intellectual strength has served as model in these years. I thank my friends Brian, Mary Claire, Matt, and Alex for their camaraderie (and especially for their understanding as I spoke in wild academic tongues for ceaseless hours). And I thank Dr. Alfred C. Boyd of the University of Maryland Chemistry Department for making sure that I remembered that art was meant to entertain and instruct rather than merely function as an intellectual plunder.

And, finally, I thank Kate, my faithful companion, my stalwart comrade-at-arms, and my dearest friend. You've quenched fires, diverted deluges, and calmed tempests.

*Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I  
Thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are  
Too dear a halfpenny.*

## Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION: MOSES, THE ARCHETYPAL ROYAL SLAVE**

- The Golden Chain and the Royal Slave
- Moses as the King's Slave: Identifying Nations, Identifying Slaves
- Moses as Enslaved Royalty: Divided Selves and Self-Denial
- Moses as Enthroned Slave: A Brief Survey of Moses and Aaron Books
- Moses as Political Metaphor: Charles I, Cromwell, and Charles II as Mosaic Leaders
- Royal Slavery in Early Modern English Literature

**CHAPTER ONE: THE KING'S SLAVES: REBELS AND LOVERS**

- Chapter Introduction and Overview
- The Myth of the Freeborn Englishman
- Caesar's Rebels: Self-enslavement to the Straw Man Tyrant
- *Antony and Cleopatra*: Love Politics and Political Love: Fear and Loving in Egypt
- Hercules and Omphale: Slaves Dressed as Queens, Queens Dressed as Slaves
- Love Slavery without Love Is Tyranny
- Spenser: Who is more Tyrannical: The Over-stepping Judge or the Legalistic Queen?
- The Straw Woman: Perpetuating Royal Slavery by Misrepresenting the Queen

## CHAPTER TWO: ENSLAVED KINGS

- Guevara, Feltham, and Distressed Kings
- Marlowe and the Sympathetic Tyrants
- Shakespeare and the Pathos of Royal Slavery
- To Pity and to Shame: Royal Slavery in *The Rape of Lucrece*
- From Pity to Shame: Political Application in Seventeenth-Century Handbooks
- Lucy Hutchinson and the Curse of Kingship

## CHAPTER THREE: ENTHRONED SLAVES

- Milton: Devil's Can't Be All Bad; Salvaging the Utopian Discourse of Hell
- Scudery's Ruling Slaves
  - Briseis: Love's Mastery
  - Cariclia: Enslavement Makes Better Rulers
- Cartwright: Royal Slavery and Tragi-comedy
- The Return of the Golden Chain

## CONCLUSION: *OROONOKO, the Royal Slave*

- Oroonoko: The Failure to Form a Nation
- Identifying with the Divided Self
- The Royal Slave Paradigm
  - Slaves to a King
  - Enslaved Princes
  - Slaves that become King
- Coda



## INTRODUCTION: MOSES, THE ARCHETYPAL ROYAL SLAVE

### AN EXAMPLE OF ROYAL SLAVERY

In a 1590 slave narrative, Edward Webbe describes his Mandevillean travels throughout the Mediterranean region, from plausible encounters with his Turkish captors, to his more fantastic encounters with unicorns. After finally escaping his chains and arriving in Italy, Webbe is beset by yet another travail:

The report in Rume [sic], Naples, and all ouer Italy, in my trauel which was at such time as the Spaniards came to inuade England, after I ha[d] beene released of my imprisonment, as I passed through the streets, the people of that partes asked mee howe I durst acknowledge myselfe to be an Englishman, and thereupon to daunt mee, did say, that England was taken by the Spaniards, and that the Queene of England (whome God long preserve) was taken prisoner, and was comming towards Rome to doe pennance... (D1r-D1v)<sup>1</sup>

The Italians harass Webbe with the cruellest of ironies. After having finally regained his own freedom from slavery, they want him to believe Queen Elizabeth has become the spoils of war herself. Indeed, her alleged condition is quite slavish, as Webbe goes on to explain how her Spanish conquerors force her to march waist deep through a network of trenches running all the way to Rome and dug especially for her (D1v). If there is any question what will happen to her (and her subjects) once she meets the pope, the story is preceded by a large illustration of a diminutive English subject sycophantically on his knees before a towering bishop (E4v). Although English pride and disdain for captivity

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The Rare and most wonderfull things which Edw. Webbe an Englishman borne, hath seene and passed in his troublesome trauailes, in the Cities of Ierusalem, Damasko, Bethlehem and Galely: and in the landes of Iewrie, Egypt, Grecia, Russia, and Prester Iohn*...London: 1590.

moves Webbe to deny the accounts, his Italians know precisely where to hit an English subject. They assault his love of freedom and his identification with his monarch. In other words, Webbe describes Italians directly assaulting his English national identity through an image of a captured Queen, a figure of royal slavery. For readers in 1590, the joke is perhaps on the Italians. The Spanish Armada has been crushed, but for those who remember the fear of invasion, the image of Elizabeth led as a prisoner is perhaps sobering. To transfer his own debased servitude unto his Queen is too much for Webbe to bear or imagine (and this from a man who endured Turkish galley-slavery and believes in unicorns). Royal slavery can thus be a pathetic appeal; it can unify and define English national identity; and it can speak directly to hopes and fears regarding restoration. However, to Webbes' Italians (who no doubt share common traits with Catholic holdouts in England), royal slavery can also express a subversive agenda against government and rouse disdain for those who abuse or usurp power. To an English reader with Webbes' sensibilities, Elizabeth led to Rome is tragic; to those readers who were still hoping for a restoration of the Catholic Church, it perhaps appears like justice. Thus, Webbe's account sets forth many of the themes to be explored in the following. It exemplifies royal slavery's multivalent meanings and its relevance to English national identity.

## THE GOLDEN CHAIN AND THE ROYAL SLAVE

...a chayne? Why this

Is but an exprobaton of my late

Distressed fortune. 'Tis rich yet, and Royall;

It cannot be the wealth of any, but the Throne...

(William Cartwright, *The Royall Slave* D2r)

Yet golden fetters, soft-lined yokes, still be

Though gentler curbs, but curbs of liberty,

As well as the harsh tyrant's iron yoke...

(Lucy Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder* 5.136-146)

Now lately Heav'n and Earth, another World

Hung ore my Realm, link'd in a golden Chain.

(John Milton, *Paradise Lost* II.1004-5)

The golden chain and the royal slave are classical rhetorical figures for the paradoxical conjunction of debasement and felicity. Often, they allegorize the human error to disdain what we should value, value what we should disdain.<sup>2</sup> Cartwright's golden chain juxtaposes sovereignty and slavery to remind audiences that true freedom lies in virtue (not in the liberty to follow passions); Hutchinson's golden fetters remind us that wealth can overwhelm the wealthy; and Milton's golden chain reminds readers that all worldly

---

<sup>2</sup> See Rosalie Colie on paradox in *Paradoxia Epidemica*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

creation is bound to Heaven. The golden chain describes a king's responsibilities, a courtier's obligations, a lover's bonds, and an array of comparable, seductive burdens. It informs us that if we sometimes mistake our self-enslavement for our liberty, we sometimes misrepresent true freedom as slavery.

A resonant "world-turned-upside-down" figure, royal slavery appears in drama, poetry, political tracts, homilies, and throughout the English versions of the Bible. Even though the trope of royal slavery consistently invests texts with political significance, it has received surprisingly little scholarly attention as such.<sup>3</sup> And yet royal slave rhetoric may do the familiar new historical work of slander and subversion, or it may prove self-ironizing, intentionally undermining its own call to arms. One moment, it shames subjects to rebel; the next, it shames them to submit; and still the next, it shames a monarch to reform. Royal slavery destabilizes distinctions between sovereignty and servitude whenever a self-sacrificing king enslaves his royal self to the people or a self-serving king enslaves his royal power to his own appetites. It asks if we are free or bound.

Working with early modern literary examples, I have arrived at three categories with which to give some discernible shape to this protean trope. A royal slave can be 1) an

---

<sup>3</sup> There are a few exceptions of note. See Quentin Skinner "John Milton and the politics of slavery" *Visions of Politics Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 1-21. Skinner's essay is a litany of republican arguments that depict the English as enslaved to Stuarts. Constance Jordan's *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997 similarly describes English debates concerning absolutism and what she calls "political" slavery. Ziad Elmarsafy's *Freedom, Slavery, and Absolutism: Corneille, Pascal, Racine*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003 is an extremely thorough look at royal slave rhetoric in early modern France. Of particular interest to early modern England is Elmarsafy's frequent use of Bodin, whose treatises on government were widely disseminated in English translations. Maria Elena Diaz's *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000 deals with Spanish imperialism. In El Cobre, Spanish royal slaves were granted exceptional freedoms and political rights. Martin Butler's "Royal Slaves? The Stuart Court and the Theatres." *Renaissance Drama Newsletter Supplement Two* (Spring 1984) describes court performances as submissive "royal slaves" when compared to more subversive drama outside the court, but does little more with the trope.

enthroned slave, 2) an enslaved prince, or 3) a prince's slave. I briefly note one early modern example of each royal slave type and then discuss the Mosaic royal slave at greater length. In William Cartwright's *The Royall Slave* (1639), a slave becomes a king. When a Persian ruler temporarily transfers his authority to Cratander, a Greek prisoner of war, the Persians believe that the slave will seek pleasure in a carnivalesque romp. Instead, they discover that Cratander's noble mind turns him into a philosopher-king who reforms the nation in just and virtuous ways; the slave proves a better king than the real monarch (who appears in contrast to be a slavish tyrant). The enslaved prince in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, the royal slave* (1688) is an African king's grandson who has been sold into New World bondage. Behn's novella interrogates British national identity as well as the racial and social meanings of civility and barbarity. My final example of royal slavery comes from a seventeenth-century sermon. In *England's Late Miseries, Mercies, and Miscarriages* (1651), John Flower describes the political oppression which anti-monarchists experienced under King Charles I as enslavement to a king: "For how often of late, when God had beaten the way before us, and opened the door for us, yet for all this, how often, I say, we refused to come out of our Royal Slavery..." (D2r).<sup>4</sup> Flower invokes Exodus as well as the myth of the freeborn Englishman in order to shame his countrymen. He suggests that, like the Israelites of Moses' day, the English accept tyranny's security. The English risk backsliding and would (again like the Israelites) re-enslave themselves if they could.

Flower's sermon reminds us how deeply connected Moses and Exodus are to early modern royal slave discourse. Indeed, the Biblical narrative is arguably the archetypal

---

<sup>4</sup> Flower (1623-c.1667), a Church of England clergyman, preferred Continental Protestantism to the English churches early in his career, but eventually conformed after the Restoration and slipped into obscurity (DNB Online).

royal slave story for early modern England, and Moses exemplifies all three categories of royal slavery. Born in bondage to Pharaoh, Moses is the slave to a king. Raised by Pharaoh's daughter as a courtier and prince, he is like an enthroned slave. After a forty-year exile, Moses chooses to take on the life of a slave when he returns to Egypt at God's command; he becomes an enslaved prince. He then becomes a ruler who leads the Israelites out of Egypt and so becomes a king (many early modern sources insist on this royal title). Thus, Moses is an Egyptian slave turned Egyptian prince, turned Egyptian slave again, turned Israelite monarch. As such, Moses models nothing less than political theology and philosophy for English authors. Flower's text shows how nuanced that model could be, and most of his sermon methodically compares minute details of Exodus and recent English history. His subtitle reflects a common typology linking England with Israel, particularly through the Exodus narrative: *A Parallel betwixt the sometime Case of the Israelitish, And the late condition of the English. Wherein is shewed our late Bondage in England, to have been as great as theirs in Egypt*. However, the comparison between Israel and England is not all milk and honey. While Flower's title elevates the English to the status of the Chosen People, it also shows how the English reenact the ingratitude and waywardness of Moses' followers in the wilderness: *our Deliverance as glorious, our carriage towards God as unkinde*. According to Flower, English ingratitude arises from political divisions; some want to undo Parliament's allegedly God-inspired changes. The monarch might be dead, but (as Flower sees it) slavish belief in royalty is alive.

Flower predictably casts Charles as Pharaoh, but he is less interested in demonizing the late king than in shaming the English. As Flower would have it, the English are like the Israelites who would relinquish their newfound liberty and forego God's Providence

in order to return to the fleshpots of Egypt, or, in England's case, restore a monarchy to avoid taxation under Parliament. Hard-pressed to maintain their liberty, the English selectively remember what was beneficial rather than oppressive in their past. They forget how they needed a miraculous and unsought deliverer, the Moses figure that for Flower is now embodied in Parliament. No doubt, Flowers' seventeenth-century puritanism and republicanism influenced his typology, but Moses did not belong to anti-royalist preachers alone. Polemicists across the political spectrum appropriated and recast Moses, Pharaoh, and the Israelite nation to serve their own agendas.

Because the chains of royal slavery twist, knot, and double back on themselves, it is helpful to analyze how each phase of Moses' royal slavery relates to some aspect of his political development. The first section to follow observes how Moses' slavery to Pharaoh emphasizes national identity and highlights early modern uncertainties about servitude. Because the period blurred the distinction between "servant" and "slave," a working definition of slavery will prove useful to the project as a whole. The next section describes Moses' loss of royalty and how this loss relates to lack of self-interest. Moses' self-denial renders him the early modern epitome of the meek servant-king who identifies with his people and unites them through his suffering. The third section analyzes Moses' elevation to monarch and the ways his leadership adumbrates an early modern political theology of Church and State relationships. The introduction closes its discussion of Mosaic royal slavery by offering brief examples of English rulers being explicitly compared to Moses.

## MOSES AS THE KING'S SLAVE: IDENTIFYING NATIONS, IDENTIFYING SLAVES

For a publique and National mercy or deliverance, [God] expects a publique and National praise, and acknowledgement. (Flower B3r)

Flower warns that if subjects fail to unite as a people after God has freed them collectively, then God will take offense. Flower argues for English solidarity; England must relate to God as *England*—as a national collective rather than as individuals—because God already considers nations as such. God, Flower suggests, has no qualms letting people suffer for the sins of their government, and vice versa. In this regard, royal slavery and emancipation from it are socially shared experiences. By comparing England's royal slavery to Israel's, Flower advances royal slavery to unite the people; however, he is also ambivalent about this comparison. How can England identify itself with Israel, a nation that defined itself through its slavery, when England also identifies itself as a land that never knew slavery? Wanting to have it both ways causes writers like Flower to posit perplexing definitions of freedom and slavery.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps more familiar to us is Flower's example of Israel's slavery to unite the English because it anticipates modern scholars who describe Moses as an early architect of national identity. In *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader*, Aaron Wildavsky writes that national identity is key to understanding the purpose of Exodus:

---

<sup>5</sup> See Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness: Economics of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995 and Nabil Matar's *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Both frequently connect early modern slavery to the formation of English national identity. Their analyses, however, have to do with England defining itself through contrast with the Other, largely through early modern transatlantic and Mediterranean slave trades. Whereas they argue for definitions of Englishness distinct from slavery, much of my analysis relies on identifying the English *with* slaves.



“Under a regime of slavery, subjects become objects; the Hebrew people lose their identity...The first dilemma is that the identity the Israelites hope to achieve by liberation also is its precondition” (29).<sup>6</sup> In other words, the Israelites must conceptualize themselves as an inherently free people if they are to escape slavery to Pharaoh, but their spiritually deadening bondage interferes with such a self-fashioning. In *Like Unto Moses*, James Nohnberg similarly argues that Israel requires a “Mosaic hero” who can generate a sense of national destiny, “a specifically *Israelite* future. But he also brings a rendezvous with Israel’s ideological destiny—and the seal of the deed of a specific historical commitment” (4). Much of this “ideological destiny” roots itself in the memory of royal slavery. As Wildavsky observes, “Israel is endlessly exhorted to remember, to make present choices in awareness of past experiences, so as not to enslave [or re-enslave] itself by paying attention only to momentary passions” (68). Unsurprisingly, then, the memory of Egyptian royal slavery also informs the Law: “Much social legislation in the Pentateuch is reinforced by reminders of the exodus or even represented as a consequence” (David Daube qtd in Wildavsky 69). The Law in turn defines what it means to be an Israelite. If royal slavery fills memory, and if memory generates Law, and if Law crystallizes national identity, then royal slavery is the preeminent, shared historical experience entrenched deeply in Israelite identity as a nation. It is not merely what *happened* to the Israelites, it is who they *are*. Once a royal slave, always a royal slave. Moses indelibly redefines Israelite national identity by rooting it in the exodus and by uniting the people under a Mosaic Law based on royal slavery.

---

<sup>6</sup> Elmarsafy often describes slavery through what Orlando Patterson calls “social death...the permanent, violent domination of racially alienated and generally dishonored persons” (21).

Moses does not merely dictate such an identity from a distance. He himself experiences royal slavery. Although Moses lives much of his life as a stranger to the Jews, he initially shares their bondage and later joins their labors. Some accounts even assert that he always identified with the Israelites. In *Moses His Choice* (1659), Jeremiah Burroughs depicts Moses' contemplation of his great fortune in having Pharaoh's daughter as a stepmother: "she should have care, that my education might be such, as I might be meet for honour and advancement in her fathers house, whereas she might have brought me up in some base and servile manner, according to the quality of a Bondslaves childe, or an Hebrew childe, so much abhorred and hated by the Egyptians" (B1v).<sup>7</sup> Although Moses has yet to experience the labors of his nation, he momentarily identifies with the enslaved Israelites. Slavery marks his identity from birth, and slavery to Pharaoh will unite the Jews beyond their shared racial/genealogical heritage. But what does it mean to be a slave to Pharaoh? More importantly for early modern England, what did it mean to experience slavery, bondage, or servitude? If we analyze slave language through a Mosaic paradigm, we are bound to notice the early modern confusion over what constitutes servitude or slavery.

Whereas recent English translations of the Bible abound with references to slavery, the term (which derives from Slavic ethnicity) does not appear in early modern English translations of Exodus.<sup>8</sup> Thus, applying "slavery" to the Israelite's oppression was a very serious matter for Sir Robert Filmer, who wrote in his *Observations upon Aristotles Politiques* (1652):

---

<sup>7</sup> Burroughs (c.1601-1646) was a popular Independent minister. Divested for nonconformity in 1637, he became a champion of moderate tolerance, struggling to bring the puritan congregations together in a unified front against the Church of England (DNB Online).

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, Latin, and Greek sources do not appear to distinguish between what the English would consider slaves and free servants.

Adam was the father, king and lord over his family. A son, a subject, and a servant or a slave, were one and the same thing at first...As for the names of subject, slave and tyrant, they are not found in Scripture, but what we now call a subject or a slave is there named no other than servant. I cannot learn that either Hebrew, Greek, or Latin have any proper and original word for a tyrant or a slave. It seems these are names of later invention, and taken up in disgrace of monarchical government. (237)

A staunch defender of patriarchal monarchy, Filmer observes that any attempt to depict slavery in the Bible imposes one's own anti-monarchical (and pagan) bias on the text. Thus, viewing the Israelites as slaves is politically subversive (according to Filmer's argument). How then are the Israelites depicted in the Bible? Hebrews are "in all manner of bondage" (Geneva I.14) and "all manner of service" (Tyndale I.14); they suffer "oppression" (Geneva III.9) through "burdens" (Geneva I.11). After the Egyptian taskmasters increase their work load, Israelites complain to Pharaoh that they ought not to be treated so badly since they are his "servants" (Geneva V.15). But because servants were technically freemen in English law, a casual reader (or Filmer) might not understand Egyptian bondage as enslavement. Despite the Bible's ambiguity, many textual glosses, commentaries, and other paratextual material were explicit about slavery.

As Filmer observes, those who see slavery in the Bible do so to attack tyranny; those who interpret the Israelites as slaves also argue Pharaoh is a tyrant. In its introduction to Exodus, the 1560 Geneva Bible states that "the King and the countrey grudged and endeuored bothe by tyrannie and cruel slauery to suppressse them" (f.iiiir). The potentially subversive glosses in the Geneva Bible do not merely assert the slavery of the Israelites,

they call Pharaoh a king and a tyrant. A cruel slave owner, Pharaoh is also an unjust ruler. 110 years after the Geneva Bible was published, in a homily entitled *Moses and Aaron: A Sermon Preached before the King at Saxham in the County of Suffolk, April 17, 1670*, George Seignior proposes that Moses and Aaron “*both sent unto an oppressing hard-hearted Tyrant to demand a speedy restitution from slavery*” (A2v).<sup>9</sup> Even if language of tyranny is not explicit, Pharaoh appears tyrannical because he intentionally makes the Israelites suffer. For example, when Flower describes the ancient Israelites as slaves, he says that Pharaoh sadistically *intends* their suffering: “Then to afflict them more, He caused them to work as slaves, to make Brick to build him Cities and Houses withall” (B4r).<sup>10</sup> In his 1654 commentary, John Mayer implies that Pharaoh tyrannizes by abusing classical slavery:

Philo speaking more largely of this oppression saith, that the King made slaves of them, as if they had been taken in the warre, or bought. He laid burthens upon them which they could not bear, that is, he exacted work of them beyond their strength, and if any for his infirmity withdrew himselfe, he was put to death, and such as were most cruel, were set over them to exact the doing of these works to the full. (Hhhr)

Here Pharaoh’s tyranny consists of treating the Israelites as acquisitions, despite the fact that he never acquired them.<sup>11</sup> Tyranny is not merely cruel; it oversteps property rights. It

---

<sup>9</sup> The ESTC puts Seignior’s death at 1678. The title of his other registered text, *God, the king, and the church* (1670), indicates that Seignior was a Fellow of Trinity College and “domestick chaplain to the right honorable the Earl of Burlington.”

<sup>10</sup> Milton, of course, refers to the Israelites as slaves when recounting Exodus in *Paradise Lost* (XII.167).

<sup>11</sup> This passage also indicates that early modern English see captives and prisoners of war as synonymous with slaves.

is also important to note that slavery does not express a person's inherent being for these authors. The Israelites are not *natural* slaves; rather, they are victims of tyranny.

Although slaves are not necessarily subhuman, early modern English people often objectified those who served others. In a funeral sermon entitled *Moses His Death*, Samuel Jacombe describes Moses' servitude to God in dehumanizing slave language:

*The proper notion of a servant is to bee used at the pleasure of another. Zeno well defined liberty [Greek omitted]: And Cicero to the same purpose, in Paradox. Est potest as vivendi ut uelis, a power of living and acting at a mans own pleasure: The true notion of servitude which is opposed to liberty, must therefore bee this, To bee determined to act, or not act at the command and will of some other. The Philosopher hath no less ingeniously, than truly defined a servant, [greek omitted] a living instrument. (B1v)*<sup>12</sup>

Although English servants were legally distinct from slaves, Jacombe describes servants as property, and therefore as slaves. Lacking recognized agency, a servant can act only to fulfill another's will. Servants' wills do not dissolve; rather, their will is inconsequential. All of this echoes Sir Thomas Smith's much earlier definition of a slave in *De Republica Anglorum*, "[a] Slave is but an instrument of the Lord like an axe or saw...though reasonable and lyving instrument and possession, not admitted to socieitie civill or commonwealth but as goods of his Lord" (C2r). Smith's slave, like Jacombe's servant, is a commodity and not a person. One human's service to another *appears* to dehumanize the server.

---

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Jacombe was a university preacher and best known for his *Short and Plain Catechism* (1657). His older brother, Thomas, was a presbyterian minister and served on a committee for religious orthodoxy under Cromwell (DNB Online).

For all that, service was not necessarily shameful in itself. Jacombe presents service as honorable rather than shameful when he meditates on God calling “Moses my servant” in Exodus:

The common maxime amongst Civilians, is *Servus non est sui juris, a servant so far as hee is a servant, hath no right to himself*: yet Masters had not equal title to all servants; for amongst the Heathen, those whom they took captive (and called *mancipia quasi manu capti*) them they made account they could sell, and dispose of, as wee of lands that are our own inheritance; those whom they hired, they could dispose of, as wee of land rented (*i.e.*) They thought they had right to the persons of the former, but to the actions only of the latter. (B2v) <sup>13</sup>

Jacombe distinguishes between two kinds of servants, but modern readers would conceive of both as slaves. The distinction is between owning a person as such and owning a person’s labor, but both are contained under Jacombe’s discussion of *servants*. Moses can be seemingly free but also in bondage to God; he can be a royal slave without being tyrannized. This perplexing ambiguity bears on British national identity. In Jacombe’s depiction of servitude, one can serve God or God’s representative without necessarily being enslaved. Thus, monarchy does not necessarily infringe on freedom.

However, Smith challenges the myth of the freeborn English by suggesting that some subjects’ freedoms really are in jeopardy. For Smith, servitude’s ambiguity hides practical slavery in the midst of political freedom; he writes that, although slavery is effectively extinct, “yet there is a need to have help and a need to work” and this demand “keepe[s] figure or fashion of serfdom [or] slavery alive” (O2r). Smith concedes that sixteenth-century service is not so much slavery as *villaines appendantes* since servants

---

<sup>13</sup> Again, captives are synonymous with slaves.

serve for the “time of daily ministrie” and are “otherwise in libertie as full free men and women” (O1v).<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the lack of slaves requires free men to be used as slaves (if only during certain hours and with moderation).

In *Leviathan* Hobbes also attempts to distinguish between servant and slave. He writes that once one who is a “Vanquished” person has made a covenant with his new master, he becomes a

Servant...for by the word *Servant*...is not meant a Captive, which is kept in prison, or bonds, till the owner of him that took him, or bought him of one that did, shall consider what to do with him: (for such men (commonly called Slaves,) have no obligation at all; but may break their bonds, or the prison; and kill, or carry away their Master, justly:) but one, that being taken, hath corporall liberty allowed him; and upon promise not to run away, nor to do violence to his Master, is trusted by him. (141)<sup>15</sup>

This Hobbesian approach complicates Filmer’s argument that the Israelites must not be slaves, since they are not allowed the freedom of servants and their freedoms are restricted against their wills. It does, however, further blur the distinction between mere captives, prisoners, and bona fide slaves. In the passage above, Hobbes resonates with Jacombe by suggesting that what distinguishes servants from slaves is a willingness, a consent to serve a master: “That wee must do no harm, is certain, (let none but hellish slaves carry Plague-sores about them) but that wee must do good, bee *servant in spirit*,

---

<sup>14</sup> Although servitude to God might be just, Jacombe argues that only heathens claim possession of another’s personhood or goods. Citing Acts 17:23, Jacombe proposes a proto-abolitionist belief that no human being has a justifiable title to another human being or another’s goods: “God alone hath an universal right to all that any creature, is, hath, or can bee done by it...” (B2r). He then addresses Seneca: “they bee servants, yet they are men; and that wee and they too are servants together of the supreme Deity” (B2r) and laments that “the world hath neglected this great truth in their practice” (B2r).

<sup>15</sup> Note that Hobbes explicitly says that “captives” are “slaves.” Also note how slavery dissolves moral culpability; in Chapter One, I will discuss rebels who seek to defend their actions based on this philosophy.

*serving the Lord*, is as certain” (D4v). In the context of a spiritual meditation on motivations, Jacombe suggests that servants willingly do God’s will but that slaves act only under compulsion. The one entity that can treat us as slaves expects us to act freely; those who would enslave have no right to do so. Despite Jacombe’s distinctions between free and compulsory service, both sound like modern definitions of slavery.<sup>16</sup> The definition of servitude is therefore a slippery one. It can describe harsh service, social caste, labor contracts, a lack of political enfranchisement, the loss of liberty, freely given obedience to God, or all of the above.

To make matters still more complicated, the early modern term “slave” might also describe a spiritually defective person. Indeed, early modern authors often considered spiritual slavery the most horrifying form of bondage. Milton argues that true slavery is not merely service, but service to a morally enslaved figure. In *Paradise Lost*, the loyal angel Abdiel scolds Satan with

Unjustly thou depriv’st it with the name of servitude to serve whom God ordains,  
 Or nature; God and nature bid the same,  
 When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude,  
 To serve th’ unwise, or him who hath rebelled  
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,  
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled.

(VI.174-181)

---

<sup>16</sup> Elmarsafy suggests that Pascal and Calvin have different approaches to man’s relationship to God. For Calvin, man is already enslaved to God; God is essentially a self-justified tyrant. Pascal, however, argues that man is inherently enslaved to sin, but chooses to enslave himself to God, who, like the ideal absolute monarch, liberates those who willingly serve him (74).



Abdiel's argument bears on Mosaic slavery. To truly free the Israelites, Moses must be morally superior to Pharaoh, which, as it turns out, is not as easy as it sounds. Particular flaws of Moses' character, such as his quick temper, indicate his own slavishness if not slavery. It may be that the palace's ease and luxury enslaves him even more than brick-making would.

### **MOSES AS ENSLAVED ROYALTY: DIVIDED SELVES AND SELF-DENIAL**

The fellowship of a Kings Court, such as *Pharaohs*, in riot, feasting, drinking, gaming, is hateful to a sound mind in comparison of the society of the miserable and persecuted Saints, though a fleshly eye cannot see it. (Theophilus Taylor, *Moses and Aaron* D5r)

Early modern authors, especially those with puritan leanings, often describe the Egyptian court in which Moses matures as a den of vice and sinful pleasures. According to such authors, Moses lived among vipers that threatened to poison him with courtly decadence (and the Egyptian court often bears uncanny resemblance to Jacobean and Caroline courts, with their masques and extravagant pastimes). Yet he is preserved from the distractions of Egyptian court life; he retains his Israelite identity through his wet-nurse (conveniently his biological mother). Thus, he belongs to two families, both of which are in a form of bondage: one is a household of spiritually slavish courtiers, the other is a tribe of chattel slaves. In this way, Moses' two identities are both at odds and intertwined with one another. Moses learns that royalty can be enslaved to its own private desires or to the public good, and he experiences slavery to both.

Wildavsky and Nohrnberg each understand Moses to be divided by his liminal status as royal and slave. According to Wildavsky, Moses has a “split identity” as Israelite and Egyptian (Wildavsky 30). However, Wildavsky does not find these divided selves to be completely dichotomous. Rather, he suggests that Moses’ Egyptian self prepares him for leadership,

The explanation for the name given Moses by his Egyptian mother—who should sense his destiny, having brought him into the world of royalty, where he might learn to lead instead of submitting as a slave—has been disputed by scholars on philological grounds. As far as anyone knows today, the name Moses is Egyptian, not Hebrew, and signifies ‘son of Egypt’ or ‘born of Egypt’, a name also given to Pharaoh and the Nile. In this way, Moses is clearly marked off from his Hebrew brothers. As great leaders often are, Moses is a stranger, overidentifying with Hebrew possibilities, underidentifying with their necessities. (58)

Similarly, Nohrnberg argues that Moses develops a unique character through self-division:

Moses’ singularity is his duality, a Hebrew Egyptian and an Egyptian Hebrew...the bondswoman’s son is adopted by Pharaoh’s maternally-inclined daughter, while his fellow Hebrews have been conscripted for Pharaoh’s work, on the other hand, the bondswoman is able to hire herself out as the foundling’s nurse, and thus gets herself reinstated as the child’s mother. The servants are doing their master’s living for them, and the royal house is paying for what ordinarily a child receives for free. (135-36)

As Nohnberg observes, this “double-motion” (136) affords Moses’ a beneficial opportunity. He can be his slave mother’s son as well as her prince; the enfranchised son can protect his enslaved mother. Nohnberg’s “double-motion” might better suit a discussion of enthroned slaves, except that, for early modern authors, Moses’ Egyptian royalty is a false start. Of course, the idea that Moses reaped certain benefits from his time at court predates modern exegesis: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mightie in wordes and deedes” (Acts 7:22). However, Egyptian wisdom is only advantageous if separated from Egyptian decadence.

Moral interpretation of Moses’ character hinges on which—Israelite bondage or Egyptian royalty—is actually the more *slavish*. According to early modern commentaries, Moses binds himself to Pharaoh not only through physical slavery but through unchecked and therefore tyrannical passions as well. By murdering an Egyptian, Moses shows us that he lacks restraint and diminishes his own character. When Moses later comes across the quarreling Hebrews, the guilty Israelite taunts Moses with knowledge of the secret murder. According to the Geneva Bible, the Hebrew frightens Moses: “then Moses feared and said, Certenly this thing is known...” (Exodus II.14). Passionate indignation and instinctive self-preservation have led Moses into scandal. The Geneva gloss on this scene refers to a line from Hebrews: “Thogh by his feare he shewed his infirmitie, yet faith couered it. Ebr.11.27.” Clandestine murders, mortal fears, and stealthy flight hardly evoke the noble, stalwart hero. More like a Platonic tyrant, young Moses enslaves himself to emotions.<sup>17</sup>

Even after forty years in Midian, where Reuel’s daughters first mistake him for an Egyptian, Moses appears to lack total self-control. When Moses encounters God in the

---

<sup>17</sup> On Platonic tyranny, see Rebecca Bushnell’s *The Tragedies of Tyrants*. Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1990.

burning bush, he vacillates between humble subjection and comic reluctance. After Moses catalogues his faults, God must frighten Moses into taking action: “Then the Lord was very angry with Moses, and said, Do not I knowe Aaron thy brother the Leuite, that he him selfe shal speake...” (III.14). God must intimidate Moses into doing His will. Fear (again) spurs Moses to action, and the patriarch’s attitude more resembles that of Jacombe’s compelled slave than his willing servant. However, not all commentaries condemn Moses for his cowardice before the Almighty. John Mayer excuses Moses’ fright as human:

I do not think with those Hebrews, that it was a great sinne, because there was no punishment inflicted upon him therefore, but a sinne of weaknesse, which is incident to the best, against which although Gods anger be stirred, yet out of his infinite mercy, he is soone pacified againe upon their repentance. But a sin I cannot but hold it to have been, because the Lord was provoked to wroth hereby, and for the name of veniall, it was certainly none otherwise such, but as all the sinnes of Gods servants, for which upon their repentance they have pardon... Thus God partly by fearing *Moses* with his anger thrusteth him forth, and partly by offering one so near a companion unto him, allureth him, and by giving another signe of *Aarons* coming out to meet him confirmeth him. (Mmm1v-Mmm2r)<sup>18</sup>

God motivates Moses with baits and punishments rather than through sheer authority (although perhaps to Moses’ credit, he takes the bush at its word). Moses’ weakness still masters him; he, like his people, still requires deliverance. Moses must endure a physical and a spiritual bondage of his body and mind in order to overcome his own interior

---

<sup>18</sup> John Mayer (bap. 1583, d. 1604) was “a determined opponent of both popery and forms of protestant extremism.” He distinguished himself by publishing a commentary in vernacular English; he also called for Charles II to unify religion in England and left an unpublished history of the world (DNB Online).

slavery to his passions. For Mayer, the entire exile in Midian functions as an exercise in patience and pride rather than courage.

Perhaps Moses is still a little spoiled from his years in Pharaoh's court. He has fled Egypt, but he has not yet abandoned his Egyptian identity; to do this, he must confront the new Pharaoh. Nohnberg emphasizes that "Moses returns from rustication not to reclaim princely status in Egypt, but to repudiate Egyptian status altogether" (142). Such repudiation, however, means that Moses must both identify with slaves and be recognized as a slave. Whatever Moses' legal status had been previously, the Geneva translation provides compelling evidence that the new Pharaoh identifies Moses as another Hebrew slave: "The[n] said the King of Egypt vnto them, Moses and Aaron, why cause ye the people to cease from their workes? get you to your burdens" (V.4). The man who once convincingly appeared like an Egyptian is finally identified as an Israelite slave, and a slave to a king at that. This is no minor sacrifice that Moses makes, especially if, as Burroughs has it, Moses had been heir to Egypt's crown (*Self-Denial* B2v). Whatever the benefits he might have received from an Egyptian education, he prepares himself for leadership by refusing the golden chain.

Moses' frequent and sudden vacillations in power and slavery also pertain to class issues. In *Moses, his Self-Denial*, Burroughs quotes Seneca: "No man whom riches set high is great, he only seems so" (D2r). Burroughs later suggests that power is like the fetishization of gold, and he shows how inflation and scarcity cause an object to gain or lose value in the eyes of men without any change to its substance (*Self Denial* D4r). As Burroughs notes, social hierarchies largely depend on one's point of view. To one another, individuals may appear to differ in social worth. Next to God, they are all

essentially worthless: “God is no respecter of persons...when you come to appear before God, you must stand amongst the rest without any note of distinction...” (*Self Denial* B6r). This is a favorite rhetorical set piece of seventeenth-century puritan homilists, and Burroughs’s himself incessantly returns to this theme: “God is worthy that all the Kings, Princes, Potentates, great ones of the earth should come and bow, and lie down flat before him, abased in his presence” (*Self Denial* B8v). If one seeks redemption, “the thoughts of nobility and dignity must be laid down, they must be refused, where God may be honoured” (*Self Denial* C2r); “we must be willing to be deprived of titles of honour, of all our estates, of all that glory we have, that we are born unto, to be imprisoned” (*Self Denial* 18). Henry Ainsworth’s *Annotations* similarly argues “[Moses] renounced his pleasures and honours at Pharaoh’s court, and associated himself to God’s afflicted people” (A4).<sup>19</sup> In a 1615 sermon, Thomas Bastard suggests that Moses considered “the highnesse of [God] ...before whom, not onely all earthly Kings and their kingdoms, but the heauens themselues are lowe” (I3r).<sup>20</sup>

Homilists and commentators observe that Moses’ temporal fall from Egyptian power to slavery relates to his virtue or spiritual health, but they also recognize humility’s practical and political value. Considering Corinthians 4.1 in *Moses, his Death*, Samuel Jacombe suggests that leaders ought not to think that their social superiority grants them rights at their inferiors’ expense: “That Masters should give to their servants that which is just and equal, because they also have a master in heaven” (B2r). In *Moses, his Choice*,

---

<sup>19</sup> Henry Ainsworth (1569-1622) was a significant separatist minister and “teacher” of the Ancient Separatist Church of Amsterdam, until it eventually dissolved as a result of a dispute he had with fellow elders. Ainsworth then became pastor of his own branch. He was “one of the finest Hebrew scholars of his day” (DNB Online).

<sup>20</sup> Bastard (1565/6-1618) was a poor clergyman known less for his sermons than for his “unimpressive” poetry, largely through his *Chrestoleros* (1598), a book of epigrams. He apparently suffered from dementia later in life and died in a debtor’s prison (DNB Online).

Burroughs argues that self-denial preserves a leader from the temptations of power and that Moses can only shield himself from power's corrupting influence by embracing affliction rather than sin (B2v-B3r). Nohrnberg also observes that Moses must experience slavery to unite himself with the Israelites, "Moses shares the life *of* his people, and so shares his life *with* them. His life is thus converted to Israel's, while its life is converted to his" (147). In this sense, Moses prefigures the king's two bodies. However, whereas a king identifies with the people through his royal title, Moses gains the title by first identifying with the people. Moses must be enslaved to be enthroned. He becomes God's agent to liberate the Israelites only when he has become a powerless slave. He can only appear the trustworthy servant of God when he can reap no benefit from ruling the Israelites. Without a country to call his own, he can now unify and galvanize a nation.

### **MOSES AS ENTHRONED SLAVE: A BRIEF SURVEY OF MOSES AND AARON BOOKS**

There is no king but that was raised from those which were servants...There is no servant but had some of his ancestors kings... (Jeremiah Burroughs *Self-Denial* B7v)

In these lines, Burroughs cites Seneca's last-shall-be-first ethic, exhorting masters to be humble, and to take note of the mutability of social identities, of the role of Fortune in shaping man's destiny, and of the practical benefits of general benevolence. Mercy toward slaves will mollify their resentment and may even advertise masters when Fortune's wheel inevitably turns (and Fortune often plays a major role in royal slave narratives). Indeed, the master who identifies with his slave through a shared servitude

will inspire more loyalty than the master who tyrannizes over his servants. Of course, a master's humility is no guarantee of obedience. Even Moses faces insurrection. But at the very least, his humility leads *us* to sympathize with him when others do not.

As we have seen, Moses is not always an ideal leader, and few Mosaic commentators felt the need to absolve Moses of all error. To his credit, his self-acknowledged blunders make him more humble and therefore sympathetic. Wildavsky's Moses provides political leaders with a kind of negative example; he shows them how *not* to lead when he errs:

Moses' mistakes are almost his most important legacy. Inasmuch as he is imperfect—teaching faith but falling into idolatry at Meribah—we are given opportunities to learn from his errors...Mosaic leadership, then, does not offer a series of successful solutions but rather a set of perennial problems that may be mitigated from time to time but can never be resolved. (6)

Neither does Wildavsky's Moses stand for any one form of government. In what he calls Moses' "U-turn" (24-25), Wildavsky argues that the patriarch leads the Israelites through distinct political systems: from slavery to anarchy, from anarchy to equity, and from equity to hierarchy. As Wildavsky suggests, hierarchy can easily slip back into a slave state if improperly established. Like the early modern thinkers, Wildavsky concludes that "Moses' experiences are suffused with ambivalence; he cannot be slave and free. How to marry the opposing qualities required for leadership—passion with patience, acceptance with renunciation, authority with sharing power—is Moses' perpetual problem" (39-40). Early modern exegetes recognize that Moses struggles to rule himself at the same time that he struggles to rule the Israelite nation. One expects the Law to keep both the nation and its leader in check, and this is perhaps why a flurry of Mosaic literature appears in the



heyday of seventeenth-century English republicanism. The Law does not favor Moses; it further subjects him to the nation. Moses, like Pompey, subjects himself to the system he delivers to the people. But precisely what sort of leader was Moses in the minds of early modern English authors?

Moses' title typically answers to the political agenda of the author describing him. John Fenwicke's *Englands Deliverer* distances Moses as far as possible from any kind of kingship: "Moses was magistrate...not king for Rex was then no more but Dax" (A3v). Sydenham's uses the term "magistrate" synonymously with king when describing Moses' allegorical role as government (D2r).<sup>21</sup> Although Sydenham strains to distinguish Moses from a monarch, others see Moses more regally. Mayer's 1654 commentary recounts Josephus's tale of Pharaoh setting his crown on the boy Moses' head (Iii2). This midrash shows Moses' acceptance at court and his future overthrow of Egyptian power, but it also foreshadows Moses' rule over the Israelites. Theophilus Taylor argues in *The Mappe of Moses: or, A Guide for Governours* (1629) that all commonwealths need a governor, and that even if the first humans lacked temporal governments, England's current situation is different: "Naturall, therefore it is that the inferiour obey the superiour, the lesser the greater; without which subiection, the state of humane society cannot subsist" (B3r).<sup>22</sup> Taylor acknowledges the possibility that kingship does not descend from Adam (as it was said in primitivist and patriarchal arguments); however, for Taylor, post-lapsarian humanity must obey divine-right monarchs. His Moses is distinctly *royal*.

---

<sup>21</sup> Nohnberg writes: "Moses is a magistrate, but not a sovereign. Rather, he is an elder ruling through a historical interregnum and exercising a dictatorship—properly God's—of the proletariat" (Nohnberg 18). With its references to interregnums and dictatorships, one can almost hear the ghost of a seventeenth-century republican in Nohnberg.

<sup>22</sup> The title page informs us that Theophilus Taylor received his Master of Arts and was the pastor of Saint Laurence in Reding.

A sub-genre that we may identify as the “Moses and Aaron book” helps us to clarify Moses’ relationship to royalty. The seven texts that I survey offer a variety of political theology. Predictably, some of the authors claim that their texts are purely biblical guides or exegesis, that they have no overt political agenda. Many, however, directly take up English politics (some barely even discuss biblical figures beyond their title). Even the texts that do not depict Moses as a monarch expect political leaders to follow a Mosaic model and notice that Moses was not simply royal, but a *royal* slave.<sup>23</sup> In any case, four issues emerge across these texts: obedience to governors, service to the people, national unity, and the limits of power.

In *Moses and Aaron or The Affinitie of Ciuill and Ecclesiasticke power* (1626), Humphry Sydenham avoids the predictable association of Moses with the crown by focusing instead on his priestly lineage: “’Tis not my intent to shew you *Moses* here in the stormes and troubles of the *Court* and *State*, but of the *Church*...” (B2v).<sup>24</sup> Sydenham has to tell us what he is not doing because he assumes that his reader equates Moses with the State. He argues that both Moses and Aaron possess ecclesiastical and civil authority, but that their dual powers argue for a separation of Church and State. An English priest-king, Sydenham argues, would be too popish (C1v). Although Sydenham does not directly correlate Moses with kingship, Moses’ authority nevertheless leads him to describe the obligations, and therefore limits, of Moses’ power:

---

<sup>23</sup> In what follows, I am primarily interested in understanding the “royal” part of Moses’ royal slavery; that is, I am interested in how his authority and power function as an early modern political model. Moses’ kingliness is often coupled with descriptions of his obligation, or the burden of rule, which implicitly relates back to royal slavery.

<sup>24</sup> Sydenham (1591-c.1650) was a staunchly pro-Laudian and (therefore) vehemently anti-puritan clergyman, who had been invited to preach before the ill-fated second session of the 1625 Parliament. Parliament stripped him of his benefices in 1645 (DNB Online).

The morall is plaine, *Soueraignty stands between God and the Priesthood, and the Priesthood between Soueraignty and the people*...let not my zeale to the *Priest* dispruiledge my *allegiance* to my *King*. I speake not this to set vp *Moses* in competition with *Pharaoh*, or riuall the dignity of the *Priesthood* with that of *Soueraignty*; but to mind you in what lustre it sometimes shin'd, & how the times now conspire to cloud that glory. (C2r)

Even when not a king himself, Moses shows how a king has responsibilities that *limit* his power, and that there are institutions that he must *serve* as well as command.<sup>25</sup>

In 1653, John Rothwell published Samuel Gardiner's sermon, *Moses and Aaron Brethren: or the Excellencie, Necessity, Consistencie, and Vsefulness of Magistracy and Ministry under the Gospel* to reunite a people that the Civil War has divided.<sup>26</sup> Without giving Moses a distinctive political title, Gardiner suggests that Moses embodies government while Aaron embodies the Church and that the two institutions must rely on one another to create a lawful England. Unity is a key theme in this text, as well as obedience to governments (Gardiner does not describe a monarch or Parliament in particular): "We should be most ungrateful to God and men for so excellent a blessing, if we should look upon all *Government* as tyranny and slavery, on just Laws as bolts and shackles. It's true liberty to obey good Lawes" (B1v). However, his argument turns when he insists that God's power is transmitted through the people:

---

<sup>25</sup> Sydenham also describes how England's problems arise from a conspiracy against the priesthood rather than the kingship. This idea, that the English Civil War arose from religious schism rather than lofty political ideals, reemerges in the final Moses and Aaron book I discuss.

<sup>26</sup> The DNB provides little information on Gardiner (1564-c.1632) other than that he defended Calvinism in the Church of England and so loved fishing that he often included angling metaphors in his sermons (he also published a book on the subject). There is no DNB entry on Rothwell, who also authored *A catalogue of the most approved divinity-books* (1655).

That popular saying then, that all power is from the people, must be wisely and warily understood, else it will be found both dangerous and irreligious. For though it's true, government of men over men is usually co[m]mitted for execution to men, by the free consent and choice of men; yet we must still firmly hold, unless we deny providence, that it's primarily, principally, and originally from God... (B2r)

Authors typically remind *rulers* that all power comes from God. In the 1650s, however, the political climate changed. Even for Hobbes, monarchical authority in primitive societies arises because subjects sacrifice their personal authority to a single individual.<sup>27</sup> If Hobbes uses this idea to legitimate authority, anti-monarchists could claim that they were merely taking back the authority that was already theirs. Gardiner's Moses addresses primitivist arguments by reminding England that all authority ultimately belongs to God, even if authority passes first through the people before it reaches the monarch. If the people assert their own authority, then, like Moses, they must also accept authority's limits and remain obedient to superiors. Mosaic humility complicates popular authority.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> See *Leviathan*. Ed. Richard Tuck. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p 120.

<sup>28</sup> Or, as Hobbes writes, "nothing the Sovereign Representative can doe to a Subject, on what pretence soever, can properly be called Injustice, or Injury; because every Subject is Author of every act the Sovereign doth; so that he never wanteth Right to any thing, otherwise, than he himself is the Subject of God, and bound thereby to observe the laws of Nature" (148). Compare this with Adam's lament in *Paradise Lost*:

...Inexplicable  
Thy justice seems; yet to say truth, too late  
I thus contest; then should have been refused  
Those terms whatever, when they were proposed:  
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,  
Then cavil the conditions.

(X.754-759).

Adam, like Hobbes, reasons that he cannot complain of anything God does to him since he willingly submitted himself to the terms God offered. Adam, therefore, is responsible himself for his own punishment per the terms of his covenant with God.

In the same year as Gardiner's *Moses and Aaron*, William Jemmat compiled *Moses and Aaron, or the Types and Shadows of our Savior in the Old Testament. Opened and Explained* (1653), allegedly from Thomas Taylor's notes.<sup>29</sup> The book contains a series of Christian typological readings and is perhaps the least political of the Moses and Aaron texts I have surveyed.<sup>30</sup> Taylor's political allegory operates in general terms only: "Hence observe four sorts of people that are not of Christs nor *Moses* minde: 1. Politicians, who take the honour and profit of the Gospel, but will none of the afflictions of Christ..." (D5r). Moses functions as legislator and liaison between the human and Divine but without a clear temporal or ecclesiastical distinction: "*Moses* received from God, and delivered to his people the Law, and was a Mediator between God and his people" (D3r). What is clear is that Taylor believes that Moses possesses and is aware of his "delegate authority" (D3v). For Taylor's Moses, true leadership consists of *serving* not ruling, and true temporal authority bolsters religious authority.<sup>31</sup>

If Taylor sidesteps political activism, James Noyes is unabashed about his political leanings in *Moses and Aaron: Or, the Rights of Church and State; containing two Disputations* (1661).<sup>32</sup> Thomas Parker compiled Noyes' text after the author's death (and

---

<sup>29</sup> The older brother of the aforementioned Theophilus Taylor, Thomas Taylor (1576-1632) was a Church of England clergyman and Calvinist puritan who opposed James' plans to reconcile with Spain through marriage. Jemmat, another Church of England clergyman, also published five of Taylor's sermons in *A Mappe of Rome* (1619). Parliament appointed Jemmat a preacher at Faversham, although he eventually took of the oath of allegiance and supremacy after the Restoration (DNB Online).

<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, William Jemmat's dedicatory epistle refers to the golden chain as well: "In the golden chain of our salvation, which reacheth from eternity to eternity, we shall observe, that Christ is the owke or closure that tyeth every linke together" (A2v).

<sup>31</sup> For the sake of brevity, I have moved Daniel Pointel's *Moses and Aaron. or the Ministers Right and the Magistrates Duty* to a footnote. This text is so politically charged that Moses and Aaron appear to be a mere catch phrase for the title, barely figuring into the text itself. Printed in 1657, Pointel's text defends the government's (Moses') right to tithe a population for the sake of clergy (Aaron) in Christian England.

<sup>32</sup> According to the title of the children's *A Short Catechism*, Noyes (1608-1656) was a "teacher of the Church of Christ in Newbury in New England." He also published *The temple measured: or A brief suvery of the temple mystical...Wherein are solidly and modestly discussed, most of the material questions touching the constitution and government of the visible church militant here on earth* (1646).

provided his own flattering dedicatory epistle to the returning Charles II).<sup>33</sup> Both of Noyes' disputations are royalist, one defending the king's role as head of the Church of England, the other railing against regicide. Noyes repeatedly associates Moses with kingship: "*Moses* a type of Christ was a visible mediator to whom the tribes assembled; *Numb. 10.44*...[Christ] is represented by visible Kings" (B3r) and "Moses had a Kingly power, *Deut.33.5*" (C4r). Noyes follows a transitive logic: if Moses is like Christ, and Christ is a king, then Moses must possess kingly qualities (if not kingship itself). Noyes emphasizes Moses' sovereignty as a way of reminding subjects to pay due respects to their king. Following Charles II's restoration, Noyes argues for obedience to the crown.

In George Seignior's *Moses and Aaron: A Sermon Preached before the King at Saxham in the County of Suffolk, April 17, 1670*, Moses and Aaron are, again, "*Magistracy and Ministry; a King, as Supreme, and an High Priest* both constituted by God himself to live, to love and to rule together" (A3r). Seignior emphasizes the need for the separate institutions of king and Church to provide a *united* front, if only to uphold God's will:

That, Government both *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*, was at first instituted and established by God himself, over such a People, whom he would take and choose to himself for his own inheritance, and these two instituted not onely *at one Time*; but, *both* in an *Union*, in a mutual relation and dependence one upon the other. (A4v).

---

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Parker (1595-1677) was the cousin of James Noyse; the two settled in America, with Parker as a minister and Noyse as a teacher. The DNB indicates that they were unusual among settlers for their presbyterian views, which led them to demand more authority over their congregations than other New World ministers (DNB Online).

As Seignior notes, even a supreme king like Moses recognizes his dependence on the clergy and acknowledges the *limits* of his authority over religious matters. Seignior observes how Moses humbly defers to his ecclesiastical brother who rules with “Divine Right” equal to the king’s (A4v). Though the end of obedience may be salvation, Seignior cites the Targum to suggest that unified temporal and spiritual powers protect royalty’s interests: “so [subjects] may be taught to obey nor [sic] for wrath, but for conscience sake” (B1r). Civil obedience ranks as the first concern for Seignior and, no doubt, for King Charles II. Moses’ meekness, service, and ability to delegate authority all promote obedience in the people and provide a model anti-tyrannical monarchy.

By 1672, Moses and Aaron texts are so entrenched in the royalist party line that authors could attest to Moses’ monarchical powers in even the most mundane trivia. Thomas Godwyn’s *Moses & Aaron: Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites, Used by the ancient HEBREWS* is an exegetical handbook explaining countless arcane legal and religious practices that appear in the Bible. Its twelfth edition addresses Moses’ kingship in no uncertain terms when Godwyn describes the reformation of the primitive Israelite “Commonwealth.”<sup>34</sup> According to Godwyn, there is no distinction between Hebrew religious and temporal authorities prior to Mosaic Law: “The *Fathers* of their several Families, and their *First-born* after them, exercised all kind of Government, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, being both *Kings* and *Priests*, in their own houses” (B1r). Although Moses retains elements of a spiritual leader, Godwyn suggests that Moses and Aaron represent the first separation of Church and State for the ancient Israelites: “In *Moses* his days then, did this prerogative of primogeniture cease; and as *Aaron*, and his

---

<sup>34</sup> The ESTC lists three titles by Thomas Godwyn in the late seventeenth century. His *Phanatical-tenderness, or The charity of the non-conformists* (1684) identifies him as *sometime vicar of St. Philips and Jacobs Church in Bristol, and now rector of Poulchrohan in Pembrokeshire*.

posterity was invested with the right, and title of *Priests*; so *Moses*, and after him *Josua*, ruled all the people with a kind of *Monarchical* authority. For *Moses* was among the righteous as *King*, *Deut. 33.5*” (B1v). Here is a royal Moses who recognizes his authority’s limits.

I turn last to Laurence Womock’s *Moses and Aaron; the King and the Priest* (1675), a sermon that memorializes “King *Charles the Martyr*” (A2r).<sup>35</sup> Once again, we get a highly politicized King Moses from a vehement royalist. Whereas Seignior shows how the Church could benefit the prince, Womock reminds kings of their duty to protect orthodox religion for the sake of peace in the nation: “*Schism* can no sooner arise in the Church, but it is presently attended with *Sedition* in the State...If *Aaron* be disturbed in his Office, *Moses* cannot long sit quiet upon his Throne” (E2r). The homilist emphasizes Aaron over Moses and exhorts sovereigns to defend the Church: “*Moses*, we see, had a good warrant for this; but the Peoples jealousy suggested, that he had his own ends to serve under pretence of Gods Institution. They suspected he had a design to establish his own Throne and an usurped Prerogative...he might take his Advantage to make himself an absolute Prince over them” (Womock E4v-E5r). After describing Copher’s rebellion against Aaron, Womock embellishes the biblical narrative in order to allegorize recent English history. Rebellion is “A rod of *Iron*...that broke the *Royal Scepter*, and beat down the *Royal Branches*, and *dasht* the Church in pieces; *A ragged staffe*, whose *fangs* were *stell’d* with Malice, and *died* with innocent blood. It knockt down *Moses*, and thrust out

---

<sup>35</sup> The ESTC identifies the author as Laurence Womock (1612-1685). The title page identifies him as *the author of the examination of Tilenus before the triers, in the time of the late rebellion*. Womock was a prolific writer, with twenty-five individual titles bearing his name in the stationer’s register. According to the DNB, the Womocks had something of a “clerical dynasty.” This Womock was a staunch royalist who wrote against presbyterianism and Arminianism and eventually became the bishop of St. David’s (DNB Online).



*Aaron*...this *Rod* was at last thrown away, and *Moses* restored” (G4r). This is hardly subtle: Womock would have it that the English Revolution erupted not in response to tyranny but out of desire to control the pulpit. Consequently, kings must protect their clergy, hence shoulder sometimes unwelcome responsibilities.

All of these texts, whether royalist, republican, or neutral, depict the limitations and duties of monarchical power in the person of Moses. Although they might disagree about where to set political boundaries, they consistently acknowledge that Moses’ leadership was bounded by his obligations. Although Moses refuses Pharaoh’s pleasures, wealth, and power, his rule nevertheless places a golden chain around his neck. For Sydenham, Moses models a ruler’s symbiotic relationship with the Church. Gardiner similarly argues that a division of labor actually assures greater unity. Jemmat and Taylor suggest that temporal authority that does not take its duties to the Church seriously abuses its power, whereas Noyes suggests that those who do not respect temporal authority offend God. All of these authors believe that government must serve the religion that it commands and that government must teach subjects to obey by virtue of its own obedience. Seignior insists on the interdependence of Church and State in order to articulate their service to one another; Godwyn argues that this very interdependence first emerged when Moses and Aaron split temporal and religious authority. And Womock explains that temporal authority’s most pressing role is to police religious heresy and religious authority, lest theological debates spawn civil turmoil. Again and again, we read that temporal authority must be obeyed and served, but that the obedient subject has a right to expect that the state will achieve national unity and peace by protecting and serving religious institutions. Moses serves Aaron; Aaron serves Moses.

## MOSES AS POLITICAL METAPHOR: CHARLES I, CROMWELL, AND CHARLES II AS MOSAIC FIGURES

...are we not in great slavery still? do we not lye under such and such taxes, and payments, which almost take away half of our Estates? (Flower C4v)

In his 1651 sermon, Flower considers the objections of English malcontents disillusioned with the new Parliament. The new boss, as Flower admits, bears an uncanny resemblance to the old boss. Flower argues against pessimism, however, urging his fellow English people not to underestimate the good hearts of those in Parliament:

that there is no tax laid on any, or all of us, which is not {for the time present} exceedingly necessary, I say *necessary*, and that not to maintain the *Pride* and *Lust* of the *Governours*, (as it was formerly) but the *Peace*, and *Liberty* of the people...Consider again how absurd it is for any of us to say we live, or are in slavery under the present power; for they suffer when we suffer, they pay when we pay, those pressures of War are as heavy on their backs as on ours, and now (considering this) how can any reasonable man say that we live in, or under slavery more then they? (C4v-D1r)

Like Moses, Parliament allegedly shares in the sufferings of those it leads. According to Flower, this lack of self-interest proves the good intention and divine origin of magistrates. Indeed, Flower would have it that Parliament is as providential to the English people as Moses was to the Israelites: “Who thought of a Parliament?” (C4v). Who but God? Not everyone, of course, agreed with Flower. Early modern biblical glosses and commentaries from rival political groups employed typological readings of

Exodus to depict Tudors, Stuarts, and Cromwell as Mosaic figures. If there was a consensus among exegetes that England was the new Israel, there was much less agreement among polemicists as to who was Moses and who was Pharaoh.

In *Mercies Memorial* (1644), William Gouge depicts Charles I as Moses in order to ease growing political tensions. However, his comparison is less than direct. Rather than elaborate on Charles's own similarities to Moses, Gouge begins by comparing Moses with a more universally loved monarch: Queen Elizabeth. Preaching on Elizabeth's coronation day, Gouge's strategy is to resurrect the image of the long dead monarch and describe her as Moses leading England in an exodus from Catholicism.<sup>36</sup> For Gouge, Elizabeth's coronation was the day that England fled from spiritual slavery in the "Kingdome of Antichrist [i.e. Catholicism]...a bondage far worse than the temporall bondage under which the Israelites were held in Egypt" (B1v). By describing the worst slavery as spiritual oppression under a Catholic pope, Gouge downplays the significance of Charles I's current dispute with Parliament. His writing is not so much pro-Caroline as it is anti-rebellion.

Perhaps Gouge allows Parliamentarians their belief that England is under royal slavery, but he suggests that there have been far worse sufferings than what Charles inflicts and that a good king's bounty in the future outweighs the damage done by bad kings in the past. For instance, Gouge acknowledges that Queen Mary persecuted Christians; she was a bad monarch. He concedes that monarchy can become tyranny, but

---

<sup>36</sup> James Shapiro observes that the royal palace itself asserted such connections between royalty and Moses. Describing what Shakespeare might have seen entering Whitehall, Shapiro writes of "a short detour up a staircase into the privy gallery overlooking the tiltyard led Shakespeare into a breathtaking gallery. Its ceiling was covered in gold, and its walls were lined with extraordinary paintings, including a portrait of Moses said to be a 'striking likeness.' Near it hung a 'most beautifully painted picture on glass showing thirty-six incidents of Christ's Passion'" (25). See, Shapiro, James. *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare, 1599*. New York: Harper Collins, 2006.

he begs the audience to keep in mind how Elizabeth subsequently saved England from her sister's alleged tyranny, led the nation to even greater glory, and ushered in "the many blessings which this Land injoyed all the time of that blessed Queens raigne, the many victories which God gave her against the implacable enemies of this land..." (B2r). According to Gouge, monarchy corrects itself over time. But Elizabeth did more than restore England in this history, she transfigured it into a Promised Land through a superfluous bounty. For Gouge's followers, this seemingly miraculous reversal signified God's hand at work in English politics. Such generosity on the part of God and queen demands gratitude from the English (or a swift return to slavery). In order to avoid emulating the stubbornness that the Israelites showed to Moses, the English must appreciate their rulers, even if that means tolerating bad monarchs for the sake of good ones. Having cast Elizabeth in a Mosaic role, Gouge transfers her political capital to Charles I, and those still sitting on the political fence are encouraged to accept monarchy for peace's sake or Elizabeth's sake, even if not for Charles's sake.

Other seventeenth-century writers were more direct in their comparisons between political figures and Moses. According to Christopher Hill, Oliver Cromwell was the first politician to be described as Moses, at least in the seventeenth century (440). John Rogers depicts Cromwell as "that great deliverer of his people...out of the house of Egypt" (qtd in Hill 113). Celebrating Cromwell's victory at Dunbar, John Fenwicke likens Cromwell to Moses in his three-fold dedication: "*And to the Right Honorable the Lord General Cromwell his Excellency, our Englands Moses, with all his called, and chosen, and faithfull: by & with whom the Lamb overcoms his enemies and makes way to His*

*Kingdom Revel. 17.14*" (A2r).<sup>37</sup> The dedication appears as three peaks on the page; Christ is praised in the center with Parliament to the left and Cromwell to the right. Fenwicke's text, *England's Deliverer*, spends surprisingly little time describing the deliverer himself. Instead, Fenwicke focuses on Scotland's role as the Egyptian horde and its miraculous destruction. Although Fenwicke never mentions Cromwell by name after the introduction, he repeatedly assures his reader that Moses is a good Parliamentarian. As Fenwicke recounts, Moses denied himself the pomp of court in order to be one with the Israelites: "*Moses...* when he came to age, refused to be called the son of great K. *Pharaoh's* daughter, chosing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God. Then to enjoy the pleasures of *Pharaoh's* Court, the pleasures of sinne for a season..." (A3r). Fenwicke's Moses is no courtly fop; he anticipates Cromwell's endurance and mettle. But neither is Fenwicke's Moses a king: "Israel had no King till they waxed wanton and would be like the Heathen, grew weary of their State Government the first and best, being Gods appointment" (A3v-A4r). Moses and Cromwell alike are military leaders who shun the temptations of nobility in order to protect their countrymen from heathen oppression and conquest. In the end, England's redemption appears to depend less on Moses himself than the collective nation:

1. Vse of Exhortation to all true English-men, to be true and faithfull to the interest of this strong eternall God; for in his interest lyes all our safety and protection.
2. Be tender of his souldiers, who are faithfull to his interest, your greatest interest in his design for his Kingdom. Neglect them not as you love your

---

<sup>37</sup> Fenwicke's *Christ ruling in the midst of his enemies* (1643) identifies the author as a Lievtenant Collonel. Also in 1643, he published *Zions ioy in her King comming in his glory* under what the ESTC describes as the nearly anagrammatical pseudonym Finiens Canus Vove. According to the DNB, this Fenwicke was a merchant and a parliamentarian officer who repeatedly published religious-political texts.

own safety, they are the means below of your protection, they are the prodigall of their blood for you. (B2v)

For Fenwicke, England's real deliverer is the true English subject, collectively likened to Moses.<sup>38</sup>

An English subject who failed to see Cromwell, or any other leader, as Moses, paradoxically strengthened this comparison. After all, the Israelites repeatedly denied Moses and refused to obey him. Why should a new Moses be respected? When Cromwell compared himself to Moses, he did so in order to bring an unruly Parliament back into line. Like Flower, he depicts the Parliamentarians as Israelites in the desert, backsliding towards their former ways in Egypt (Hill 145). He also uses imagery from Exodus to restore order among the soldiers: "Burnet tells us of Cromwell speaking in 1648 of a few officers who seemed inclined to return to Egypt, and in 1656 of MPs who spoke against kingship for Oliver as going back to Egypt" (Hill 113-14). Leaders like Cromwell (or his champions) invoke Moses to criticize their critics. Their Moses represents liberation, but liberation demands constant resistance to the temptations that lead back to enslavement.

Of course, royalists were looking for their own redeemer. At Charles II's restoration, James Ramsey's delivered his sermon *Moses Returned from Midian*.<sup>39</sup> Ramsey predictably depicts Cromwell and his son as the two Pharaohs of Exodus, but Ramsey is more interested in the Jewish servant that accuses Moses of murder. This figure stands for the subject who sided with Parliament, and Ramsey considers his psychology at length:

---

<sup>38</sup> Hill observes that the Mosaic figure often appears in reference to commoners in Cromwell's New Model Army (96).

<sup>39</sup> The DNB contains no entry for James Ramsey.

What is it that moved this oppressour to thrust Moses away; even fear of punishment: he had done evil, and feared the Judge, Thinks thou to kill me? He desired, in effect, to be Judge himself, and could not endure any above him to controul his dealing with the weaker... The means whereby this rebellion is carried on [...] are three. 1. The calling in question and contemning of his Authority... 2. Reproaches of him as a bloody man that would kill all he ruled over... 3. The third mean, whereby this rebellion was carried on to it's hight, was violence... and we find no real ground of provocation from Moses, his worst word we find (ver. 26) to be, Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye wrong one to another? (A4r)

For Ramsey, subjects are oppressors; kings are victims. Hence Ramsey focuses on the unworthiness of certain subjects to receive a king's protection: "*even a righteous and good King, may be thrust away, and refused by those over whom he is sent by God to Govern... Innocencie in a King, will not restrain rebellious Subjects*" (A3v-A4r). Via Moses, Ramsey depicts Charles as a compassionate and patient father to a nation. The patriarch only records one sin that the Jews perpetrate under the Egyptian rule: a single Israelite's rejection of the nation's divinely appointed deliverer (A2r-v).<sup>40</sup> Ramsey's Moses (and therefore Charles II) bears no grudge against his subjects, even those who have turned away from him. Understanding both royalty and slavery, Moses can understand and therefore better forgive his people's faults.

Moses is many things in early modern literature. He is a royalist king or a republican rebel, a worldly courtier or a tormented saint, a godly servant or a chattel slave,

---

<sup>40</sup> The significance of this omission becomes clearer in the light of typical biblical commentary of the period arguing that the Hebrews must have been guilty of heinous crimes in order for God to permit them to endure such oppression—most likely idolatry to Egyptian gods.

depending on one's point of view. Early modern biblical scholars were well aware of Moses' allegorical flexibility. The Bible's aptness to describe virtually any situation was for them a useful tool with which to describe political situations in universal terms, but the biblical Moses also spoke to individual consciences. The 1635 *Italian Convert, Newes from Italy of a Second Moses or the Life of Galeavivs Caracciols the Noble Marquesse of Vico* describes an Italian nobleman giving up a life of luxury, decadence, and Roman Catholicism to accept Protestantism in terms of Mosaic typology. In *An Essay toward the Ammendment of the Last English Translation of the Bible* (1659), Robert Gell notes that the Bible translates Moses' name as "to draw out" and asks what prevents one from sinning when opportunity arises, "what else but *Moses*? he is the *drawer of the Father*, and Gods faithful messenger to thee...What's that which now whispers to thee, and saith, *Do thy self no harm*" (Y3v-Y4r).<sup>41</sup> Moses' role as a conscience reminds us of his self-denial when a royal slave. Indeed, Moses the royal slave pertains to every person and many literary characters. While this dissertation does not explicitly relate every literary royal slave to Moses, it does rely on a Mosaic archetype to show how early modern English texts use royal slave imagery to discuss subjection and sovereignty, to define individual and national identity, to generate shame and pity, and to promote obedience and rebellion.

---

<sup>41</sup> Robert Gell (1595-1665) was a Church of England clergyman who wrote the *An Essay toward the Ammendment*, among other works, to defend his religious orthodoxy against critics during the Restoration (DNB Online).



## ROYAL SLAVERY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Chapter One surveys depictions of enslavement to princes. Writers of the period, such as Bishop Antonio de Guevara and Sir Thomas Smith, invoke royal slavery to discuss obedience and tyranny. In his political handbook, Smith articulates an early modern English belief in the freeborn English who will die defending native liberty. In literary texts, political rebels and love slaves use the language of royal slavery to excuse disloyalty to government or fellow subjects. Slavery to a king suggests tyranny, but the literary examples discussed in this chapter blame subjects for *allowing* monarchs to enslave them. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge*, various retellings of Hercules's enslavement to Queen Omphale, and Spenser's Book V of the *Faerie Queene* consistently blame enslavement on the subject rather than the tyrant. The shame of self-enslavement conflicts with the shame (and mortal danger) of disobedience, leading theorists such as Smith to regard political revolt with ambivalence. Authors such as Guevara argue that political slaves ought to teach tyrants patience by example. Virtue, not violence, liberates the subject from the tyrant. As Guevara argues, virtue can also liberate the tyrant from that which makes him tyrannical—enslavement to his own vices.

Chapter Two examines the shift in royal slave rhetoric from pitying hapless kings in mid-sixteenth century literature to attacking selfish monarchs in the late-seventeenth century. The king who suffers due to selfless devotion to the nation appears like a passionate Christ. The monarch who lets his passions enthrall him appears like a tyrant. This chapter uses Guevara's comparison of the king and slave and Feltham's pithy

reflections on royal suffering as touchstones. For Guevara, no worldly occupation brings one more burden and worry than kingship. In Feltham's *Resolves*, a suffering king is an object of supreme pity; pathos is directly proportional to the victim's class. Witnessing a king's fall could arouse sympathy even from one's enemies, as is arguably the case for Bajazeth in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays. Shakespearean dramas such as *Richard II*, *Henry V*, and *The Tempest* repeatedly depict kings (or would-be kings) who manipulate royal slave images in bids for pity. In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare uses royal slavery to vilify Tarquin's tyranny and to lament Lucrece's suffering. But when writers invoke royal slavery to sympathize with a king's humanity, they inevitably remind us that all kings have flaws. Anti-monarchist Lucy Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* ultimately argues that humanity's fallen nature means that *no* human is worthy to wear a crown. Hutchinson's poem repeats the homiletic tropes that God and Death do not recognize worldly title and that cosmic powers regard all of us as slaves due to the fall of Adam. For Hutchinson, the crown simply disguises a king's slavery. Whereas Guevara depicts a sleepless king selflessly suffering out of concern for the nation, Hutchinson's royal insomniac is a tyrant with a guilty conscience.

Chapter Three argues that slaves who rise to princely status model ideal rule even as they call into question familiar class distinctions. They may also stand for chaos and misrule. Or the slave who becomes king may better attend to the needs of his people than a king who has only experienced life at court. If a poor slave can rule with greater wisdom and authority than a noble, then notions of inherited or inherent kingship may be without merit. The wondrous ascension of a royal slave offers a rare endorsement of social mobility, possibly even egalitarianism. Cartwright's *The Royall Slave* and

Madeleine de Scudery's retelling of Theagenes and Cariclia both advertise slaves who rule, and both show how these slaves are not so much restored to freedom as advanced to greater glory through enduring slavery. However, when Scudery retells Achilles' betrayal of Briseis, we find that slavery is more likely to leave one without any hope of restoration. Likewise, Milton's *Paradise Lost* argues that slaves can effectively distract themselves from their bondage, acquire power, and breed chaos, and yet ultimately discover their efforts gain them nothing. His enthralled devils effectively establish a primitive government and achieve harmony amongst themselves, but their attempt to make themselves royal in the midst of slavery dooms them to greater shame in the end.

The conclusion focuses on Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, the royal slave*. Oroonoko and the slaves of Surinam face the same crisis as Moses and Israel. Whereas Moses ultimately delivers the Israelites from Egypt by forming for them a new national identity (with Divine assistance), Oroonoko fails to bind his fellow slaves into a collective. And so his rebellion fails as well. Instead of teaching the African slaves self-denial, Oroonoko clings to his own self-interest and so teaches the slaves to follow his lead. Self-denial seems counter-intuitive to slaves whose masters violently strip away their very sense of self, but liberation requires that one first deny oneself. Oroonoko's inability to accept this paradox dooms his revolt.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE KING'S SLAVES: REBELS AND LOVERS

#### CHAPTER INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Characters in early modern literature who say that they have been enslaved generate pathos by painting themselves as victims of cruel tyrants who have stripped them of their rights. These oppressors must be tyrants, not kings, because the latter treat subjects as subjects—people with rights—not as slaves or possessions. Slaves, then, are mere objects; unless they rebel, they are wholly without recognized wills. Indeed, even when they do rebel, royal slaves argue (often for tactical reasons) that tyrants compel their rebellion. Given their severely limited agency, they have no other way of seeking redress. While self-proclaimed slaves may thereby hope to escape responsibility for their actions, early modern texts in which they feature complicate these matters.

Most early modern dramatists and poets described tyranny as an evil to be avoided, but they did not universally sympathize with the victims of tyranny. As this chapter argues, many early modern writers depict tyrants' victims, even those who claim to resist tyranny, as shamefully complicit in their own enslavement. Their texts emphasize that subjects relinquish their agency to tyrants through cowardice, flattery, or indulgence. Insurrectionists themselves strengthen tyrants, if only for the purpose of building a rhetorical straw man to suit their own political ends. The self-serving motivations of these speakers undermine their anti-tyrannical posture, effectively exonerating monarchs from accusations of tyranny. When the rhetoric of royal slavery backfires, rhetoric that was meant to disparage a tyrant can actually empower (or at the very least enflame) a

monarch. This is not to say that tyranny is not present in these texts, only that straw men have a habit of coming to life when summoned.

Although all of the characters that employ royal slave language are hoist on their own petards in the examples that follow, two specific types of royal slave emerge: the rebel and the lover. Both strategically deploy the language of royal slavery, equating political, mental, or metaphorical slavery with physical slavery in order to excuse the subversive fulfillment of their desires. Slavery justifies the rebel's insurgency, and it gratifies the lover's (or love-slave's) passions. Because these characters have explicit (and in some cases illicit) associations with their monarch, one can hardly avoid reading their tales as political commentary. We can best decode this commentary if we understand early modern political discourses on slavery.

This chapter first outlines the political definitions of slavery found in Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* and Antonio Guevara's *The Diall of Princes*. According to such early modern political theorists, a slave had no place in society—no political relationship to the king or required allegiance to the government. Characters in the literary texts that I investigate express precisely this political theory, that tyranny alienates as it enslaves. These characters rally support by showing how the tyrant has disenfranchised members of society. Divorced from liberty and from society, the rebel and lover appeal to a sense that, as slaves, they cannot be held responsible for their actions, whether they strike out against or comply with the status quo. Alien beings, strangers within nations, they cannot make choices as part of a national collective. As rebels, they act without the consent of the nation; as love-slaves, they act only out of self-interest.

Having canvassed the literary-politico-dimension of slavery, the chapter turns to the literary depiction of tyrants in order to test the validity of royal slaves' claims that subjects are enslaved against their will. Frequently, the redeeming qualities of putative tyrants call into question their detractors' accusations. Instead of showing tyrants that impose themselves on subjects, that is, instead of showing how tyrants actively enslave their people, these texts feature subjects who willingly and often aggressively enslave themselves. However much these characters claim to be tyrannized, however much they use political theory to argue that they are passive victims, they consistently and willingly choose their enslavement and their choices affect entire nations.

Rebels who speak the rhetoric of slavery abound in early modern imaginings of ancient Rome. In *Julius Caesar* and *Caesar's Revenge*, conspiratorial senators generate an ethos of royal slavery to justify their pre-emptive rebellions. Their rhetorical self-presentations incite outrage among nobles and plebeians who value their Roman identity as free persons. Trading on their political identity, rebel slaves can arguably disobey their masters without being treasonous to the nation. Such conspirators can paradoxically appeal to Roman national identity at the very moment that they strip themselves of that identity; they resist government but appear to remain loyal to their nation.

Love slavery operates according to a different dynamic, especially when a leader enslaves himself to a foreign queen. Rather than deploying a rhetoric of royal slavery to excuse resistance to government, characters such as Antony, Hercules, and Artegall use slavery to excuse their passivity. In *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Caesar's Revenge*, love for Rome makes the Roman masculine, honorable, and free, while love for Cleopatra makes the Roman effeminate, base, and servile. In Heywood's drama, *The Brazen Age*,

and in Gower's translation of Ovid, the cross-dressed Hercules plays Omphale's lap dog, abandoning his role as tyrant-tamer to please his lover. In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Artegall enslaves himself to Queen Radigund, thereby relinquishing his quest to thwart injustice. When these heroic figures seek their own pleasure by enslaving themselves to queens, it is, once again, a matter of national interest.

## THE MYTH OF THE FREEBORN ENGLISHMAN

Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* models how early modern English political theory regarded slavery. As Smith defines a commonwealth, which he repeatedly argues must consist of free subjects, he qualifies his definition by way of negation. That is, if a commonwealth consists of free subjects following a king, then a commonwealth cannot be a population of slaves owned by a tyrant.<sup>42</sup> For Smith, the difference between a subject and a slave depends upon how a government views those it governs. In Smith's top-down approach, the ruler defines whether one is a slave or a subject.

Smith juxtaposes selfless, freedom-loving kingship with selfish, slave-driving tyranny to contrast upright English kings with treacherous foreign tyrants. Casting the tyrant as Other, Smith distances tyranny from English life. Absent any examples of tyranny in England itself, Smith finds no precedent to describe what the proper English response

---

<sup>42</sup> For more on language of commonwealth, see A. N. McLaren's *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. McLaren argues that language of commonwealth first grew popular among English theorists during Edward the VI, but that it eventually became a key term in justifying submission to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. McLaren suggests that the *patriarchal* political language that flourished under Henry VIII seemed inadequate to express loyalty to a *queen*. According to McLaren, when sixteenth-century theorists viewed England as a commonwealth rather than a kingdom, they opened the door to republicanism in the seventeenth century.

should be in the event of tyranny.<sup>43</sup> In general, Smith prefers obedience to rebellion since a government is less likely to execute law-abiding citizens. His view is shared by the Spanish Bishop Antonio de Guevara's *The Diall of Princes*.

For Guevara, subjects always owe their rulers Christian obedience; subordinates merely have the right and obligation to refrain from following immoral commands, but they are never justified in deposing their superiors. Rebellion is never an option—it promises freedoms it cannot assure, often exacerbates the tyrant's cruelty, and frequently ignores the pre-existing conditions that have led to enslavement. For Guevara, rebellion is immoral because it ignores the obedience due God through His earthly ministers. Refusing to acknowledge Providence, rebels produce further chaos. Because the people, rather than the ruler, are the true source of tyranny, Guevara discounts rebels' efforts to blame a tyrant for their own faults. Unlike Smith in this regard, Guevara's bottom-up approach suggests that the people define their relationship to the monarch.

Even though *De Republica Anglorum* and *The Diall of Princes* occasionally represent rebels as sympathetic protagonists, both texts warn that rebellion perpetuates the political evils it intends to remedy. Smith may acknowledge that one can *logically* conclude in rebellion's favor based on his own political *theory*, but he is certain that theoretical justification cannot predict or determine practical success. Hence *De Republica Anglorum* and *The Diall of Princes* supply tools with which to explicate the political theory answerable to rebels' royal slave rhetoric, but they do so without condoning rebellion itself.

\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps Smith's indecisiveness reflects a fear that he himself might be cast as a rebel during the tumultuous political climate of the latter sixteenth century.



Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* (1583) delivers a detailed and highly patriotic account of England's contemporary political and legal practices. Widely available in manuscript before its first publication, *De Republica Anglorum* outlines early modern England's legal systems and government structures while offering a panegyric on English rule. Smith boasts of English monarchs' historical refusal to submit to foreign powers. He lauds English kings' (allegedly) unwavering promotion of English liberty. For Smith, English sovereigns do not seek to control the nation; rather, they protect and indeed produce the nation's freedoms.

When discussing English freedom, Smith waxes philosophically on the political dangers and the psychological trauma of freedom's antithesis: slavery. For example, in his chapter on due process in English courts, Smith suggests that using torture to extract confessions will never be as common in England as abroad precisely because torture impinges on a subject's liberty:

Likewise, torment or question which is vsed by other countreis to put a malefactor to excessiue paine, to make him confesse of him selfe, or of his fellowes or complices, is not vsed in England, it is take[n] for seruile...The nature of English men is to neglect death, to abide no torment: And therefore he will confesse rather to haue done any thing, yea, to haue killed his own father, than to suffer torment, for death our natio[n] doth not so much esteem as a mean to torme[n]t...The nature of our nation is free, stout, haulte, prodigall of life and blood: but contumelie, beatings, seruitude and seruile torment & punishment it will not abide. So in this nature and fashion, our auncient Princes and legislators haue

nourished them, as to make them stout hearted, couragious and souldiers, not villaines and slaues, and that is the scope almost of all our policie. (Miiir-v)

A short passage on interrogation develops into an encomium on English love of freedom and hatred of slavery. More significantly, Smith remarks that England has its government to thank for this cultural phenomenon, and he proposes that English princes encourage their subjects to resist unjust authority rather than to bow in servility.<sup>44</sup> While this optimistic analysis of English monarchy overlooks darker times in British history, it does foster the myth of the free-born Englishman, a subject who does not stand in a relationship of base servitude towards kings, or anyone else for that matter.

Smith's praise for England serves a rhetorical function beyond mere patriotism.

Praising English love of freedom and disdain of slavery reinforces his argument that England is a commonwealth: "A common wealth is called a society or common doing of a multitude of free men collected together and united by common accord & couenauntes among themselue, for the conseruation of themselues aswell as peace in warre" (Civ).

Smith can rightly call England a commonwealth because its subjects are free.

Furthermore, Smith's depictions of English kings and subjects offer hope for England's future. The English will retain their status as a commonwealth so long as they love freedom. Should they fall out of love, then the nation will no longer be what it claims to be, and tyranny will swiftly (if silently) spread its wings.

Distinguishing between every day speech and political theory, Smith offers various examples of what a reader might mistake for a commonwealth. By making these false examples seem alien to English sensibilities, he allays suspicions that England might be a

---

<sup>44</sup> Smith's argument certainly appears counter-intuitive to modern, post-Marxist criticism. Smith proposes that English governors paradoxically promote independence among the subordinate classes to the effect that subjects actually remain more loyal.

commonwealth in name only. First, Smith argues that a group that assembles merely for a specific purpose is not a true commonwealth: “For properly an host of me[n] is not called a common wealth but abusiuely, because ther are collected but for a time and for a fact: which done, ech diuideth himselfe from others as they were before” (Civ). Man-made governments collapse and die, but commonwealths aim to be permanent structures. To identify oneself as an English subject means *freely* to accept permanent solidarity with one’s fellow subjects as well as the crown. A collectivity of self-interested individuals is not a commonwealth. But neither does a common interest on its own constitute a commonwealth; in theory, slaves share their master’s interest, but a group of slaves is no commonwealth.

Smith explicitly describes political slavery when he contrasts a commonwealth with a slave state. According to *De Republica*, a commonwealth pursues mutual preservation for the good of society whereas a slave state or a tyranny seeks only the good of the master. Smith qualifies his assertion by noting that, although masters and slaves might appear to have a symbiotic relationship, the intentions of masters and slaves differ from the intentions of a commonwealth’s citizens:

And if one man had as some of the olde Romanes had (if it be true that is written) v. thosande or x. thousande bondmen whom he ruled well, though they dwelled all in one citie, or were distributeth into diuerse villages, yet that were no common wealth: for the bo[n]dman hath no communion with his master, the wealth of the Lord is onely sought for, and not the profit of the slaue or bondman. (Civ)

While this slave master is no diabolical overlord, he does not protect and nourish his slaves for their sake but for his own. For that matter, the slaves do not work for the sake

of the *common* good but for the good of the master. Any benefit the slaves receive from their master is an undeserved gift:

For as they who write of these thinges haue defined, a bondman or a slaue is as it were (sauing life and humane reason) but the instrume[n]t of his Lord, as the are, the saw, the chessyll and gowge is of the charpenter. Truth it is the charpenter looketh diligently to save, correct and amend all these: but it is for his owne profit, and in consideration of him selfe, not [f]or the instrumentes sake. And as these be instruments of the carpenter, so the plow, the cart, the horse, oxe or asse, be instrumentes of the husbandman: and though one husbandman had a great number of all those an looked well to them, it made no common wealth nor could not so be called. For the private wealth of the husbandman is onely regarded, and there is no mutuall societie or portion, no law or pleading betweene thone and thother. (Civ)

Even if the master does not abuse those under his command, even if the slave does not suffer under oppression, the slave-owner fits tyranny's classical definition. A tyrant, as opposed to a king, holds human beings as possessions and uses them for his personal benefit (Biir). In political theory, tyranny expresses the relationship between a ruler and a subject, not the quality of a subject's life. Indeed, a tyrant could conceivably improve the lives of slaves. But in time, if only by chance, an occasion will arise when the slaves have a grievance, and then they will discover that they have no right to demand anything from their master.

Smith argues that it is a subject's ability to seek redress from the sovereign power that ultimately proves that a state is a true commonwealth. A king and a subject may discuss

their grievances, whether through an established system of petition or through legal institutions. This is not so for a slave, who stands outside of community and has no means of expressing desires. Regarded as an object rather than a person, a slave lacks any political or legal representation:

the bondman or slaue...is bought for monie...he is but a reasonable and lyuing instrument [,] the possession of his Lorde and master, reckoned among his goods, not otherwise admitted to the societie civill or common wealth, but is part of the possession and goods of his Lorde. (Civ-Ciiv)

A subject participates in a commonwealth, but a slave is merely a tool. If Smith's arguments are taken to their logical conclusion, then one can never really be a slave to one's own king. That is, subjects always have political relations to kings. When a king enslaves a subject, he dissolves the king-subject relationship, thrusts that subject outside the commonwealth, and creates royal slavery.<sup>45</sup>

When *De Republica Anglorum* directly considers enslavement to *kings*, it frequently associates the phenomenon with other times and other nations (ancient Hebrews and early modern Turks); it is not an acceptable destiny for Christian England.<sup>46</sup> Smith chooses the

---

<sup>45</sup> According to Hobbes, the slave is not bound to obey like the servant because the former has made no contract to obey. In this sense, a slave lives outside the law: "for such men (commonly called Slaves,) have no obligation at all; but may break their bonds, or the prison; and kill, or carry away captive their Master, justly" (141).

<sup>46</sup> Smith describes royal slavery in the Hebrew Bible in order to present the classical patriarchal arguments for the origins of kings. He refers to Adam as being both a father and a slave-owner:

But all commeth to one effect: for at the first, all kinges ruled absolutely, as they who were either the heades & most ancient of their families, deriued out of their own bodies, as Adam, Noa, Abraham, Iacob, Esau reigning absolutely ouer their owne children and bondmen as reason was: or else in the rude world amongst barbarous & ignorant people, some one then whom God had endewed with singular wisdom to inuent thinges necessary for the nourishing and defence of the multitude...Such among the Jewes were Moses, Iosua, & the other iudges...(Biiiiv)

Smith goes on to argue that Moses' authority derives from the Aristotelian notion of the slavery of brutes. Moses commands his fellow Israelites not because he inherited Adam's paternal role, but because he is the only Israelite fit to rule—the rest are too servile.

Turkish example because, at first glance, it poses the greatest counter-argument to his thesis—this slave state appears far more successful than a commonwealth. The Turkish Empire is the exception that proves the rule. Recent imperial studies have proposed that early modern England’s depictions of the Turk were meant to unify England’s own national identity. If Turks were a frightening, diabolic, and enslaving Other, then the English could identify themselves as freedom-loving Christians.<sup>47</sup> Smith’s early modern political theory appears to follow suit, describing Turkish society as an intricate and overblown slave system:

Wherefore except there be other orders and adminstrations amonst the Turkes, if the prince of the Turkes (as it is written of him) doe repute all other his bondmen and slaues (him selfe and his sonnes onely freemen) a man may doubt whether his adminstration be to be accompted a common wealth or a kingdome, or rather to be reputed onely as one that hath vnder him an infinite number of slaues or bondme[n] amo[n]g whome there is no right, law nor common wealth compact, but onely the will of the Lorde and segnior. Surely none of the olde Greekes would call this fashion of gouernment...for the reasons which I haue declared before. (Civ-Ciiv)

---

Regarding the rise of tyrants, Smith explains that at first, “tyrant” in Greek was not perjorative—only as time passed did “tyrant” come to describe corrupted monarchs who were “not shepherdes as they ought to be” (Cir). The Mosaic-Christian disposition of the proper ruler is clear from the pastoral metaphor, but Smith does not explicitly argue that biblical narratives provide effective models for contemporary political structures.

<sup>47</sup> In his introduction to *Three Turk Plays*, Daniel Vitkus suggests that modern Western demonizations of Muslims stem from what he believes are early modern justifications for English imperialism and conquest. Nabil Matar’s *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* suggests that such readings are anachronistic, and instead argues that the English were genuinely frightened by what they saw as an unstoppable Islamic conquest of the Mediterranean and Europe. Regardless of who was actively conquering whom, early modern England saw the Turks as antithetical to the English.

For Smith, the Turkish system does not represent government but tyranny. Intentions rather than living conditions distinguish a commonwealth. Yet, as Smith has already noted, politics in practice seems to defy politics in theory. The Turkish Empire might be a slave state, but what a magnificent slave state it was. If one were to choose a political system based on its outward glamour, the Turkish system seems to surpass the European commonwealths by far. Royal slavery can tempt those not experiencing its oppression, attracting Europeans with golden fetters. As Nabil Matar observes, Islamic conquest had already claimed the Holy Land, Constantinople, Northern Africa, and had flanked Europe, while the English commonwealth was only beginning to expand its territories.<sup>48</sup> England typically viewed the Turkish Empire as militarily unstoppable and financially unsurpassed, but religiously heretical and socially abhorrent. The Turkish Empire appears glistening and attractive, but its power is a forbidden fruit on religious grounds and an affront to the dignity of freeborn English. Islam was a force with which to reckon but not to emulate because it meant widespread royal slavery and because it was, supposedly, doomed. Smith argues that governments follow a life cycle, tyranny being the death throes of a civilization. Tyrants may temporarily prosper, but in time they breed rebellion and incur the wrath of God, ensuring their collapse.

Smith is certain that England ought not to take the gold-plated path of the Turk, but he is less confident how to proceed should a king start on the road to tyranny. *De Republica*'s neutrality on rebellion might stem from its encyclopedic nature. Smith prefers *description* over *prescription*—he says more about what tyranny is than how to avoid it. His response to the question of how to live justly under a tyrant is quite frank:

---

<sup>48</sup> Although the Western victory at Battle of Lepanto in 1571 did inspire European hopes, Islam and its pirates remained a terrifying force well into the seventeenth century and beyond.

So when the common wealth is euill gouerned by an euill ruler and vnjust...the question remaineth whether the obedience of them be iust, and the disobedience wrong...Brutus and Cassius against Caesar, which hath bin cause of many commotion in common wealthes, whereof the iudgment of the common people is according to the euent and successe: of them which be learned, according to the purpose of the doers, and the estate of the time when present. Certaine it is that it is alwayes a doubtfull and hasardous matter to meddle with the chaunging of the lawes and gouernement, or to disobey the orders of the rule or gouernment, which a man doth finde alreadie established. (Biiv-Biiir)

Smith refuses wholly to praise or denounce either submission to the tyrant or civil disobedience; situation-ethics prevail. As I have suggested, Smith's ambivalence might also arise from his historical context. He served under both Edward and Elizabeth, and survived Mary's intervening reign. It pays to play one's cards close when opposing political factions are rising and falling, and Smith's pragmatism does not overtly align him with any political group. Being a civil lawyer, Smith leans towards obedience as the safest action since, at the very least, service to the monarch's law cannot be judged a crime, regardless of the law's moral value or ideological underpinning.

More direct support for obedience to a tyrant can be found in Sir Thomas North's translation of Bishop Guevara's *The Diall of Princes*, a text with deep, multi-cultural layerings. An English Protestant's translation of a Spanish Catholic bishop's fictionalized account of a stoic Roman emperor's advice to the Holy Roman emperor, North's translation was dedicated to Catholic Mary Tudor and rededicated to Protestant Elizabeth. There is much in the text that seems at odds with itself. One position it consistently



argues, however, is obedient submission to a monarch regardless of that monarch's qualities or behavior.

*The Diall* pleads with subjects to remain obedient in order to avoid an infinite feedback loop typical of tyranny. Guevara admits that a bad ruler is responsible for alienating those who should be his followers, but it cautions that resistance turns a merely bad governor into a full-blown tyrant:

I warne, pray, and importunately require you all, that you be loyal, and faythful seruauntes, to the ende you may deserue to haue louing lordes. For generallye, the prynce that is wycked, causeth hys subiecte to rebel, and the sedicious subiecte, maketh his lord to become a tiraunte. (fol 40v)

*The Diall* argues that the people have only themselves to blame if a monarch enslaves them in tyranny, suggesting that tyrants are afflictions from God sent to galvanize a morally lax nation.

Oftymes god suffereth, that there be emperours in the Empire, kinges in realmes, and gouerners in the prouinces, lordes in the cities, and prelates in the churches, not all onelye as the common wealth desireth, nor as the good gouernment deserueth. For now a daies, we se manye, that haue the charge of soules in the churche, whiche deserue not to keape the sheape in the felde...they are not gentyle pastores, but cruel hangemen...God sendeth us such prelates, and gouernors, not for that they should be mynysters of hys lawes, but for that they should be scourges for oure offences. (fol 40v)

To obey even a corrupt monarch is to fulfill Christian duty and displays humility because it shows respect for God. To resist a tyrant is to resist God's providence and to deny Him authority to punish us.

Despite exhorting subjects to ameliorate tyranny with love, *The Diall* nevertheless describes obedience as a curse. When invoking the primitive origins of authority, *The Diall* justifies contemporary submission to rulers as a consequence of original sin:

God wylleth, and ordeynethe, that one onelye commaunde all: and that all together obey one...In this case, speakeynge lyke a Christian I saye, that if oure father Adam had obeyed one onelye commaundemente of God, which was forbydden hym in the terrestriall paradyse, we had remained in lyberty, uppon the yearthe, and shoulde haue been Lordes and maysters ouer al. But sythe he woulde not then obeye the Lorde, we are nowe become the slaues of so many Lordes...O wycked synne, cursed be thou, sythe by the onelye, the worlde is broughte into suche a bondage without teares I cannot speake...(fol 39v)

While Guevara supports the status quo, he acknowledges that it is far from good. He envisions the ideal world, the utopian paradise, as a terrestrial anarchy that will never return as long as humans rule the world.<sup>49</sup> Because humanity chose to follow itself and not God, God altered His plan and gave humanity what it ostensibly wants—self-rule. The paradox is that rule under God gives us more freedom than rule under kings, since God at least allows His followers what we curtail: the opportunity to disobey. God might punish after one commits a sin, but at least He sponsors human choice. People hold each other as slaves and in “a bondage,” not just punishing but curbing each other's action

---

<sup>49</sup> By anarchy, I mean that it lacks a governing hierarchy. If all people are equally kings and masters, then no one is governed. In Chapter Three, I argue that the devils essentially attempt to make themselves a utopian society by declaring themselves simultaneously kings and subjects.

with legal and even physical means. Human rulers compel obedience at sword point and forcibly prohibit disobedience by constructing prisons and forging chains. *The Diall* senses something unnatural in human authority that demands but does not inspire obedience, something artificial in the elevation of certain persons over others. According to *The Diall*'s prelapsarian polity, all humans were equally Lords by their nature—all were essentially made as kings of the world and only by rebellion have they become slaves to kings.<sup>50</sup>

*The Diall* condemns rebellion both because it aggravates a bad king into tyranny and because God has ordained that man must suffer for original sin. Slavery and bondage are not morally good things—they are punitive evils meant to bring humanity to a greater good. God might desire that one rule all, but the very purpose of *The Diall* is to show how the abuses of princes go against God's will. Guevara is no defender of tyrants; the tyrant is not justified in doing evil because he is God's scourge. Nevertheless, the tyrant's evil does not excuse the evil of disobedience. If rebellion derives from pride, then royal slavery is a punishment we bring upon ourselves and must accept without complaint. Humanity must console itself with divine love, not political violence.

According to Guevara, the rhetoric of royal slavery fails to acknowledge that human slavery is not merely political, that it is a crucial expression of divine judgment. As an example, Guevara turns to Roman political discourse to show how tyrant's victims misunderstand their situation. He explicitly condemns the Roman use of royal slave rhetoric as a justification for insurrection, noting that it overestimates man's inherent freedom:

---

<sup>50</sup> For more on the debate over whether mankind is a race of enslaved kings, see Chapter Two.

For the Romaines in this case were so proude harted, that they had rather dye in libertye, then liue in captiuitie. GOD had so ordeyned it, and their wofell case did so promise it, when they were aboue all other kinges, and Realmes of the yearth, that the slaue should be obedient to his yronnes, and the subject shoulde acknowledge the homage to his master.

And though the subiectes do moue warres, though kings also do winne Realmes; and Empoerours conquere Empyres: yet (will they or nyll they) bothe greate and small shoulde acknowledge themselves for seruauntes.

For duringe the time of our fleshelye life, we can nevyer withdraw ourselyes from the yoke of seruitude. (fol 41r)

The parallels to Smith's description of the English captive are obvious, but Guevara has bigger issues to deal with than national identity. The problem of slavery is endemic to human existence; it cannot be eliminated through political action.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, as I argue in the succeeding pages, the Roman liberators Brutus and Cassius discover that the rhetoric of royal slavery does not die when the tyrant dies. The language of slavery persists in *Julius Caesar* (1599) and *The Tragedie of Caesar and Pompey or Caesar's Revenge* (1606) after Caesar's death and eventually becomes part of the rhetoric used against the rebels themselves.<sup>52</sup> Brutus and Cassius think that by escaping tyranny, they escape slavery. Instead, as Guevara predicts, they find servitude (and their complicity in it) far

---

<sup>51</sup> Hobbes likewise blames a misunderstanding of Greek philosophy as leading to similar desires for insurrection in the name of liberty: "the Athenians were taught, (to keep them from desire of changing their government,) that they were Free-men, and all that lived under Monarchy were slaves...the Romans...were taught to hate Monarchy" (150).

<sup>52</sup> In the Norton edition, Katherine Eisman Maus gives 1599 as the performance date for Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and the textual notes observe it was only published in the 1623 folio.

more pervasive than they originally imagined, and we discover that the would-be liberators have been enslaving themselves.

### **CAESAR'S REBELS: SELF-ENSLAVEMENT TO THE STRAW MAN TYRANT**

With back and wrists crossed in the attitude of a manacled slave, he framed his penultimate lines as a rhetorical question and answer: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God...Give me liberty"...He stood like a Roman senator defying Caesar...and he closed the grand appeal with the solemn words "or give me death!" (Matthews 299-300)

Citing eyewitness accounts, Lloyd J. Matthews argues that Patrick Henry's famous "liberty or death" speech borrows directly from *Julius Caesar*. Not merely a politician, Patrick Henry is also a student of Shakespeare. Equally compelling for the early modernist is Henry's "second most celebrated speech, delivered before the Virginia House of Burgesses on May 30, 1765" in which Henry declaims, "Tarquin and Caesar had each his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third---" (qtd. in Matthews 302). This American founding father binds royal slave imagery with polemic to incite legal and political change.<sup>53</sup> And, as we well know, his contemporaries and those who came after him would and did die over the word "slavery," even when it denoted a

---

<sup>53</sup> The American Founding Fathers were also self-conscious of how their appropriation of royal slave rhetoric could be equally applied to their own engagement in chattel slavery; see Nash, Gary B. *Race and Revolution*. Madison: Madison House Publishers, Inc., 1990. On a similar note, work has begun to investigate how seventeenth-century political slave rhetoric figured into eighteenth-century abolitionism; see Hudson, Nicholas. "'Britons Never Will Be Slaves': National Myth, Conservatism, and the Beginnings of British Antislavery." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 34.4 (Summer 2001): 559-76.

life free of physical chains. Early modern English accounts of the life and death of Julius Caesar show that Henry was hardly the first person to draw upon the power of royal slave rhetoric, nor was he the first person to perform servility to motivate rebellion.

Henry calls to mind the defiant Roman senator when his body and verbal language are juxtaposed. That is, Henry's words defy King George, but he assumes a posture of base servitude. In order to lend potency to his words, his body must perform the very role he claims to disdain. Shakespeare's play shows a similar disjunction between the deeds and the words of Brutus and Cassius. Although these rebel leaders claim to loathe servitude, both perform slavery to incite their fellow Romans as well as to deceive Caesar.

Using royal slave rhetoric to justify rebellion raises a host of political questions. What rights do citizens have to protect their freedom? Must one wait until one is actually enslaved to rebel, or can one take pre-emptive action if one's freedom is threatened? How does one define a threat to freedom? Must one be manacled physically or does political oppression suffice to sanction resistance? Since royal slavery is often metaphorical, and because Patrick Henry, Brutus, and Cassius merely assume the posture of a man weighed down by shackles, we do well to remember that they are not literally, physically enchained. Rather, they alert us to the way slavery is performed to incite rebellion even when rulers stop short of physically enslaving their people. However, the boundaries between theatre and reality often blur in the context of slavery. One who convincingly performs enslavement may be taken for a slave in fact by rulers as well as sympathizers. Speak treason against a government by miming manacles, and a government might supply painful props. That performed enslavement may become actual enslavement can

serve the rebel no less than the tyrant. But even as this transformation proves the rebel's claims of victimization, it can render his rhetoric suspiciously self-fulfilling.

In order to understand what Cassius and Brutus imagine they rebel against, I begin with the debate over Caesar's status as either an enslaving tyrant or an enfranchising monarch. If Caesar is a tyrant, from what does his tyranny stem: his personal vices, his route to power, or his administrative practices? I then analyze how Brutus and Cassius' rhetoric of royal slavery unites the Romans against Caesar and how such rhetoric persists beyond the death of Caesar, disrupting peace among the conspirators.

\*\*\*\*

If rebels can perform slavery to incite revolt or to goad rulers, tyrants can perform servitude to fool their people into loving them.<sup>54</sup> Caesar craftily depicts himself as a servant to the people in order to hide his otherwise tyrannical ambitions; he would be king, but he stops short of having himself designated as such. In the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge* (1606), the rebellious Cumber Casca remarks: "Hee doth refuse the title of a King, / But wee do see hee doth vsurp the thing" (F3v). Early modern historians acknowledge Caesar's desire for this title. Political hubris dooms Caesar in Plutarch as translated by Sir Thomas North: "the chieftest cause that made him mortally hated, was the covetous desire he had to be called King: which first gave the people just cause, and next his secret enemies, honest colour to beare him ill will" (Bullough 80). Caesar is self-conscious about his pride and tries, however feebly, to mask it.

As is noted in Plutarch and dramatized in both Shakespeare's play and in *Caesar's Revenge*, Caesar argues for his royal worthiness by professing his unworthiness. During

---

<sup>54</sup> Caesar anticipates arguments I make in Chapter Two concerning the image of an enslaved king as a Christ-like servant's servant.

the feast of Lupercalia, Antony offers Caesar the “Diademe” or crown. Caesar refuses; yet, Plutarch notes that Caesar erects statues of himself wearing it (Bullough 81). In *Caesar’s Revenge*, Antony declares:

This noble mind and Princely modesty,  
Which in contempt of honours brightnes shines,  
Makes vs to wish the more for such a Prince,  
Whose uertue not ambition won that praise,  
Nor shall we thinke it losse of liberty.  
Or Romaine liberty any way impeached,  
For to subject vs to his Princely rule...

(*Revenge* F2v)

Antony draws attention to Caesar’s apparent lack of desire to be king. By expressing indifference, Caesar appears humble and therefore well suited for kingship according to a least-shall-be-greatest paradigm. Caesar persuades the Romans that they should not consider themselves royal slaves because he himself has taken on the appearance of a slave by refusing the crown. An early modern Christian audience might well see Caesar anticipating Christ’s humility when he refuses Satan’s temptations in the wilderness. Although Christ might deserve worldly power, he rejects it, and therefore deserves it all the more. Audiences would also have recognized that Caesar is no Christ; Caesar’s humility is a ruse to distract the plebeians from their subjugation. Caesar hogs the stage, wanting to keep discussion of royal slavery focused on his seemingly wondrous ascension rather than on the people’s impending loss of political representation.



Caesar believes that an outward show of acquiescence to an inferior class, that is, public veneration of the people, will earn him the right to command them. He gains authority by appearing to give the people authority. Caesar has arranged a performance of his own temptation, casting Antony in the diabolic role, but it is the Romans who face the real temptation. Antony would have the Romans give up their citizenship and become subjects. He does not say they will be free under Caesar, only that they should “think” their liberty the same. The Romans are to imagine themselves subjects but not subjugated to Caesar; liberty and slavery in this play more often describe mental states than legal status.

That the coronation should occur on the feast of Lupercalia further complicates its meaning. Replete with fertility rites conducted in the buff, it is also a carnivalesque holiday of role reversals.<sup>55</sup> If Lupercalia could be seen by Renaissance audiences as a day when the least shall be made the greatest and the greatest laid low, then Caesar’s being offered the crown and refusing it produces a conundrum. What does it mean that Caesar refuses the crown on such a day?

A familiarity with Caesar’s past makes Caesar’s humble refusal appear even more suspicious. Plutarch writes that pirates kidnapped the young Caesar for ransom, but that he maintained a haughty demeanor despite his captivity: “not kept as prisoner, but rather waited upon by them as a Prince” (Bullough 59). Caesar’s early captivity might mark him out as a slave turned prince or prince-to-be turned slave, but Plutarch does not describe

---

<sup>55</sup> As will be seen in this chapter’s discussion of Ovid, the nudity of the celebrants is directly linked to role reversals. When Ovid explains why the feast of Lupercalia involves nudity, he tells the story of how Queen Omphale exchanged clothes with her then slave Hercules. Confused by their cross-dressing, Pan attempts to rape Hercules and is sorely beaten by the hero. Thus, Pan prefers that his worshippers perform his rites with their sexual identity clearly exposed.

him in such flattering terms.<sup>56</sup> Proud Caesar refuses to serve. He will not learn humility—or any of the virtues of a servant king. Instead, he learns that pride prevails. Later, this same disdain leads him to be “most of all uncomely for the presence of the Senate whome he should have revered” (Bullough 64). Caesar will serve no one and nothing—including the state.

Proud though he is, Plutarch’s Caesar lacks power early in his political career. His generosity wins over the commoners, but his political rivals dismiss him as a weak threat. They find out too late, writes Plutarch, “that there is not so litle a beginning of any thing, but continuance of time will soone make it strong, when though contempt there is no impediment to hinder the greatnes” (Bullough 60). Caesar cloaks his aspirations with his fellow patricians’ underestimation of him. Even after his ultimate goal is made clear, Caesar is politically savvy enough not to appear as a tyrant, so he declines the title “king.”<sup>57</sup> According to Plutarch, political wisdom also encouraged Caesar’s choice to enter the forum despite his wife’s dream. If he acted on Calpurnia’s dream and cancelled the Senatorial session on the Ides of March: “who could perswade [the Senators] otherwise, but that they would thinke his dominion a slauerie unto them, and tirannical in him selfe?” (Bullough 84). Shows of humility keep anti-monarchical royal slave rhetoric in check.

Plutarch uses Caesar’s pre- and post-monarchical behaviors to distinguish between two types of political tyranny. A tyrant can be defined as one who uses illicit means to become a ruler, or one who oppresses the people while he holds power. A ruler can be a

---

<sup>56</sup> This relates significantly to Oroonoko who was renamed Caesar as a slave and whose status and pride meant that he endured only the name of slave until he rebelled (see conclusion).

<sup>57</sup> See Rebecca Bushnell’s *The Tragedy of Tyrants* for Aristotle’s argument that tyrants curb their tyranny for the sake of self-preservation.

tyrant in one or both of these senses, but Plutarch suggests that Caesar is guilty only of the former. When Caesar is consolidating his power, Metellus tries to prevent him from looting the treasury. Caesar responds, “thou art myne, both thou, and all them that have risen against me, and whom I have in my hands” (Bullough 71).<sup>58</sup> Although at times self-abnegating, Plutarch’s Caesar nonetheless uses the first-person possessive to assert his ownership of his fellow Romans early in his quest for supreme power. Plutarch also notes that Caesar’s wish to be designated dictator for life is “plaine tyranny” (Bullough 78). And yet, Plutarch’s Caesar was no oppressor, despite his tyrannical ascent:

Howbeit Caesar’s power and government when it came to be established, did in deede much hurt at his first entrie and beginning unto those that did resist him: but afterwards, unto them that being ouercome had received his government, it seemed he rather had the name and opinion onely of a tyranne, then otherwise that he was so in deede. For there neuer followed any tyrannicall nor cruell act...  
(Bullough 133)

Geoffrey Bullough wonders whether Caesar really would have reduced the Romans to slavery, or whether Caesar’s opponents were being hyperbolic and histrionic when they claimed they would be enslaved (45). Whatever kind of monarch Caesar was, his early pride fuelled the imaginations of those resistant to his rule. If his detractors could make the “name and opinion” of tyranny stick to Caesar, then they could convince fellow Romans to rise against him even if he did nothing to enslave them.

Faced with a Caesar who never quite enslaves the nation, his opponents resort to enslaving themselves and then blaming Caesar for their self-enslavement. The slave

---

<sup>58</sup> Caesar did in fact own slaves. As a slave owner, Caesar found his slave-barber to be immensely useful as a spy and a means of detecting an assassination plot on his life in Egypt (Bullough 74).

possesses an ethos that is hard to argue against. How can one refute another person's claim to be a slave? If one performs the role of a slave, one is a slave, whether or not one is compelled by force or by law. Denying another's slavery appears either pitiless or duplicitous. The rebel claims to disdain slavery, yet the rebel embraces, performs, or creates slavery for rhetorical advantage. Of course, the rebel's over-eager run into slavery can also undermine his credibility and the authenticity of his enslavement.

Early in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Casca and Cassius debate the appropriateness of assassinating their would-be monarch. Their dialogue reaffirms notions that the individual, not the tyrant, defines his or her own status as a slave.

Casca: So every bondman in his own hand bears

The power to cancel his captivity.

Cassius: And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?

Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf

But that he sees the Romans are but sheep.

He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.

Those that with haste will make a mighty fire

Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome,

What rubbish, and what offal, when it serves

For the base matter to illuminate

So vile a thing as Caesar! But, O grief,

Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this

Before a willing bondman; then I know

My answer must be made. But I am armed,

And dangers are to me indifferent.

(1.3.100-14)

Cassius sets his targets low, not high. He does not claim that Caesar descended on Rome as a tyrant; rather, the Roman people raised him to tyrannical heights through their own base servility. He does not express his desire to overthrow tyranny out of a love for Rome, but out of a hatred for slavery—a hatred for those who enslave, those who are enslaved, and those who enslave themselves. One might get the impression that Cassius would rather slaughter the slaves than the tyrant. Indeed, he reveals that he is armed in the event that Casca might prove a slave. As for the base Romans, they are “sheep” and “hinds”—fit objects for sacrificing and hunting. Cassius loathes the “willing bondman” who enslaves himself to Caesar, calling him “base” and “trash” and the source of infection. Whether or not the Romans actually do enslave themselves to Caesar, Cassius eagerly throws rhetorical chains on those he would claim to liberate in order to excuse his rebellious furor. He will enslave them to Caesar in order to be the one who frees them.

In other accounts of Caesar’s life, the plebeians are less prone to masochism but more vulnerable to seduction. Caesar seduces the Romans through what Plutarch’s Cassius calls the “tyrannicall favors” bestowed on a loyal supporter to “weaken his constant mind” (Bullough 94). This form of enslavement is also noted in *Caesar’s Revenge* when Pompey observes the impossibility of bargaining with a tyrant: “He that goeth seeking of a Tirant aide, / Though free he went, a seruant then is made” (*Revenge* A4v). Pompey does not argue that Caesar is inherently tyrannical, or that he is overwhelmed by his passions. Rather, this Caesar is an intelligent opportunist who takes advantage of people’s

vices and weaknesses. In *Caesar's Revenge*, assassinating Caesar has less to do with saving Romans from a tyrant than with saving Rome from itself.

Cassius' willingness to take violent measures is important not merely as a sign of practical necessity but because it shows his lack of mortal fear.<sup>59</sup> Fear makes one slavish. After dispersing the commoners, Shakespeare's Flavius remarks, "These growing feathers plucked from Caesar's wing / Will make him fly an ordinary pitch, / Who else would soar above the view of men / And keep us all in servile fearfulness" (1.1.71-74).<sup>60</sup> Although Roman sycophants empower Caesar in hopes of favors, Flavius observes that fear, not greed, will enable Caesar to retain his rule. Without present action, the Roman nobility will come to fear Caesar's might and become as base as Caesar's common followers.

For Cassius, slavery oppresses not by torture or threat but by shame. He is less afraid of death than being seen as someone who is afraid of death. In an honor culture, one purchases honor with courage. Slavery, however, suggests that one has let oneself be captured, not having fought bravely enough to defeat the enemy or die nobly. A slave appears to have submitted, and the suffering and labor of a slave offends Cassius less than his submissiveness. Shame makes the mere title "slave" unbearable to the noble Roman, regardless of slavery's conditions.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Natural rights theorists of the seventeenth-century debated the extent to which a man could defend himself against a monarch, even an oppressive and life-threatening one. See Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>60</sup> Hobbes also writes that fear and liberty are not mutually exclusive (146), but he notes that "For Slaves that work in Prisons, or Fetters, do it not of duty, but to avoyd the cruelty of their task-masters" (142). For a discussion on classical views that fear caused slavery, see Daniel Beaumont, "King, Queen, Master, Slave: The Master/Slave Dialectic & the *Thousand and One Nights*." *Neophilologus*. 82.3 (July 1998): 335-56.

<sup>61</sup> Still, Cassius's sincerity leaves room for doubt. John Roland Dove writes that the historical Cassius was typically depicted as a "petty man enslaved to the dictates of his own unworthy passions" (549). David Klein demurs, arguing that Caesar alone openly attacks Cassius's nobility. Plutarch indicates that whatever

Plutarch's Brutus likewise despises tyranny as a matter of principle. He declares: "For my selfe ...I meane not to holde my peace, but to withstande it, and rather dye then lose my liberty" (Bullough 96). Unlike Cassius, who would die merely to avoid shame, Brutus would die for *liberty's* sake.<sup>62</sup> Like Cassius, he does not express fear of slavery's hardships or conditions. Unlike Cassius, his love of ideals motivates him more than his disdain for shame. Cassius hates slaves; Brutus loves freemen.

Justifying the assassination of Julius Caesar to the mob, Brutus also appeals to honor, personal worth, and national identity: "Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe" (3.2.13-15).<sup>63</sup> He goes so far as to confess his love of Caesar: "Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his" (3.2.15-19). Using "love" to describe the relationship between Brutus and Caesar signifies more than a lack of malice or jealousy. Love describes the proper, mutually beneficial relationship between subject and ruler. Love moves the one to act in the best interests of the other. But love may also conflict with loyalty: "If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my

---

Cassius's inner demons might be, his distaste for subjection is sincere: "Cassius even from his cradell could not abide any maner of tyrans" (Bullough 95).

<sup>62</sup> Of course, Brutus's anti-slave rhetoric might mask his own ambitions. Arguing against prevalent discussions in the mid-twentieth century that a machiavellian Cassius leads a blind Brutus astray, Gordon Ross Smith holds that Brutus is himself tyrannical in his leadership of the revolt: "the play contains at least fourteen occasions in which Brutus proceeds to dominate or to domineer over his fellows" (368). Smith concludes that "A natural concomitant to Brutus' need to run everything, and to his use of his own well-advised virtue as justification for doing so, is his conscious conviction that he has no substantial faults: he is pure intellect and pure virtue happily united in a self-sufficient team" (373).

<sup>63</sup> It is worth noting that Brutus's speech successfully binds the Romans together as Romans, under one national identity. Antony, however, dissolves that identity, depicting Caesar as having a personal relationship with each Roman as an individual. Brutus's error is that national identity must be reinforced or it will yield to private interests. This has bearing on Oroonoko's failed revolt in my conclusion; his speech undermines itself by reminding the slaves of their private interests rather than uniting them as a commonwealth.

answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?" (3.2.19-22). A servant with two masters, Brutus must serve one and sacrifice the other. Mother Rome wins the day.<sup>64</sup>

With the willing enslavement of her people, Rome herself would become a slave to a tyrant. *Caesar's Revenge* repeatedly describes slavery not merely in terms of individual subjects, but in terms of Rome as a singular entity.<sup>65</sup> Pompey hopes for his own revenge, saying "When death and angry fates shall call me hence, / To free thy country from a Tyrants yoke" (*Revenge* A4v). Cato Junior laments his father's death saying: "His to courageous heart that cannot beare / The thrall of Rome..." (*Revenge* D4v). In a sense, Brutus's rhetoric calls for service to a royal slave named Rome not to a royal master; and like Caesar refusing the crown, Brutus would be the servants' servant.

In his final plea, Shakespeare's Brutus appeals again to patriotism and emphasizes the potential for dishonor and shame.

As Caesar loved me, I weep for him. As he was fortunate, I rejoice at it. As he was valiant, I honour him. But as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition.

Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak, for him

---

<sup>64</sup> To appeal to Romans' sense of Rome requires them to identify with Rome (since Rome consists in part of her individual citizens) and to see Rome as somehow other than themselves (since love of Rome extends beyond mere self-love). By appealing to love of Rome, Brutus hopes to unify the Romans. He intends to make them forget their individual desires and surrender their wills to the State.

<sup>65</sup> For more on how Shakespeare reifies Rome as a singular entity, see Robert Miola's *Shakespeare's Rome*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Miola traces how Shakespeare's concept of Rome evolves over his literary career.



have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak,  
for him have I offended. I pause for a reply. (3.2.23-31)

Whereas Cassius depicts Romans—particularly the base plebeians—running gleefully and headlong into bondage, Brutus argues that all Romans, even commoners, still value freedom. For Brutus, “Roman” is synonymous with “free man.” The Roman plebeians retain their Roman identity so long as they are free, no matter how base they might be. Brutus intends his rhetorical defense to affect how the plebeians view him, but, being crafted for a specific audience, his rhetoric also tells us about how Brutus views the plebeians. He believes that they must be reminded continually of their own identity. They will value what they are told to value, and, although they can be shamed, their short attention span and brief memories make them untrustworthy. Although he treats them as fellow Romans, he knows that they are passive. Indeed, Brutus must justify his speech to the plebeians after the assassination precisely because they were not part of the conspiracy. Florus’s history notes that “Brutus, and Cassius, and other Patricians, Lords of the highest ranke, conspired to assassinate [Caesar]...” (Bullough 162). Rebellion did not start with oppressed plebeians, but rather with patricians who claimed that they were acting in the best interest of the foolish and lethargic people. Those who struck against potential tyranny knew they had the most to lose by it, while the commoners did not.

Ironically, the plebeians could have gained more from a tyrant than from republican factionalism. Given Caesar’s reputation for generosity, the plebeians might have found subjection more advantageous than a liberty in which they had little political voice. Caesar at least appeared to seek the approval of the common people before taking action (even if he employed bribery and duplicity to earn that approval). The Roman Senate had

a less flattering track record with the commons, and the rebel patricians acted without consulting them. Although neither Caesar nor the nobility put complete trust in commoners, only Caesar convinced the lowly to trust him. In fact, plebeians historically had little reason to put faith in the patricians, despite senators' claims to act in their best interests.<sup>66</sup> Because monarchy alone might end the bitter rivalry between the plebeians and the patricians, Brutus studiously refuses to contrast monarchy with republicanism. He never even endorses the republican status quo. Rather than telling the people to stick with the devil they know, Brutus sets out to show how Caesar's political theory contradicts the *ideal* Rome. Defining Rome by its freedom and liberty, Brutus argues that no Roman citizen can become a subject and retain his Roman identity. Rome would not necessarily suffer under Caesar, but Rome would cease to be herself. Brutus concedes that he killed the common father because Julius Caesar threatened to kill the common mother.

Neither Cassius' nor Brutus' speeches appear in Shakespeare's known source material.<sup>67</sup> Although Plutarch includes many dialogues in which Cassius and Brutus express their desire to reclaim lost freedoms, they do not refer directly to slavery or bondage in the context of Julius Caesar's reign. At one point, Plutarch has Brutus declare his anxiety regarding slavery, writing that he "sent unto Cassius it was not for the conquest of any kingdom for themselves, that they wandered up and downe in that sort, but contrarily, that it was to restore their country againe to their libertie: and that the

---

<sup>66</sup> Indeed, even a cursory glance at Livy shows that the plebeians often felt that the Senate tyrannized them as much as the Tarquinni ever had.

<sup>67</sup> Stoicism might also provide a potential source for slave rhetoric. Marvin Vawter argues that Shakespeare's play questions the feasibility and healthiness of a Ciceronian Stoic lifestyle (174). Significantly, Vawter's classical sources describe Stoicism in terms of royal slavery: the mind is ruler, the body slave. Vawter further argues that descriptions of Stoicism in English Renaissance translations of Guillaume DuVair's *The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks* depict the "ideal man" as a "disembodied mind, ruling over his body as a tyrant does his bonds slave" (178).

multitude of souldiers they gathered together, was to subdue the tyrannes that would keepe them in slavery and subjection” (Bullough 109). This passage, however, describes the careers of Cassius and Brutus during the second triumvirate. During the reign of Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, Plutarch’s Brutus disparages the Romans for their self-enslavement, calling friends in Rome “slaves more through their owne fault, then through their vallientries or manhood which usurped the tyranny: considering that they were so cowardly and faynt hearted...” (Bullough 109). Again, before Brutus’s final confrontation with the triumvirs, Plutarch notes: “For approaching neare to the instant daunger, he wrote unto Pomponious Atticus, that his affayres had the best happe that could be For, sayd he, eyther I will set my contry at libertie by battell, or by honorable death end me of this bondage” (Bullough 110-1). Although he might value the liberty of all Romans, Plutarch’s Brutus is by no means an egalitarian. He kills captured slaves, but frees captured freemen: “For with [Brutus], they were slaues and seruantes: and with [Brutus], they were free men, and citizens” (Bullough 124). Roman freedom is circumscribed by Roman identity; just as Romans are not slaves, slaves are not Romans.<sup>68</sup>

Talk of slavery persists right through the fifth act of *Julius Caesar*, but it is increasingly associated with the shame and deceit of the rebel nobles rather than with the plebeians. When Antony delivers his speech against the conspirators, the plebeians declare Brutus and Cassius “villains,” hence slaves (3.2.152). During a dispute over money in 4.2, Brutus tells Cassius that he should save his fury for his slaves, since Brutus

---

<sup>68</sup> Other sources associate Brutus and anti-slave rhetoric. Ronald Berman notes comparisons between depictions of Lucius Junius Brutus and the characterization of Shakespeare’s Brutus using William Painter’s *The Palace of Pleasure*. Berman cites the following lines “Brutus complained of the abhominable rape of Lucrece, committed by Sectus Tarquinius: and thereunto he added the pride and insolent behavior of the king, the miserie and drudgerie of the people” (198). In this account, the earlier Brutus makes use of the word “drudgerie,” the menial and slavish tasks imposed upon the people, to motivate them in rebellion against the Tarquins. Shakespeare’s Brutus’s forum speech then becomes a warning against backsliding into Rome’s pre-Republican days.

is not frightened by Cassius' rage—implying that Cassius is a tyrant treating him as he would a slave (4.2.97). But Cassius says that it is Brutus who treats him “like a bondman” (4.2.151). This is the same rhetoric they used to justify the murder of Caesar. Indeed, Cassius' passion leads him to threaten the life of his friend Brutus despite their professed love—just as Brutus slew Caesar despite their intimacy. They are both, as Brutus acknowledges, mutual slaves: “O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb” (4.2.164). On the battlefield, Antony confirms this:

Villains...

You showed your teeth like apes, and fawned like hounds,  
And bowed like bondmen, kissing Caesar's feet,  
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind  
Struck Caesar on the neck. O you flatterers!

(5.1.40-45)

In Antony's account, the conspirators are like the “willing bondmen” that Cassius so loathed.<sup>69</sup> Caesar bound them in no chains, and yet they slavishly groveled before him. They performed the very slavery they believed Caesar would inflict and enslaved themselves in order to generate an excuse to assassinate their master. In *Caesar's Revenge*, Caesar recognizes the slavishness of the conspirators in his death speech, proclaiming himself: “Casar whos name might well afright such slaues” (G1v). The rhetoric of royal slavery in these cases points to self-debasement and self-deception. For

---

<sup>69</sup> Compare with Milton's description of the rebel devils (also allegedly republicans striving to overthrow a monarch). Gabriel says to Satan:

And thou sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem  
Patron of liberty, who more than thou  
Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored  
Heav'n's awful Monarch? Wherefore but in hope  
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?  
(V.956-961)

all their talk of honor, virtue, and courage-at-arms, the conspirators did not confront tyranny face-to-face, but struck in disguise and from behind. Death comes at the hands of slaves for Caesar.

The image of slaves leading their masters to an early demise recurs in *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and such scenes always complicate notions of honor and liberty. Believing he has lost the battle against Caesar's avengers, Cassius dies when he commands his own slave Pindarus to kill him. Despite his bitterness and disdain for slaves as dishonorable, Cassius believes he will retain more dignity dying at the hands of Pindarus than in allowing himself to be captured by his enemies. Pindarus obeys, claiming after Cassius' death "So I am free, yet would not so have been / Durst I have done my will" (5.3.46-47). Pindarus echoes Brutus's ambivalence regarding the freedom purchased through the master's murder. He claims to have acted against his will, but there are alternatives to slaying one's master.

Although politics repeatedly trumps love in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the distinctions between them are blurred when royal slavery becomes self-imposed love slavery in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-07). Antony attempts to follow Cassius's example, asking his slave Eros to kill him after hearing the false report of Cleopatra's suicide.<sup>70</sup> Eros responds by killing himself instead. Although a slave, Eros's disobedience proves that his will is intact. He can still make choices. Eros's refusal to kill his master also proves that a slave can sometimes serve the master's own best interest through seeming disobedience. Antony's power over Eros cannot suppress Eros's love for his master. Eros' loving disobedience refuses Antony's power; it exerts political agency and

---

<sup>70</sup> In the Norton edition, Walter Cohen suggests a performance date of 1606-07, but the textual notes indicate the play was not actually published until the 1623 folio (although it was entered in the Stationer's Register in 1608).

therefore makes love itself a political act. Afterwards, Antony reflects on how this teaches him that it is nobler to die by his own hand than a slave's. For Antony, it is better to choose a bad end than to have it chosen for him. This reiterates a theme of *Antony and Cleopatra* that Egypt at least offers Antony the ability to choose his slavery to its queen, whereas Rome would compel his obedience. Love justifies political subversion, whereas obedience to political establishment would question that love and accuse it of sycophancy.

### ***ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA:***

#### **LOVE POLITICS AND POLITICAL LOVE: FEAR AND LOVING IN EGYPT**

In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Brutus and Cassius enslave themselves in order to excuse their pre-emptive rebellion and cut off future oppression. Because Caesar does not *appear* to be the tyrant, the senators see advantage in depicting themselves as royal slaves. If he does not seem oppressive to the populace, then the rebels will turn him into a tyrannical straw man. The language of enslavement and victimization gives the rebel patricians a powerful, convincing rhetoric, but it also proves their undoing when Antony exploits its emotional appeals in favor of the assassinated ruler. Brutus claims that he kills Caesar because love for Rome trumps the love of a friend, but Antony shows the plebeians how much that friend loved them. Even after Caesar's death, his will expresses his love for the people as individuals in a tangible way that inhuman, abstract Rome cannot. Caesar, unlike a city, can reciprocate love, and the plebeians would rather love where they are loved than love where there is no hope of return. Although love does not

demand reward, it is easier to love when love is exchanged and not just taken. Could Cleopatra's seemingly mysterious hold over Antony likewise simply be that she can give him love that Rome, as such, cannot? It is her love, after all, that he wants, not merely her submission, obedience, or duty, all of which he can find in Rome.

Emotions and politics course through the embittered and impassioned speeches of republican and imperialist alike in *Julius Caesar*. Questions pertaining to government and individual liberties are writ large on every column in the Roman Senate. Not so in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where romantic discourse overtakes much of the play's political complexity. From the mouth of a lover, emotional appeals seem devoid of political motivation; they sound like personal pledges of love, not binding political contracts. Antony and Cleopatra's tragic love affair, along with the sympathy and fear we feel for their inevitable demise, helps us to forget the inextricable connections between personal love and political action; but it is the oft-ignored political implications of their emotions that generate their tragedy. We pity lovers whose political identities complicate their love, and we fear tyrants whose political schemes disrupt our own loves.

The more Antony fashions himself as a royal slave to Cleopatra, the more he effaces the political identity that he inherits from Julius Caesar. He is potentially a threatening Roman occupier, and she has reason to be frightened of Roman conquest, but Antony's self-enslavement assuages Egyptian fears. Indeed, because his self-professed slavery so effectively disarms Cleopatra's political worries, Antony is in better position to win her love. Like Brutus and Cassius, Antony first discovers the rhetorical profit in self-victimization and then discovers it can backfire. Although he would have it that he *chooses* slavery, he, of course, is not an entirely a free agent (love can madden and

Cleopatra has potent charms). Either way, his outward show of political docility broadcasts a message of weakness to his rivals and earns him his fellow Romans' disdain. This shifting affective and political balance between love and fear propels much of the play's dramatic conflict. How much can a monarch or a paramour dote before losing credibility or authority? How much can a ruler or a lover terrorize before alienating others completely?

Fear and love wage war on the battlefield and in the hearts of Antony and Cleopatra, testing their abilities as rulers no less than their fidelity as lovers. No matter what they intend, global politics insist that theirs is a love affair between conquering triumvir and conquered queen. In fact, the possibility that their love might *only* be a political act unnerves both them and us, as the play consistently and explicitly questions whether Cleopatra seduces Antony merely for political gain. There are obvious practical benefits to Cleopatra accepting servitude to Antony as well as accepting Antony's self-professed slavery. Ania Loomba notes, "Cleopatra...has always frankly used her sexuality as an element in the struggle to keep hold of Egypt" (171). Antony and Cleopatra cannot make love without making politics, and political action enables them to express love for each other. Theirs is by necessity a political love, and they exchange political favors as a form of affection.

In this regard, we can describe *Antony and Cleopatra* as a long series of what William Dodd calls "love tests" in which one lover asks another to publicly express affection in exchange for material reward.<sup>71</sup> As Dodd argues, such tests call into question the authenticity of their professed love, reducing that love to a *quid pro quo*, or a political transaction, as opposed to a gift or a sign of one's bounty. Antony and Cleopatra

---

<sup>71</sup> Dodd develops his theory of the love test to analyze *King Lear* not *Antony and Cleopatra*.



continually test each other's love; each wants the other publicly to demonstrate fidelity and each wants to demonstrate his or her own love. However, neither lover makes public promises to reward these declarations of love. Antony does not explicitly offer to exchange Cleopatra's political freedom for her love, nor does Cleopatra demand that Antony make such an offer before she will love him. They do not want the promise of reward to taint the sincerity of their lover's professions. They desire a love beyond politics, but despite their intentions, the world continually reminds them that their partners have political interests at stake and that their love is always already political.

To credit this fusion of (personal) love and (public) politics is to avoid the pitfalls of discussions that favor one over the other. For example, Janet Adelman suggests that Cleopatra stands outside politics, "Her queenship is largely implicit, her subjects invisible; she is one with her feminized kingdom as though it were her body, not her domain. Political power is reserved for the men; Cleopatra's royalty in the end consists of dying well" (Adelman 191). Surely Adelman's argument is political to the extent that it casts Cleopatra as an enslaved *queen*, but it does not consider how political entanglements themselves contribute to Cleopatra's tragedy. Jyotsna G. Singh argues that feminist theory has freed Cleopatra from masculinist criticism that looked for

emotional identification as the main criterion for tragedy...Feminist critics also recognize the complex issues of politics and desire at stake in her life. They do not naturalize her theatricality and histrionics as "feminine wiles," but rather point to their political ramifications in a variety of ways. (414)

Singh takes a Brechtian approach, insisting that we can only understand the politics of the play "if, unlike generations of critics, we do not allow ourselves to be enthralled by

Cleopatra and her tragic destiny” (427). I would add that we only fully understand the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra if we acknowledge the profound politicization of their love, or, as Loomba writes, that “all this historical movement and flux...exert[s] continuous pressure on *all* the personal relationships represented” (170). Rather than imagine the political and personal as distinct spheres exerting gravitational force on one another, I believe that, for Antony and Cleopatra, they are but a single, indistinguishable force. When Antony argues that he is fettered in Egypt (and therefore Cleopatra’s love slave), he intentionally and, so, strategically redistributes political power through affection.

Love and politics first merge with preparations for a dinner date. According to Enobarbus, Antony begins his love slavery by going to the barber’s after Cleopatra’s enchanting voyage down the Cydnus:

Upon her landing, Antony sent to her;  
 Invited her to supper. She replied  
 It should be better he became her guest,  
 Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,  
 Whom ne’er the word of ‘No’ woman heard speak,  
 Being barbered ten times o’er, goes to the feast,  
 And, for his ordinary, pays his heart  
 For what his eyes eat only.

(2.2.229-35)

In addition to exposing Antony’s prior service to women, Enobarbus’s speech reveals Cleopatra’s bravado as she invites Antony into the relationship on her own terms.

Cleopatra's ploy is two-fold. By playing hard (but not too hard) to get, Cleopatra increases Antony's desires. She tantalizes the would-be lover by asserting her dominance (and thereby political identity), by insisting that she will determine the nature of their relationship. Cleopatra's terms suggest her desire for Antony's company as well as her fear of appearing sycophantic and subservient to Antony. It is not that Cleopatra will not serve her lover, only that she does not want to *appear* the subordinate party (at least not at the moment). As Roberta M. Hooks writes, "The need for mastery and a sense of choice in how we live our lives is a necessary illusion" (40).

Appearances (or illusions) matter in politics as much as they do in love—and they prove to be as much on Antony's mind as Cleopatra's when Enobarbus mentions Antony's repeated barbering. Enobarbus describes Antony's excessive preoccupation with male cosmetics to show his commander in a lover's frenzy. Antony's passion can be measured by the absurdity of his grooming, but Antony's intense fixation on appearances indicates more than just Cleopatra's hold over him; it shows that Antony is self-conscious about how Cleopatra will perceive him. While having his beard trimmed has certain obvious aesthetic benefits, early modern literature suggests that a trip to the barbershop might have political connotations.

In her investigation of early modern beards and shaving, Patricia Parker links what she calls "associational networks" between the homophonic words "barber" and "Barbery." According to Parker, a trip to the barber in early modern literature often implied Mediterranean slavery:

Barber'd manages at the same time to convey its Roman overtones—curling the hair in an effeminate fashion (recalled in the 'curled Antony' of act 5); depilating,

shaving, and the eunuchry associated with Egypt or the East; and the potential pathic subjection registered both in orientalizing descriptions and in the Roman reputation of Antony as the ‘catamite’ or male ‘bride’... The retroactive description of Antony as ‘barber’d’ in Cilicia or early modern Turkey... casts Cleopatra as a pirate king taking him captive... (230)

For Parker, Antony is a passive victim, a European being led to the barber by his North African enslaver. However, Antony exhibits more agency than Parker allows; Cleopatra does not physically drag Antony to the barber’s. He recognizes the advantage of a shave. If barbering does connote slavery as Parker suggests, then Antony *desires* to appear to be taken captive. Antony reads Cleopatra’s cheeky refusal and counter-invitation as a warning that she does not wish to appear mastered, and so he takes initiative to appear subordinate.<sup>72</sup>

While barbering connotes feminization, boyishness, and the sorts of enslavement to which Parker draws our attention, it had still other political meanings for the early modern period, especially in relation to ancient Rome. In his general prologue to *The Diall of Princes*, Guevara writes at great length about barbering. He includes barbers in a

---

<sup>72</sup> Psychoanalytic readings deliver alternative explanations for Antony’s submission to Cleopatra. Janet Adelman argues that Antony surrenders to Cleopatra because, as a woman, she has certain reconstitutive powers that can solidify a fragmented personality; see *Suffocating Mothers*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Lisa Starks seconds Adelman’s reading, adding that Antony seeks a rebirth through Cleopatra that will allow him to cast off his patrilineal ties to Rome; see “Like the Lover’s pinch, which hurts and is desired.” *Literature and Psychology*, 45.4 (1999): 58-73. Also see Roberta M. Hooks, “Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*: Power and Submission” *American Imago*, 44.1 (1987) 37-49. Hooks argues that Antony’s obsessive devotion to Cleopatra arises from an oral fixation. Cleopatra is “a maternal ideal of absolute attentiveness to the needs of the child that offers Antony sanctuary from the divisiveness of Roman experience” (39) by offering her lover “the loss of self felt in the earliest experience of gratification that human subjectivity knows—feeding” (42). Although she does not discuss *Antony and Cleopatra* at length, Cynthia Marshall argues that masochistic submissiveness might have pleased early modern audiences by providing “a temporary respite from the accumulating pressures of individual selfhood” that humanism fostered (4). If Rome does stand for contemporary England, then Antony’s desire to lose himself might express what Marshall argues was a pervasive literary phenomenon in the English Renaissance to offer audiences an outlet against emerging individualization and selfhood.

list of five social phenomena that define a civilized commonwealth (the others being communal living, letters, laws, and clocks):

The fourth thinge that commonly through the worlde amongst all men was accepted, was the barbers. And let no mane take this thing in mocherye. For if they doe reade Plinnie in the .59.chapiter the seuenth booke, they shal finde for a trouthe, that the Romaines were in Rome .454. yeares, without pouling or shauing the heires of the beard of any man. Marcus Varro said, that Publius Phiesnius, was the first that broughte the barbers fro[m] Scicili to Rome. But admitte it were so or otherwise: yet notwithstanding there was great conentention among the Romaines, for they sayde, they thought it a rash thinge for a man to commit his life to the curtesye of an other. Dionisius the Siracusan neuer trusted his beard with any barbor, but whan his doughters were very littel: they clipped his bearde with sisers, but after they became great, he would not put his trust in them to trimme his beard, but he him selfe did burne it with the shales of nuttes. This Dionisius Siracusan, was demaunded why he woulde not trust anye barbours with hys beard. He aunswered, because I knowe that there be some, which wil geue more to [th]e barbour to take away my life, than I wil giue to trimme my bearde. Plinie in the seuenth booke saieth. that the great Scipio called Affrican, and the Emperor Augustus, were the first that caused them in Rome to shave their beardes. And I thinke, thend why Plinie spake these thinges, was to exalte these two princes, which had as great courage, to suffer the raysours touche their throtes, as thone for to fighte against Hanniball in Affrike, & thother againste Sextus Pompeius in Scicil. (bir)

It is Caesar Augustus, the Octavius Caesar of Shakespeare's play, who becomes one of the founding fathers of barbering in Rome. According to Guevara, Augustus uses barbering as a political statement that, unlike Dionisius the Syracusan, he has no fear of other men.<sup>73</sup> While Antony and Cleopatra (and Patricia Parker) depict "scarce-bearded Caesar" as weak and boyish, Guevara offers another explanation for Caesar's trim appearance, one that correlates with power and courage. Thus, Guevara's description of barbering relates to Antony's love slavery, but after a different fashion. Like Augustus, he will submit himself to another, even ten times over. By showing his exceeding trust in the barber, Antony also shows how he will put his life in Cleopatra's hands (depending on the circumstances).

Antony knowingly and repeatedly expresses his relationship to Cleopatra in terms of love slavery, admonishing himself that "These strong Egyptian fetters I must break / Or lose myself in dotage" (1.2.122-23). The familiar trope of love fetters describes the bond of love as bondage. Yet, Antony does not use the word "love" in relation to the fetters. He calls them "Egyptian," suggesting that the enslavement in which he indulges is fundamental to Cleopatra's culture. In *Caesar's Revenge*, the Romans associate Egyptian national identity with slavery long before Cleopatra appears on the scene. Cato observes that the primary difference between a Roman and an Egyptian is that Romans possess inalienable liberty whereas Egyptians have always been slaves:

And all the bordering regions vpon Nile

That neuer knew the name of Liberty...

Why reckon we our yeares by Consuls names:

---

<sup>73</sup> The passage from Guevara appears almost verbatim in the tyrannical tragedy *Damon and Pithias*.

And so long ruld in freedom, now to serue?

(*Revenge* B2r)

However, the Roman liberty that Cato so values is not the freedom to follow one's desires, but freedom from one's desires.<sup>74</sup> Romans see no emancipation in love (Shakespeare probes the limits of their imaginations). Although they frequently associate Egyptian love with a freedom from moral restraint, Romans view it as paradoxically more enslaving. As *Antony and Cleopatra*'s Pompey hopes, "Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both; / Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts" (2.1.22-23). The libertine, the one who freely pursues his every desire, finds himself bound by witchcraft, beauty, and lust. This Roman vision of Egypt as an enslaving "field of feasts" corresponds with early modern homiletic depictions of Egypt as a land of tyranny conducive to liberty only in the sense of moral laxity or erotic indulgence.

Of course, Caesar stands to gain far more if Antony remains steeped in pleasure than if he should return to his duties. A weakened Antony makes way for a conquering Caesar—and a wayward, soft-willed Antony makes the scarce-bearded Caesar appear more masculine and a better representative of Roman virtue. As Adelman writes, "The impetus toward idealization that makes Antony the legendary father is consequently counterbalanced by the contrary impetus to cut him down to size: Caesar uses Antony simultaneously to recuperate the father destroyed in Julius Caesar and to master his prodigious presence, basing his own potency on that mastery" (181). Rather than expressing Caesar's personal disappointment, his pleas to the absent Antony in 1.4

---

<sup>74</sup> Hobbes defines "Liberty of Subjects" at length, suggesting that "The Liberty of a Subject, lyeth therefore only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the Sovereign hath praetermitted: such as the Liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own aboard, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit; & the like" (148).

publicly shame Antony, accusing him of allowing Rome equally to be shamed through him: “Let his shames quickly drive him to Rome” (1.4.73-4). Caesar recalls Antony’s self control because this helps him to argue that Antony chose his current dishonors, chose to divorce himself from Rome, and chose to make himself a slave to a foreign queen. If Rome is the pinnacle of Western civilization, the vast empire with a seeming manifest destiny to bring peace to the world, why would one of its three rulers willingly abandon if not actively undermine the project? Antony threatens his fellow Romans to the extent that he forces them to question the political ramifications of his right to pursue happiness. And to love as he likes.

According to another line of Roman criticism, then, Antony’s shackles are love fetters in the most pejorative or base sense, evidence of Antony’s inability to resist Cleopatra’s tempting couch. Romans sympathetic to Antony want to convince themselves that he has not chosen this slavery. For them, it is unimaginable that the paragon of Roman manliness would willingly sacrifice Roman ideals; rather, he must be under an Egyptian spell. Even Antony, when in his Roman frame of mind, imagines himself breaking his Egyptian fetters and resuming his life as a free Roman. To believe himself unable to resist slavery is to believe himself no longer a son of Rome (which, at times, he’d like to do) and to believe that Roman ambitions have their limits. Rome may conquer Egypt in the field, but Rome fears that Egypt may yet devise ways to reassert its own values. Then too, the Romans worry about Cleopatra’s power to enchant them, and still more that they could find themselves, like Antony, choosing enslavement.

So Antony fears that he chooses his slavery and Antony fears that he might not be willing himself into slavery after all. At one moment he embraces servitude to Cleopatra,



at another Antony announces his desire to resist Egypt's power: "I must from this enchanting queen break off" (1.2.135). All three of the OED's definitions of "enchant" refer to spell-casting, but two specify "To influence irresistibly or powerfully, as if by a charm; to hold spellbound; in a bad sense to delude, befool...To attract, win over, compel or induce, as if by magic (to do something)." Cleopatra, then, tests Roman will power, challenging Antony's ability freely to determine himself. Claiming that Cleopatra enchants him diminishes his agency, but apparently it reserves enough to rebel (or at least to consider rebellion).

In *Caesar's Revenge* Julius Caesar foreshadows the love slavery of Shakespeare's Antony. Caesar describes Cleopatra as a Tyrannesse and swears to offer her his military conquests:

O how those louely Tyranizing eyes,  
The Graces beautilous habitacion...  
Consume my heart with inward burning heate,  
Not only AEgipt but all Africa,  
Will I subject to Cleopatras name...

(*Revenge* B4r-C1v)

As generous as Caesar appears, his lust remains subordinate to his ambition. Unlike Antony, he does not promise Cleopatra the world or even his kingdom. Rather, he promises only Africa, and that only to her name. He professes to be her thrall, but her beauty cannot keep him enthralled for long. Caesar liberates himself to continue his imperial pursuits, declaring "Now have I shaked of these womanish links, / In which my captiued thoughts were chayned a fore" (*Revenge* E2). Caesar succeeds in throwing off

his Egyptian fetters where Antony fails (or where Antony does not wish to succeed), but what frees Caesar is not moral virtue or self-control. Rather, his insatiable political ambition keeps him on the move. One has the sense that Cleopatra was merely a morsel for this monarch, and that Caesar's sexuality was merely a weakness exploited by a slave. Antony seems to be looking for something else. Although he realizes that any love affair in which he is involved must be political, he seeks love that is not *just* political. Antony's ambition is not to conquer the world, but to be the man who *knows* he has truly won Cleopatra's heart. In *Caesar's Revenge*, Caesar's ally Antony begins his fateful love with Cleopatra by listening to her words: "Next prisoner tane by her captivating speech... / In Cupids Chariot ryding in her pride, / And leades me captiue bound in / Beauties bondes" (*Revenge* E3r). As far as *Caesar's Revenge* is concerned, Cleopatra does not target Antony with her speech; he is the victim of seductive crossfire. Nevertheless, he wants Cleopatra even before he can have her, before she is his political subordinate. If she enchants Antony in this play, it is not to her immediate political advantage. There is more to the inchoate love in this scene than political machinations or tyranny.

Julius Caesar sees how loving Cleopatra cannot avoid becoming political and therefore sacrifices love to preserve his political identity. He will neither be bound to Cleopatra nor foreswear his destiny, even if it means retracting his meager oath to Egypt. In Shakespeare's play, however, Antony's Roman-Egyptian hybrid sense of honor and attendant pledge bind him to her. In his eagerness to serve Cleopatra, Antony makes a rash vow—but a vow he intends to keep nevertheless. When he leaves Cleopatra, he tells her, "I go from hence / Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war / As thou affects" (1.3.70-71). He professes the chivalric cliché to battle in Cleopatra's name and be at her

command. Of course, he says this as he leaves, despite her clear desire for him to stay—and his apparent contradiction does not go unnoticed by Cleopatra, who has already dismissed Antony's promises with "Riotous madness, / To be entangled with those mouth-made vows / Which break themselves in swearing!" (1.3.30-32). Cleopatra hints at her own love slavery to Antony, but, more significantly, she rightly observes that any love-oaths that Antony has sworn are suspect. He breaks an oath to make an oath. And yet, despite his spurious vows, the two continue, bound to one another throughout the play. Of course, it is not enough for Antony merely to profess service; he must do something that will empower Cleopatra and show his love for her—he must actually go to war as she affects. In Egypt, war is love. Antony's political actions late in the play prove his love and, ultimately, verify his otherwise tenuous oaths in the opening scenes.

Cleopatra mocks Antony's for his submissiveness, but her mockery reveals serious political ambitions. She wonders whether or not

...the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent  
His powerful mandate to you: 'Do this, or this;  
Take in that kingdom and enfranchise that,  
Perform't, or else we damn thee.'

(1.1.22-25)

Cleopatra intimates that Octavius is the brains, Antony the muscle that Caesar relies upon. While she jests (Antony has been too negligent to really be Caesar's minion), she also acknowledges that Antony has the ability and the authority to "enfranchise" Roman territories. As the triumvir with jurisdiction over Egypt, Antony has the power to liberate

Egypt or to play its tyrant. Is this Cleopatra's none-too-subtle hint to Antony to make emancipation his present to her?

By substituting her own desires for Caesar's, Cleopatra avoids directly putting Antony to a love test; she need not explicitly make her love appear dependent on Antony's political action. She can deflect suspicions that her love might be a political ruse or that his beautiful queen merely flatters him with her love, and her taunts and jeers are one way to disarm Antony's suspicion. Using reverse psychology, Cleopatra plays the disinterested love tyrant in order not to appear to be the flattering sycophant. Just as she does not want Antony to be her self-interested tyrant (tyrants' appetites are too changing, and Egypt requires the stability of a man of steel), Antony does not want Cleopatra as his self-serving seductress, for this would diminish his sacrifice. The lovers submerge their political desires so as not to undercut the sincerity of their romantic desires. And yet, those political and romantic desires overlap. Antony wishes to rule and to serve Cleopatra, while she wishes to submit to and to master Antony. By playing coy with their political/romantic desires, the lovers inevitably create a sense of holding back, inadvertently generating an impression of flattery at the very moment that they try to avoid it. Against their wills, they are doomed to suspect one another of sycophancy and tyranny despite themselves.

Octavius has these suspicions in mind when he sends Thidias to cut a deal with Cleopatra. As Thidias remarks, "[Caesar] knows that you embrace not Antony / As you did love, but as you feared him" (3.13.59-60). Here, Thidias manipulates an early modern commonplace regarding fear and love. As Colin Burrow writes of *The Rape of Lucrece*,

Early readers of the poem would have heard ... Erasmus ('The tyrant strives to be feared, the king to be loved'), or any one of a dozen contributors to the genre of humanist prince-books...early readers...would instinctively feel that princes *should* seek to be feared through love, and *should* provide exemplary government (52)<sup>75</sup>

Thidias insinuates that Cleopatra responds to Antony in the way that a slave responds to her tyrant overlord. She loves out of fear, rather than fearing out of love. Sycophancy is a useful survival tactic. Of course, the insinuation that Cleopatra plays the slave to Antony is at odds with the Roman propaganda that it is Antony who is under Cleopatra's thumb. By describing Cleopatra as a victim, Thidias gives her a political escape route by which she can betray Antony and save herself (although Caesar clearly has other plans for Cleopatra). This playing upon the lovers' insecurity, a political maneuver for Caesar, reminds us once again of love and politics' connection in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

When Antony is in his Roman frame of mind, he fears that Cleopatra merely plays him for the fool, that she pretends to love for political leverage and in order to keep him from using his power over Egypt tyrannically. He fears that she uses him as he suspects she did his predecessors. Whether or not the lovers are sincere or merely play politics in bed does not matter to Octavius. For him, it is sufficient that lovers of any type will question each other's motives. The political/romantic dynamic of their love merely makes his task easier. Even if she does not accept Caesar's offer to be rid of Antony, her hospitality to Octavius's man is enough to raise Antony's suspicions, and those suspicions are enough to push Antony into a passionate frenzy. Although Antony may not tyrannize Egypt, he expresses his tyrannical jealousy and possessiveness when he has

---

<sup>75</sup> Burrow is citing *The Education of a Christian Prince*.

Thidias whipped for meddling. But if Antony fears Egyptian loyalty, Cleopatra fears Roman power; and each has just displayed precisely the behavior that the other fears. The lovers run the risk of becoming each other's nightmares—a dominating tyrant and a political whore. Fear bears down on love—Octavius' trap works (at least temporarily). In one swift stroke, we are reminded that Antony's subordination has been self-imposed and that Cleopatra hardly has the legal means to enforce it. Unlike Charmian or Alexas (Cleopatra's legal subordinates), Antony does not look up and aspire; he looks down and raises Cleopatra up—until his jealousy exposes both his human frailty and her political weaknesses.

The play repeatedly emphasizes Cleopatra's dependence on and vulnerability to Antony as her superior. Enobarbus professes more than he perhaps intends when he says to Antony: "And the business you have broached here / Cannot be without you, especially that of Cleopatra's, / Which wholly depends on your abode" (1.2.180-82). Cleopatra requires Antony as a lover and to retain her very political identity as Queen of Egypt. For example, when Alexas says that Herod dare not look on her when she is angry, Cleopatra proclaims her dependence on Antony for political clout: "That Herod's head / I'll have! But how, when Antony is gone, / Through whom I might command it?" (3.3.4-6). In Antony's absence, Cleopatra speaks quite frankly about the complex political relationship between Antony and herself. On the one hand, Cleopatra describes commanding Antony, implying his love slavery to her. She reveals how his love slavery has transferred his power into her grasp. On the other hand, she correctly asserts that she can only command military action *through* Antony, since any temporal power she has comes from his authority. She might command Antony's sceptre, but he still possesses it.

Antony's bounty does more than just offer Cleopatra restoration. Not only does he liberate Egypt, he promises to make "All the East...call her mistress" (1.5.48-9). He will make Cleopatra a free queen and a conquering Empress: "Unto her / He gave the stablishment of Egypt; made her / Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia, / Absolute Queen... / His sons he there proclaimed the kings of kings" (3.6.8-12). Antony's magnificence appears like grace, like a free gift detached from Cleopatra's actions. Yet, these gifts make Cleopatra further dependent on Antony's ability to protect them. Thus, Antony's generosity is not as gracious as it appears or as he would like it to be.<sup>76</sup> Cleopatra, in turn, knows that if Antony is removed from the political scene, Caesar will have no regard for her status.

At the moment of Antony's death, she tells her women to regard her as queen "No more but e'en a woman" (4.15.77), (as Caesar does when he cannot tell her apart from Charmian). Antony being the source of her political power, she has no one to defend her claim. The loss of political agency renders her title ineffectual; the loss of love renders it meaningless. Antony strove to preserve the political power and public dignity of her queenship, but he also made Cleopatra *feel* as if she were a queen. The royal title stings Cleopatra like a poisonous asp; it swells her grief for Antony by recalling lost hopes and it marks her for destruction (or worse) under Caesar.

Cleopatra fears that Caesar will abuse her now empty royalty, that he will see her only as another slave (as he momentarily does when he confuses her with Charmian). Cold, aloof, and terrible, Caesar will not play courtier or sycophant to Cleopatra. Rather, he will

---

<sup>76</sup> Harry Berger describes this as *mercifixion*: the process by which the giver of a gift tacitly obligates the receiver to reciprocate.

lead in her triumph and make her a trophy of his imperialist project.<sup>77</sup> But Caesar's ascension to imperial power will be complete with or without Cleopatra. Leading her in triumph is only a bonus. If he tyrannizes over her, it is because he wants to, not because he must. He could as easily show mercy—he simply chooses not to. Whereas Cleopatra awakens in Antony a surplus of love, in Caesar she arouses excessive cruelty.

In the end, Cleopatra is pleased at the thought that she has lessened Caesar's triumph with her suicide, but Caesar's spin-doctoring turns her death to his advantage:

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it  
A pair so famous. High events as these  
Strike those that make them, and their story is  
No less in pity than his glory which  
Brought them to be lamented.

(5.2.358-62)

Always the canny politician, Caesar memorializes Antony and Cleopatra as lovers, not rulers. Adept at crushing political opponents by managing resources, displaying martial prowess, and attracting good fortune, Caesar is also that demi-god who can conquer love.

He would have himself remembered as the emperor who overcame Venus; he is the conqueror who brings despair into the hearts of lovers. He would happily author tragedy. The pity that Caesar invokes on the lovers' behalf makes up only part of Aristotle's formula for tragic catharsis. Fear is necessary to complete our emotional response to tragedy, and here it is the fear we have of he who brings the lovers to be lamented.

---

<sup>77</sup> Gajowski claims that Roman disdain for Egypt as expressed by Octavius late in the play and by the Roman soldiers in the play's opening is symptomatic of imperialist racism and sexism (Gajowski 87). However, Singh argues that the Roman soliders are far from expressing imperialist disdain; rather, they pragmatically recognize early in the play that Cleopatra will cost them their lives (425).



Caesar's conquest of all-conquering love sends a message to which his fellow Romans will pay more attention than to a mere international news report. Love's conqueror, Caesar stands in stark contrast to Antony, love's conquest.

The language of slavery, the language of a captive and victor, obviously conveys a sense of attachment. It points to total dependence, even abjection, and Antony surrenders his political worth to prove that it really is Cleopatra on whom he depends for happiness and his very life. In a lover's logic, a greater self-sacrifice ought to engender greater trust; however, increasing the stakes of love can also intensify fears of losing one's lover. As a love slave, Antony does not so much fear mortality as he fears separation from Cleopatra and the inevitable return to Rome that would follow her loss.<sup>78</sup> His suicide speaks to the intensity of those fears. If love slavery indicates fear, then it is not surprising that Antony's most explicit descriptions of love slavery appear at moments of greatest insecurity and uneasiness. He refers to fetters when he tells himself to break them and when he fears Cleopatra has betrayed him. After the defeat at Actium, Antony laments that Cleopatra "Hast sold me to this novice" (4.12.14) and that "To the young Roman boy she hath sold me" (4.12.48). Antony describes his feelings of betrayal in terms of commercial chattel slavery. He wanted to be her love slave, but now he realizes that slaves are commodities that can be bought and sold. The very metaphor that expressed his devotion now throws Antony into a slave market. But then, who is he to complain should she have sold him? While his feelings are no doubt human and sympathetic, an obedient servant has no right to express grievance should his mistress dispose of him. Her will is supreme. This is the slave's dilemma that Smith outlines in *De Republica*

---

<sup>78</sup> Cleopatra, however, never professes herself Antony's slave. Servitude is precisely what she hopes to escape. Indeed, unlike Antony, Cleopatra faces the very real possibility of wearing physical chains, of serving Caesar as an actual slave.

*Anglorum*: a slave can demand nothing from the master; even benign slavery can turn oppressive. Love slavery can easily turn into love tyranny.

## **HERCULES AND OMPHALE: SLAVES DRESSED AS QUEENS, QUEENS DRESSED AS SLAVES**

Few lines in *Antony and Cleopatra* have provided more evidence of Antony's willing subordination to Cleopatra than the Queen of Egypt's oft-quoted reference to cross-dressing with her lover:

That time—O times!—  
I laughed him out of patience, and that night  
I laughed him into patience, and next morn,  
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed,  
Then put my tires and mantles on him whilst  
I wore his sword Philippan.

(2.5.18-23)

Although Shakespeare does not stage the action, the image Cleopatra conjures of Antony wearing her clothing counters Caesar's hyper-masculine description of Antony in the wilderness. Bountiful Antony even lets Cleopatra wear his sword. This Antony is playful, experimental, and even effeminate (assuming, of course, that Antony is still conscious after being drunk to his bed). Cleopatra, for her part, has nothing to fear from a conqueror willing (at least temporarily) to exchange positions with her.

Critics who discuss cross-dressing in *Antony and Cleopatra* generally focus on the power women surprisingly exert over men. For Stephen Orgel,

One thing such moments certainly suggest, even for us, is the degree to which both gender and sexual desire, in any era, are socially and culturally constructed. This is true for both sexes; and women profit from these representations and are empowered by them precisely through that recognition. It is, after all, Omphale who dresses Hercules in her garments, Cleopatra who puts Antony into her tires and mantles. These are represented not as male stratagems, but as transformations that give women power and pleasure. (Orgel 82)

Orgel does not clearly state whether he refers to the power of female audience members, whom he has just discussed, or the power of characters within the fiction. If he means the fictive women, then do they feel a need to consolidate power because they are social inferiors to men or because they fear *becoming* socially inferior? Whereas Cleopatra is Antony's political subordinate, Omphale is Hercules's political superior. These two women have very different stakes in cross-dressing, despite Orgel's conflation of them. Orgel also assumes that the cross-dressing is completely Cleopatra's "stratagem," as if Antony passively accepted Cleopatra's plan without considering how he might benefit from, or acquire power himself, in the act. Passivity can itself be a strategy in both romance and politics, especially if it encourages Cleopatra to remain loyal out of love rather than fear.

Cleopatra is a queen and she rules Antony's heart, but she is still his political subordinate. She is Queen of Egypt, but Rome currently occupies Egypt. Indeed, Antony's show of submission is so convincing that even Shakespeare's audience can

overlook the real threat Rome poses to Cleopatra's court. Although their cross-dressing indicates the influence she wields over Antony, it does not bestow political authority on Cleopatra. When they leave the bedchamber, Antony will still be the occupier and Cleopatra will still be the occupied, even though they have both made very clear political statements that they would have it otherwise. This dynamic is in stark contrast to its mythological antecedent.

In the myth of Hercules and Omphale, Omphale already possesses all the legal and political power she could hope to claim over Hercules. Like Cleopatra, Omphale is a queen with a lover who professes slavery. Unlike Cleopatra, however, Omphale really does possess her lover as a chattel slave. Omphale has the legal right to Hercules's labors that Cleopatra lacks over Antony. Having purchased Hercules as a slave, the Queen *commands* the hero to swap clothes with her and to weave thread, leading to the famous image of Hercules holding a distaff—a task unlike anything Cleopatra demands of Antony. If Omphale gains anything by cross-dressing with Hercules, it is not so much Orgel's power or pleasure—both of which she already has in excess—but fame (or infamy).

Both Orgel and Laura Levine divide traditional interpretations of the Hercules-Omphale episode into two strains: the erotic-bawdy of the *Fasti* account and the disgraceful feminization in the *Heroides* (Levine 155-6). Both critics also observe that Sidney's *Arcadia* alludes to the cross-dressed Hercules when Pyrocles, disguised as an Amazon, wears a brooch bearing the image of Hercules with distaff and the motto "Never more valiant." As Orgel rightfully notes, the motto is a riddle that begs the question: Is Hercules more valiant for enduring cross-dressing or has cross-dressing robbed him of his

valor forever (Orgel 79-80)? Orgel's questions do pertain to the effects of Cleopatra on Antony's character, but the story of Hercules and Omphale is about more than women and men swapping gendered roles—it is also about queens and slaves changing places.

Antony and Cleopatra's transvestitism creates a double-chiasmus. As Antony and Cleopatra temporarily exchange political identities they also play the part of their sexual opposites in the Hercules-Omphale story. Cleopatra and Omphale are analogous because they are both women and queens. Antony and Hercules are analogous because they are both heroic men. But if one compares the lovers based on political situation and not gender, then the analogy shifts. Cleopatra corresponds with Hercules because they are both politically and legally subordinate, while Antony corresponds to Omphale because both are politically and legally superior.

When Antony/Omphale give the symbols of their power to Cleopatra/Hercules, politically superior parties display benevolence, at once deconstructing their own authority and becoming subservient. However, neither Cleopatra nor Hercules wants merely to sap authority away from his or her lover. Both reinvest their lovers with political power as a means of expressing their love. The initially subservient parties repeatedly attempt to reconstruct the original authority of their political superiors. In love and politics, one party freely gives power to another, and the recipient freely returns it. However, political symbiosis is not necessarily the first issue we ought to consider when we discuss cross-dressed Hercules in the early modern period.

In *The Third part of the Countess of Pembrokes Yuychurche*, the image of a cross-dressed Hercules evokes a man's shame when he surrenders to pleasure:

Thus did Hercules his searching and heroicall heart leaue nothing vnattempted:  
 but by his reaching capacitie, and inquisitiue speculation, pierced through heauen  
 and hel: yet alas he that ouercome all, was at last ouercome himselfe: He that  
 mastred men, was whipped by a woman, an enforced by her to spinne and handle  
 a distaffe in stead of an Iron clubb: so doth wantonness effeminate the most  
 warlike hearts, and as much harder it is, to resist pleasure, then not to be  
 ouercome by payne. (46-47)

This emblem book interprets Omphale's enslavement of Hercules in terms of effeminacy and shame. Modern scholars like Orgel and Levine also generally endorse the reading that Hercules becomes weak and submissive in his slavery. They suggest that his cross-dressing represents female empowerment or wish fulfillment, as in Pembroke's account, where a woman compels a man to do women's work. But Pembroke's focus on gender suppresses politics; it neglects to mention that Omphale has an identity beyond womanhood—that she is a queen. Omphale's royalty calls for a political reading of her relationship to Hercules.

Discussing Spenser's adaptation of the Hercules myth in the *Fairie Queene*, Jane Aptekar correctly restores Omphale's political position in Renaissance iconography even as she denegrates her character. Omphale is the

temptress, the man-enslaver, the embodiment of lust...[who makes] an effeminate slave of Hercules as Hippolyte had tried to make effeminate slaves of all men...in the story of Omphale the queen symbolically debases her captive, Hercules, to a lascivious servitude, becoming (in both sense of the word) his mistress. (177-78)

The Lydian is not merely a slave owner; she is a queen. She is not only a queen, but a lover leading Hercules to adultery, allowing Aptekar to play on the word “mistress.” He is legally and dutifully bound to Omphale, whose royal commands have the power of law. Moreover, it is not as if Hercules finds her commands undesirable (it is what Omphale orders Hercules to do when he is done weaving that enables him to bear both the whip and the distaff). While Aptekar reads Omphale as a lecherous enchantress who dissolves Hercules’s will, and so aligns her zombified Hercules with Pembroke’s mastered man (whose will is defeated by pleasure), such accounts do not necessarily agree with other versions of the same story.

Pembroke’s emblem suggests that Omphale compels Hercules against his will. She whips him, and he is “enforced by her.” Oppressed by a cruel tyrant, Hercules is led where he does not wish to go. Or is he? Only at the end of the emblem’s explanation do we have a hint as to how Omphale really motivates Hercules: through pleasure. Hercules’s shame is not that he is whipped, for what is physical pain to Hercules? Nor can he be physically compelled to do a woman’s servile labor. Rather, Omphale *seduces* Hercules. For early modern England, Hercules’s shame is that he *wants* to be whipped. He takes pleasure in abjection.

It is not then that Hercules has lost his free will; rather, he has directed his will to an ignoble end. For the mistress to employ love slavery in a sustainable fashion, she must not dissolve the will of her slave completely, for without will, one cannot give of oneself through love. Female royalty deploys a seductive tyranny; Hercules *willingly* accepts slavery so that he might enjoy its pleasures. The mistress of a love slave must reconcile ruling her lover with giving her lover enough freedom to submit. A political tyrant has no

concern for what motivates a slave's submission; the chattel slave's will is irrelevant. A mistress, however, wants her slave *to want* to serve her. She desires the slave at least to believe that he freely and willingly serves her. Thus, the mistress of a love slave is always somewhat dependent on the slave whose love she must keep alive. Not only must she offer that lover a perpetual (and perhaps paradoxical ) choice to remain enslaved, she must also be willing to satisfy that lover's desires. Without any form of reciprocation, a passionate love slave begins to disdain his mistress (who in turn becomes a love tyrant).

The mistress' sacrifice for the sake of her love slave can transform an otherwise tyrannical queen into a sympathetic ruler. As with Shakespeare's Cleopatra, early modern literature often depicts Omphale far more favorably than one expects, given early modern political theory concerning tyranny and accounts such as Pembroke's. Neither a tyrannesse nor a hyper-empowered woman, John Gower's Omphale is a queen who serves her servants. Although she begins her story a cruel tyrant, Thomas Heywood's Omphale ultimately sacrifices her tyranny so that she can love better. When love renders these mistresses vulnerable, their slave ownership parodies proper relationships between monarchs and subjects.

Gower's 1640 translation of *Ovids Festivalls or Romane Calendar* recounts Hercules and Omphale's story in all of its nigh-pornographic details when explaining why the rituals of Pan must be performed nude. In particular, Ovid describes the feast of Lupercalia, the day in which young men run naked through the streets striking women to make them fertile.<sup>79</sup> As Ovid attests, Pan's worshippers disrobe because the god mistook Hercules for Omphale after they had cross-dressed, leading to embarrassing and

---

<sup>79</sup> Given the Ovidian association between Hercules and Lupercalia, Antony's role in the feast in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* might foreshadow his future love-slavery to Cleopatra.



homoerotic confusion for the randy little fertility god: “The God by garments cheated, hates them all, / And none but naked to his rites doth call” (D8v).

A dress-wearing Hercules humiliates Pan by physically beating him; putting on women’s clothing saps none of the hero’s vigor. Gower’s translation does not focus on the feminization of Hercules. Rather, the translator dwells on the comedic absurdity of the exchange, since neither slave nor queen can fit in the other’s clothing:

Her zone’s too little; and her wast-coats bands

He stretches out to thrust forth his huge hands.

Her bracelets break, not made for that intent:

His huge plaice-foot her pretty sandals rent.

His weighty club and lions spoils she tries,

And quiver-weapons of a lesser cise.

(D8r)

The joke is that clothing does not, in fact, make the man (or woman for that matter). Try as he may, the hero literally cannot contain himself within a female circumference, since he stretches and breaks the “bands” and bracelets. He cannot walk in Omphale’s shoes without destroying them, and she must content herself with mere “tries” at Hercule’s attire. Hercules and Omphale cannot change their inherent or physical selves simply by changing clothes. His nature is not effeminate, and hers is not masculine. Female attire does not render the hero impotent (although it does attract Pan’s misplaced sexual attentions). When the god attempts to copulate with Hercules:

*Alcides* from the couch

Throws him quite off: down lumps the lustfull slouch...

He, with his fall much bruised, grones and mones;

And, much ado, heaves up his heavy bones.

*Alcides* laugh'd, and all, at that night-rover;

And *Omphale* laughs at her goodly Lover.

(D8v)

Although cross-dressed, Hercules continues to play the role of the hero, defying gods with his superhuman strength. Even when Hercules fans Omphale, the poet chooses hyperbolic language to accentuate Hercules's might: "A golden fanne *Sols* rivall heat repell'd, / Which *Hercules* kind hand before her held" (D8r). In this simple act, Hercules combats the sun to defend the beauty of its challenger, Omphale. The hero still conducts Herculean labors, but his labors are comic not epic. The often physical comedy of this bawdy obscures politics.

Critics stress that that Hercules dresses as a woman, but this is not the whole story, at least in Ovid's version. Hercules dresses as a *queen*. Omphale, in turn, does not merely dress as a man but as a slave. Exchanging clothing, Omphale also surrenders the signs of female rule. If not for gender, this would be the prince and the pauper. Orgel suggests that a woman dressing a man in her clothing empowers her, but cross-dressing, in this case, would actually make the woman *appear* less powerful (even if it gives her pleasure). As the mistress, Omphale could have ordered Hercules to surrender his clothes without exchanging them for her own. By relinquishing her clothes and donning those of her slave, Omphale, hardly a tyrannesse, joins Antony in giving herself freely. Omphale mollifies fears of female domination or abuse by willingly *exchanging* roles.

Although Omphale allows her personal desires to influence her commands to Hercules, she lacks Cleopatra's ability to transcend legal and moral limitations. That is, the priests will not bless Omphale when she is riggish. Ovid assures his reader that Omphale does not overstep the law:

Thus, supper ended, both themselves apply  
 To sleep, and on two severall couches lie,  
 Because next day some rites to *Joves* Wine-sonne  
 They should perform, which must be purely done.

(D8r)

Omphale remains obedient to the will of the gods even at the expense of her own pleasure. She is not the queen of vice, as in the iconography that Aptekar observes. It is Pan who would spoil the purity of the following rite, whereas the love-slave Hercules preserves the purity of his and Omphale's abstinence. Although Orgel and Levine focus on Ovid's erotic humor, this abstinence comically deflates what might be construed as the promise of pornographic titillation. Ovid has the characters engage in cross-dressed foreplay, only to end their revelries in favor of solemn religious ceremony. Beyond deflating the audience after an erotic tease, abstinence also complicates Hercules's and Omphale's characters. Unlike Pembroke's emblem, the *Fasti* account does not depict a whipped man cowing before a woman, and Ovid's Hercules does not find it impossible to resist pleasure—he abstains.

Abstinence affects the love affair between Hercules and Omphale as well as the political dimensions of their relationship. Their abstinence is like the tacit desires of Antony and Cleopatra, who do not want their love to appear conditional or motivated by

self-interest. Both sets of lovers actively give, but they do not aggressively take. Rather, they receive one another's gifts. By willingly refraining from sexual activity now, the lovers show that they are in control of their appetites. Hence we should not reduce Ovid's Omphale to an emblem of pleasure and vice. Not so much a Platonic tyrant whose insatiable appetite dominates her every action, Omphale understands when the welfare of the greater good requires her to sacrifice her own desires (gods do not take kindly to mortals who shirk sacrificial protocols; the consequences of a bad sacrifice can effect the populous as well as individuals). In this Ovidian setting, love slavery is the benevolent, sustainable, mutual, and free submission of two politically unequal persons.

### **LOVE SLAVERY WITHOUT LOVE IS TYRANNY**

Ovid's depiction of Hercules's slavery is as benign and comic as Heywood's depiction is deadly and tragic. In Heywood, love slavery is a tyrannical, unsustainable, and unbalanced relationship between two politically unequal persons, but it is not necessarily devoid of free will. Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613) is a series of short interludes portraying various scenes from Greco-Roman mythology. It concludes with the death of Hercules, which Heywood rewrites in the context of his liberation from Omphale's slavery, creating a kind of *Tragedy of Hercules and Omphale*. Because Omphale bases her own identity on her public mastery over Hercules, the lover with the politically superior identity makes no effort to appear subordinate. By making a spectacle of Hercules's slavery, Omphale offers her love slave no way to avoid the appearance of public shame. Thus, Heywood's Omphale becomes a love tyrant and loses her love slave.

Hercules's easy departure from her indicates that Omphale's temptations on their own are not enough to enslave the hero. If she cannot force his slavery, then it must be according to his own will that he remained with her.

When Jason and his companions confront the cross-dressed Theban to remind him of all his great labors done before his encounter with Omphale, Hercules responds:

How haue I lost my selfe?  
 Did we all this? where is that spirit become  
 That was in vs? no maruell *Hercules*,  
 If thou beest strange to them, that thus disguis'd,  
 Art to thy selfe vnknowne. Hence with this distaffe  
 And base effeminate chares.

(K2v)

Like Antony, Hercules laments that love-slavery makes a man lose himself. He claims to have lost that which gave him the manly virtue to overthrow tyranny in heroic adventures. His loss is evidently her gain, as Omphale boasts that she has conquered the man whose mission was to conquer tyrants:

Why so, this is a power infus'd in loue,  
 Beyond all magicke; Is't not strange to see  
 A womans beauty tame the Tyrant-tamer?  
 And the great Monster-maister ouer-match?  
 Haue you done your taske?  
 Herc. Beauteous Queene, not yet.

(K1r)

Asking Hercules if he has completed his menial labor immediately after recalling his heroic labors, she reminds him of what he was and what he has become. Her taunts align Heywood's version with Pembroke's emblem; Hercules is shamefully put to tasks at the command of a petty and emasculating woman. Calling Hercules by his nickname "Tyrant-tamer," she reminds the audience of the very image that Jason says she undermines through her rule over him. By comparing the strength of her beauty to Hercules's superhuman reputation, she consumes and incorporates his identity into her own.

Omphale's greeting to Hercules's comrades confirms her concern for her own identity and its elevation in relation to Hercules:

Admit them, they shall see what pompe we haue,  
 And that our beauty can the loftiest slaue...  
 We are queene of *Lydia*,  
 And this our vassaile. Do you know him Lords?  
 Stoope slaue, and kisse the foot of *Omphale*.

(K1v)

She values beauty relative to the social worth of the man it can ensnare, and she values her self relative to the fame of those who serve her. Asking her guests, "Do you know him Lords?", Omphale confirms her identity's reliance on Hercules's. When Jason threatens to overturn her conquest, he threatens to erase her identity.

After Jason convinces Hercules to abandon Omphale, the queen plots to recapture Hercules and restore her self-image. She repeatedly considers how her identity and fame depend almost exclusively on Hercules' enslavement:

We haue lost our seruant, neuer yet had Lady  
 One of the like ranke. All King *Thespius* daughters,  
 Fifty in number, childed all one night,  
 Could not preuaile so much with *Hercules*  
 As we haue done; no not faire *Yole*  
 Daughter to *Cacus*, beauteous *Megara*,  
 Nor all the faire and amorous queenes of *Greece*,  
 Could slaue him like the *Lydian Omphale*,  
 Therefore where e're his labours be renown'd,  
 Let not our beauty passe vnregistred.  
 Bondaging him that captiu'd all the earth,  
 Nor will we leaue him, or yet loose him thuis  
 What either beauty, cunning, flattery, teares,  
 Or womans Art can, we will practice on him.  
 But now the Priests and Princes are prepar'd  
 For the great sacrifice, which we will grace  
 With our high presence, and behold aloofe  
 These rights vnto the gods perform'd and done  
 We'le gaine by Art, what we with beauty won.

(K3r-v)

Omphale revels in mastery over Hercules. Although a queen, she knows that she will be remembered less for her own identity than by the identity of her slave. She believes that “bondaging him that captiu'd all the earth” will prevent her beauty from going

“vnregistred” in the annals of history. So be it if she is remembered not as Queen of Lydia but as Mistress of Hercules.

I have argued that Shakespeare’s Antony and Ovid’s Omphale surrender their garments in order to appear less dominating or tyrannical. It is in these lovers’ interests not to play the tyrant and drive away their partners. Rather than making overtures of submission to her slave, Heywood’s Omphale repeatedly praises herself for achieving what she believes is complete mastery over Hercules’s will. She openly delights in the fact that she rules Hercules legally and emotionally. But her hold slips. Her love slave escapes when he realizes that he has nothing to gain from his servitude. Having momentarily ruled but not loved him, Omphale now finds herself unable to do either. Instead of renouncing her crown and humbling herself at her lover’s feet, she parades Hercules in triumph through her own court. When Heywood’s Omphale plays Octavius Caesar rather than Antony, she loses both love and sympathy.

Hercules does finally claim freedom from Omphale, saying, as if in the voice of Antony professing the need to shake off Egyptian fetters:

And in your honours I behold my selfe  
 What I haue bene, hence Strumpet *Omphale*,  
 I cast thee off, and once more will resume  
 My natiue vertues, and to proue this good  
 This day vnto the Gods I’le sacrifice...

(K3r)<sup>80</sup>

His inherent qualities persist, even if he has not exercised them recently. In this sense, Heywood’s Hercules resonates with Ovid’s depiction of Hercules bursting out of

---

<sup>80</sup> Shakespeare’s Antony is a “strumpet’s fool” (1.1.13).



Omphale's waistband. Whereas Omphale's identity relies on something beyond herself (namely Hercules), Hercules's identity arises from within himself (even if it requires external prompting).

Earlier in the play, Hercules displays this native heroic character even in the depths of his thralldom. Alcides pleads with his mistress:

For one sweet smile from beauteous *Omphale*,  
 Il'e lay before thee all the monstrous heads  
 Of the grim tyrants that oppresse the earth.  
 I that before, at *Iuno*'s strict behest,  
 The hundred gyants of *Cremona* slue...

(K1r)<sup>81</sup>

His motivations are tainted. He does not seek to crush tyrants out of a sense of justice, but to please Omphale. Nevertheless, Hercules offers to do heroic feats. Like Ovid's mock-epic description of Hercules fanning, this Alcides' imagination is still in the realm of epic, even if his heart has turned pastoral romance. Hercules's bid to conquer the world for Omphale is like Antony's offer to make all of Asia bow before Cleopatra, and his speech also recalls Cleopatra's dream of an emperor Antony. That is, Hercules imagines Omphale as a world conqueror (through his physical strength, of course), and he imagines how her conquest would restore his glory and effectively liberate him from private servitude.

Hercules's offer to magnify Omphale's power reveals the real political dangers of his slavery. Omphale could theoretically exploit Hercules to expand her dominion, become Empress Omphale, and command her royal slave to make more royal slaves. Fortunately

---

<sup>81</sup> Consider Caesar's speech in *Caesar's Revenge* cited on page 89.

for the world, tyrants can become so self-absorbed that they forget about conquering it. Omphale is less interested in expanding her control than she is in publishing her fame. As in Ovid's *Fasti* account, Heywood's cross-dressed lovers stand in a critical relationship to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Like Antony, Omphale has become so enthralled by her love slave that she shuns the outside world and seeks only to dominate within the private sphere of love. In this regard, Hercules's fame and heroics become powerful enchantments comparable to Cleopatra's. The pleasure that the slave gives the master can corrupt the master's will.

Although Hercules is Omphale's legal slave and although he debases himself in the public eye, he does not revel in slavery. He denies his servitude, or at least he refuses to call himself a legal slave:

Oh what a sweetnesse  
 Liues in her lookes! no bondage, or base slavery  
 Seemes seruitude, whilst I may freely gaze  
 (And vncontrold) on her: but for one smile,  
 Il'e make her Empresse ore the triple world,  
 And all the beauteous Queenes from East to West,  
 The *Lydians* vassails, and my fellow-slaues,  
 There is no Lord but *Loue*, no vassallage  
 But in affection, and th'Emperious Queene  
 Doth tyranize ore captiue Hercules.

(K1r-v)

Hercules resists shame by recasting his legal slavery as love slavery. He calls himself “captiue” in “affection,” asserting that he is “free” so long as he can look upon her. As in *Antony and Cleopatra* and Ovid’s *Fasti*, love slavery depends on the slave’s conviction that he freely submits himself to the mistress; that is, the lover must feel as if he or she chooses slavery. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, this perception of freedom comes from the lovers’ tacit demands on each other. In Ovid, abstinence indicates that the lovers freely give of themselves. In Heywood, Hercules insists on his freedom in his love slavery to Omphale, and his ability simply to walk away from her assures him that his slavery is willing, at least in part.

Liberating Hercules, then, is not a matter of breaking physical bonds, but of reminding him of the proper end of his affection and obedience:

Who nam’d my *Deianeira*? *Iason* you?  
 How fares my loue? how fares my beateous wife?  
 I know these presents, did they come from her?  
 What strumpet’s this that hath detain’d my soule?  
 Captiu’d my fame, trans-shap’t me to a foole?  
 Made me (of late) but little lesse then God,  
 Now scarce a man? Hence with these womanish tyres,  
 And let me once more be my selfe againe.

(K2v)<sup>82</sup>

Upon remembering his wife, he no longer hears Omphale’s voice. Earlier, he could only perceive Omphale’s beauty and imagine the great deeds he might accomplish in her

---

<sup>82</sup> Shakespeare’s Antony says “Have I my pillow left unpressed in Rome, / Forborne the getting of a lawful race, / And by a gem of women, to be abused / By one that looks on feeders?” (3.13.106-9).

name, if only she would permit him. Now, he perceives his ignominy, but the shame is not in female rule itself. Jason urges Hercules to return to his wife, because

'Twas she [Omphale] that made *Alcides* womanish,

But *Deianeira* to be more then man...

Tyrants euery where

Beginne to oppresse, thinking *Alcides* dead

For so the same's already. Shall a Strumpet

Do this vpon the *Theban Hercules*?

(K2v-3r)

Loyalty to a woman is not effeminate. According to Jason, love for and from a woman reinforces Hercules's superhuman nature, so long as that love is contained in its proper sphere. Jason's argument goes further: if Hercules's slavery were merely a matter of private interests (love for Omphale versus love for Deianeira), the stakes would be far less than they are. Here, Jason becomes like Thidias invading the lovers' sphere and calling into question their motivations. Thidias (spuriously) offers Cleopatra a chance to save face by arguing that her submission to Antony is out of fear rather than love. By referring to Omphale as a strumpet, Jason similarly offers Hercules a way out by arguing that he submits to base lust rather than a noble love. By casting extramarital relationships as occasions of emotional weakness, Jason and Thidias assault their sense of loyalty and duty to lovers.

Of course, Jason was hardly the paragon of marital fidelity. The unfaithful husband of Medea tries to convince Hercules to leave his mistress and go back home to his wife. Whether or not Hercules and Omphale really do love each other is not pertinent to the

Greek sophist—Jason merely needs to show Hercules the advantages of defining true love as marital love and defining his relationship to Omphale as an indiscretion. Whereas Antony is willing to risk the world to prove the sincerity of his love for his mistress, Hercules has no qualms about abandoning his affair.<sup>83</sup>

As Jason observes, tyrants take advantage of Hercules' enslavement to oppress the people. Still, Jason finds it hard to convince Hercules to put public interest before his private slavery to Omphale. Because Hercules has become addicted to Omphale's love, Jason can succeed only when he convinces Hercules that slavery affects other private or domestic interests. Jason wins not by pitting pleasure against virtue, but by connecting Hercules's role as a freedom fighter to his marital duties.<sup>84</sup> Whereas private interests typically blind individuals to their compatriots' needs, Hercules's domestic duties arguably reinforce public unity. Once the Greeks remind Hercules of his greater obligations, the hero merely walks out on Omphale. Despite the relative ease with which Hercules conducts his bloodless slave revolt, characters ascribe all responsibility to Omphale. Omphale "detain'd" and "trans-shapt" Hercules; she is a "Strumpet" that did "this vpon" Alcides. Omphale does not deny these accusations. Blaming her gives her greater control; she accepts the guilt (whether deserved or not) because it magnifies her

---

<sup>83</sup> Consider Virgil's *The Aeneid*:

Duty-bound,  
Aeneas, though he struggled with desire  
To calm and comfort her in all her pain,  
To speak to her and turn her mind from grief,  
And though he sighed his heart out, shaken still  
With love of her, yet took the course heaven gave him  
And went back to the fleet.

(IV.54-500)

Although both Aeneas and Hercules choose duty over love, Hercules has even less compassion for Omphale than Aeneas has for Dido. At least Aeneas feels conflict over abandoning a grieving woman. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Knopf, 1983.

<sup>84</sup> It is clear from Seneca's *Hercules Furens* that tyranny can have direct repercussions on Hercules's private life: his wife and children suffer under a usurping tyrant while Hercules harrows Hell.

notoriety. But just when Omphale appears to be an irredeemable tyrant, she surprises us with benevolence. Although Omphale selfishly plots to re-enslave Hercules, she does eventually turn her attention away from recapturing her slave and toward protecting him. When the poisoned shirt drives Hercules mad, Omphale desires to heal him: “I’le follow to, and with what Art I can, / Striue this his rage and torture to allay” (L1r). The mistress would undo the suffering inflicted by the wife—so much for the national benefits of marital relations.

Omphale herself observes the irony that the tyrannizing mistress might be more loyal than the jealous spouse, and she hopes her loyalty to her slave will win her more glory yet:

Beneath this rock where we haue often kist,  
 I will lament the noble *Thebans* fall,  
 The *Lydian Omphale* will be to him  
 A truer Mystresse, then his wife, whose hate  
 Hath brought on him this sad and ominous fate.  
 Nor hence, for any force or prayer remoue,  
 But die with him whom I so deerely loue.

(L2r)

Believing that Hercules’s formerly loyal wife has intentionally poisoned Hercules, Omphale seizes the opportunity to transform herself from an opportunistic slave mistress to a bona fide lover and queen. In effect, Hercules’s rebellion liberates Omphale from tyranny as much as it liberates himself from slavery. Hercules once again becomes the Tyrant Tamer.

Omphale's death is not the death of a tyrant. The tyrant does not risk his life for his subject—such is the role of the true monarch. In the end, Omphale appears to be Hercules' loyal queen and no longer his selfish slave-mistress. Heywood suggests that Omphale redeems herself from her own tyranny when Theseus' condemnation of the mad Hercules absolves her of guilt: "What hath *Alcides* done? slaine *Omphale*, / A guiltlesse queene that came to mourne his death" (L2v). Omphale dies serving her noble slave. Although Hercules leaves Omphale, she has witnessed his fidelity firsthand, both to her and to his wife. In Deianeira's alleged treachery, she sees her own tyranny. Seeing both love's fidelity and tyranny's cruelty played out upon her slave's body, Omphale learns to lovingly serve her own slave.

#### **SPENSER: WHO IS MORE TYRANNICAL: THE OVER-STEPPING JUDGE OR THE LEGALISTIC QUEEN?**

There is a progression of slavery in this chapter. Shakespeare's Brutus and Cassius submit themselves as slaves to a master who, if not unwilling, does not demand that their self-enslavement. Antony enslaves himself to a willing mistress, but she has no means of retaining his services. The figure of Hercules changes the dynamic of self-imposed slavery. The will of Olympus subjects Hercules to chattel slavery; he might perpetuate his slavery but enslavement was not initially his choice. In Book V of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser presents a hero who conflates the slavery of Brutus, Cassius, Antony and Hercules. Artegall willingly submits himself to the initial terms of slavery and finds himself a cross-dressed slave possessed by a mistress who has a legal right to him. In this

sense, he is the most enslaved of any figure we have seen yet. Artegall willingly makes himself subject by freely agreeing to the Amazon Queen Radigund's terms of combat that whoever loses their duel will serve the other.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps Artegall accepts Radigund's terms because he is confident that his physical strength will overpower his opponent—as it indeed does. Artegall's strength fails him only after he defeats Radigund and removes her helmet; only then does the Amazon's beauty paralyze him. Like Omphale's or Cleopatra's beauty, Radigund's fairness captivates and generates love slavery, but it is not her beauty that produces *legal* slavery. Artegall's bondage depends on a verbal contract that precedes his enchantment.

Artegall's complicity challenges many early modernists' arguments that he has fallen prey to a deceitful woman's clever trap. Jane Aptekar's gender-focused reading decodes Radigund as a type of the licentious and treacherous woman (Artegall, however, is pure): "In the first place, Radigund is guileful in that she practices *dolus malus*, setting legal traps for the unwary and honorable...She vanquishes him through a woman's unfair ruse, disarming him with her beauty; he, however, honorably holds to his contract and keeps his word" (Aptekar 132). However, Radigund's reputation for dishonesty and treachery stems from unreliable sources in the text. Moreover, it is Artegall whom Spenser depicts as the shamefully guilty and merciless party who breaks *his* word. Radigund is an honorable (and potentially merciful) monarch.

Because Spenser prejudices readers against Radigund before she even appears, we may be less likely to see Artegall's complicity in his enslavement. Sir Terpine (whom Artegall has briefly rescued from the Amazons) is no fan of Radigund's,

---

<sup>85</sup> Whereas Hercules and Antony exchange clothes with queens, Artegall does not wear Radigund's own clothing. Radigund is dressed as a man before she even meets Artegall.



For all those Knights, the which by fore or guile  
 She doth subdue, she fowly doth entreate  
 First she doth them of warlike armes despoile,  
 And cloth in womans weedes: And then with threat  
 Doth them compell to worke, to earne their meat,  
 To spin, to cord, to sew, to wash, to wring...

(III.xxxi)

Appealing to the knight of justice, Terpine makes Radigund appear criminal. No doubt, his own honor is at stake. He can save face if he can blame Radigund rather than himself for his shame and slavery. But if Artegall's enslavement is typical, then the enslaved knights are far more responsible than Terpine suggests.

Although Radigund murders her escaped prisoners and abuses the spoils of combat, her martial virtues are at odds with her alleged deceit and tyranny. The bravery and strength that Terpine describes unite with her attachment to and compassion for her own troops. When her forces are under attack, the "Queen her selfe, halfe like a man / Came forth in to the rout, and them t'array began" (III.xxxvi). When Artegall and his companions gain the upper hand, Radigund calls retreat—but it is no coward's flight:

[She] Caus'd all her people to surcease from fight,  
 And gathering them vnto her citties gate,  
 Made them all enter in before her sight,  
 And all the wounded, and the weake in state,  
 To be conuayed in, ere she would once retrate

(III.xlv)

No Cleopatra, Radigund remains on the field until the wounded are recovered, making certain that her troops protect their fallen comrades. When she challenges Artegall to individual combat, she is motivated not by pride but by her desire to shield her soldiers from unnecessary slaughter:

There she resolv'd her selfe in single fight  
To try her Fortune, and his force assay,  
Rather then see her people spoiled quight,  
As she had seene that day a disaventerous sight.

(III.xlviii)

Radigund is not a selfish tyrant. She risks her life for her people, and serves their best interests. Aptekar's claim that Radigund allegorizes pleasure may answer to the desire she later feels for Artegall, but her selfless martial achievements prove her to be a very different character from either Cleopatra or Omphale.

Aptekar focuses on the Radigund who intentionally draws Artegall into close combat, where he will be susceptible to her stunning beauty. However, it is Artegall, not Radigund, who betrays his word, and therefore it is Artegall who forfeits his liberty. Spenser gives us no explicit indication that Radigund intends the duel to be anything but a fair fight or that she intends to use her beauty as a weapon. Radigund's exact terms of combat are significant:

...these condition doe to him propound,  
That if I vanquishe him, he shall obay  
My law, and euer to my lore be bound,  
And so will I, if me he vanquish may;

What euer he shall like to doe or say.

(III.xlix)

According to these terms, Radigund will submit to a man if he defeats her in combat.

Perhaps this is more trickery, but her martial valor ought to vouch for her sincerity.

Spenser denies Radigund a chance to prove herself good to her word because of

Artegall's excessive enthusiasm for battle. Instead of calling upon their terms when he vanquishes her, he tries to behead her:

when he saw [her] before his foote prostrated,

He to her lept with deadly dreadfull looke,

And her sunshynie helmet soone vnaced,

Thinking at once both head and helmet to haue raced

(V.xi)

Artegall effectively disarms her, but he does not enforce the terms that she submit to his command. Mortal combat was not part of their bargain. Artegall, not Radigund, is the first to abuse a contract that Spenser chides Artegall for agreeing to in the first place:

So was he ouercome, not ouercome,

But to her yeelded of his owne accord;

Yet was he iustly damned by the doome

Of his owne mouth, that spake so wareless word,

To be her thrall, and seruice her afford.

For though that he first victorie obtayned,

Yet after by abandoning his sword,

He *wilfull lost*, that he before attayned,

No fayrer conquest, then that with goodwill is gayned.

(V.xvii, emphasis mine)<sup>86</sup>

In this case, enslavement derives from the slave's own conscious error rather than the puissance or guile of the tyrant or master—and the surest conquest depends on the victim's heart rather than external shackles.

The power of beauty questions freedom: does beauty enchant a man and cause him to act contrary to his will, or does a man willingly surrender to beauty.<sup>87</sup> To suggest that Radigund tricks Artegall is to argue that beauty can overcome free will—that Artegall falls into a trap from which he cannot escape. But Spenser does not depict the beauty that causes Artegall to drop his sword as deceitful. Radigund is no Duessa; she possesses no unholy charms to seduce knights. She is not even Cleopatra, who first enchants Antony

---

<sup>86</sup> According to the OED, “willful” primarily means “obstinately self-willed or perverse.” However, “willful” can also mean “Willing; consenting; ready to comply with a request, desire, or requirement” (it also lists two instances of Shakespeare's use of “willful” as “willing”). Either definition seems appropriate to Artegall in this instance.

<sup>87</sup> Tamburlaine professes

But how unseemly of my sex,  
My discipline of arms and chivalry,  
My nature, and the terror of my name,  
To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint!  
Save only that in beauty's just applause,  
With whose instinct the soul of man is touched—  
And every warrior that is rapt with love  
Of fame, of valour, and of victory,  
Must needs have beauty beat on his conceits—  
I thus conceiving and subduing, both,  
That which hath stopped the tempest of the gods,  
Even from the fiery spangled veil of heaven,  
To feel the lovely warmth of shepherds' flames  
And march in cottages of strewed weeds,  
Shall give the world this to note, for all my birth,  
That virtue solely is the sum of glory  
And fashions men with true nobility.

(Part I.5.1.174-190)

Tamburlaine claims to have the aesthetic sensibilities of an Antony but the willpower of an Octavius Caesar. He can love, and acknowledges how love can thwart even the most ambitious knight in his quest, but Tamburlaine, unlike the knight, chooses to overcome love.

by staging her arrival on the river Cydnus. Artegall sees beauty in Radigund at a moment when her beauty is half-hid through injuries:

...the rudeness of that euill plight,  
 bewryed of the signes of feature excellent:  
 Like as the moone in foggie winters night,  
 Doth seeme to be herselfe, though darkned be her light

(V.xii)

Her beauty is also an antidote to *Artegall*'s cruelty: "No hand so cruell, nor no hart so hard, / But ruth of beautie will it mollifie" (V.xiii). Radigund does not show any discourtesy until her oath-breaking foe becomes her slave. Only when he has surrendered to Radigund does Artegall face "a womans tyrannous direction" (V.xxvi).

Read allegorically, Artegall's fall shows how monarchy turns into tyranny not through violence but through attraction. Artegall, an allegorical figure of justice, finds something attractive in Radigund, a figure of illicit power. Yet, when he fails to show her mercy, Artegall himself behaves tyrannically. Thus, the alleged tyrant's face appears most attractive to Artegall when justice is itself tyrannical. The desirability of the potential tyrant stuns justice. Justice is no longer blind (or it is blinded by love). In times of strife (such are the present days, according to the poem's prologue) the tyrant's autocracy and efficiency might seem attractive to those who deliver justice and punishment.<sup>88</sup> The tyrant offers hope for order and lifts the burden of responsibility from the judge. Indeed,

---

<sup>88</sup> Granted, Radigund charms Artegall when she appears defeated and her humanity shows through, not when she attempts to be terrifying. With this in mind, justice finds supposedly tyrannical power most attractive when it seems as though that power can be controlled and overcome by justice. Hence, Spenser questions whether monarchy exists to serve justice or whether justice exists to serve power. It would appear from the outcome of Artegall's tale that justice is the minion of authority.

as Smith observes, the classical tyrant in Greece was simply a temporary dictator who served a nation in desperate times.

### **THE STRAW WOMAN: PERPETUATING ROYAL SLAVERY BY MISREPRESENTING THE QUEEN**

Artegall's enslavement to the Amazon Queen Radigund directly alludes to Hercules's cross-dressing and domestic labors. Depicting Artégall in "womans weeds" (V.xx) and holding a "distaffe," Spenser reminds readers of Alcides, "forgetting warres, he onely ioyed / In combats of sweet loue, and with his mistresse toyed" (V.xxiv). Artégall and Radigund's relationship is not the same as Hercules and Omphale's, but their relationship is like love slavery in two senses: 1) beauty's enchantments contribute to Artégall's loss during their duel, and 2) Radigund eventually desires Artégall romantically. Still, there is a problem with the allusion. Artégall, unlike Hercules, never joys in sweet love. Whereas other cross-dressed love slaves share erotic pleasures, Artégall and Radigund remain chaste throughout. After their battle, they do not even speak directly to one another, let alone have physical contact, and this lack of physical intimacy has not gone unnoticed. Jane Aptekar qualifies her comparison of Omphale to Radigund on the basis of what they provide their male slaves: "Radigund, though, who overworks, starves, and kills her prisoners, would seem on the face of it to offer little pleasure. Yet in those respects in which she implies Omphale, she implies, too, the temptations of Pleasure" (183-84). Although Artégall at first falls to beauty, Spenser does not depict him as reveling in the

pleasures of his mistress' body. And although Radigund falls in love with Artegall, she never declares her love to him directly.

Radigund has even been described as a sex-starved power-monger who tyrannically seeks only to gratify her own desires. John Curran casts her as the noble Britomart's base foil: "The lascivious Radigund emasculates male warriors, making them into docile slaves, while Britomart empowers the men around her and encourages them to virtuous action" (par 34).<sup>89</sup> According to Louis Montrose, Britomart is a noble and virtuous Elizabeth capable of reforming the Amazon's perverted, Marian government: "To behead Radigund is to curb what was perceived to be a female ruler's natural inclination to capriciousness and thus to tyranny."<sup>90</sup> Maurice Hunt argues that Radigund's demands on her "other feminized knights" who "slavishly work (weave) for her wages" represent Elizabeth's absurd demands on those among her courtiers who sought her favor for political survival (par 16).<sup>91</sup> Each of these scholars argues that Radigund allegorizes tyranny, but is Radigund really the lascivious, capricious, and absurd tyrant critics portray her to be?

Radigund appears less tyrannical when her attraction to Artegall leads her to self-sacrifice rather than self-assertion. Just as beauty led Artegall to put down his sword, so

---

<sup>89</sup> See John Curran. "Spenser and the Historical Revolution: Briton Monuments and the Problem of Roman Britain." *CLIO*. 25.3. (Spring 1996): 273-92.

<sup>90</sup> According to Montrose, Radigund is the sword-wielding Amazon from John Knox's *First Blast* combined with Queen Mary Tudor.

<sup>91</sup> See Maurice Hunt. "Hellish Work in *The Faerie Queene*." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*. 41.1 (Winter 2001): 91-108. Also, according to Clare Carroll, C.S. Lewis explicates the tale as an allegorical "attack on uxuriousness" (169). Carroll's Radigund represents both the effeminizing influence of Irish culture as well as Spenser's plan for the enslavement of the Irish themselves.

Critics debate Radigund's source. Carroll claims that Radigund's name derives from Irish: "'rade' in Irish means 'to grant,' or 'bestow,' while 'guna' means 'women's clothes.'" (182). Don Cameron Allen notes Radigund's similarity to Rhodogune, a beautiful daughter of Artaxerxes II who scorned men and fought in battles (121). Aptekar notes that Radigund actually merges two women in the Hercules story, the Amazon Hippolyte, whom Hercules defeated, and Omphale, who enslaved him (177). Aptekar also suggests that the Britomart/Radigund dichotomy alludes to the frequent depictions of "Hercules' choice" between wisdom and pleasure (Aptekar 172).

does love cause Radigund to relinquish her power over Artegall (or at least attempt to do so). She slowly contemplates her decision to submit herself to her slave. By deliberately choosing how to respond to her feelings for Artegall, Radigund hardly exhibits the rash or wanton slavery to one's desires that one expects from a Platonic tyrant. When she assesses what falling in love with her prisoner will entail, she brings into full-focus the complete triptych of royal slaves:

Which long concealing in her couert brest,  
 She chaw'd the cud of louers careful plight...  
 Yet would she not thereto yeeld free accord,  
 To serue the lowly vassall of her might,  
 And of her seruant make her souerayne Lord:  
 So great her pride, that she such baseness much abhord.

(V.xxvii)

The queen fears that her own love slavery might make her slave her master and her king. According the trope of Renaissance love slavery, the socially superior party repeatedly relinquishes power to the socially inferior. Ovid's Omphale exchanges clothes with her slave to revel with a more equal partner. Antony submits himself to Cleopatra to win her emotional love; he wants more than merely to benefit sexually from her political fears. Radigund realizes that she too must exchange places with her would-be partner, even if it offends royalty and Amazonian pride.

Like Heywood's Omphale, Spenser's Radigund has dressed Artegall like a woman to dominate the slave and express her power, not love. This is a very different function for cross-dressing than what we see in Shakespeare and Ovid, where it arises out of the



lovers' intimacy as a mutual exchange that expresses shared desire. Like Heywood's Omphale, Radigund expresses her own emotional attachment and self-abnegating desire for her slave only *after* she has shamed him through dressing him as a woman. But like Heywood's Omphale, Radigund learns to love Artegall through his obedience. Now she must win the affection of the man she has shamed. Like Omphale, Radigund discovers that humiliating one's slave can backfire. Having overturned gender roles, Radigund risks acknowledging her own shameful mistreatment of the knight and obliterating her very nature as an Amazon by submitting to a man.<sup>92</sup>

Love confronts Radigund with a paradox. As an Amazon, she is a woman who performs masculinity. However, to be a man sometimes means sacrificing one's manliness for love. For example, to love Cleopatra, Antony must willingly face Roman shame and accusations of emasculation. In order to love, Radigund must take off her masculine armor and reveal her womanhood. Thus, for Radigund to play at manliness eventually necessitates the sacrifice of her masculine status (if she is to find love, that is); she believes that loving Artegall means that she must renounce Amazonian gender inversion and become a subordinate woman.

Spenser employs the role-reversing dynamic of love slavery to recreate an ideal subject-ruler relationship. Although Radigund humiliates Artegall, she eventually confesses that she mistreats the man who showed her mercy when he saw her face (love makes her forget that he saw her face while trying to behead her). Unlike a tyrant whose pride prevents him from reconciliation, Radigund questions the justice of her behavior:

What right is it, that he shoud thraldome find,

---

<sup>92</sup> This inversion is limited. In Spenser, women dominate because they take on masculine traits, dress like men, and do men's work. It is not as if women's clothing or women's work suddenly becomes respectable or noble.

For lending life to me a wretch vnkind;  
 That for such good him recompence with ill?  
 Therefore I cast, how I may him vnbind,  
 And by his freedome get his free goodwill;  
 Yet so as bound to me he may continue still.

(V.xxxii)

When Radigund questions “what right is it,” Artegall appears to inspire her in the same way that she inspired him. She taught him tyranny and then mercy; he teaches her cruelty and then justice. Now, the socially superior party concludes that love requires freedom of the will if it is to be true and sustainable. Here, such love allegorizes the political love between a monarch and a subject; subjects must be free to submit themselves to monarchs who selflessly serve these same subjects. Again, like Omphale, Radigund realizes that humiliation will not create a sustainable relationship. Thus, Radigund renounces tyranny in the name of love:

Bound vnto me, but not with such hard bonds  
 Of strong compulsion, and straight violence  
 As now in miserable state he stands;  
 But with sweet loue and sure beneuolence...

(V.xxxiii)

Radigund decides to stop shaming her slave before he disdains her completely and takes flight, like Sir Terpine. If pride does not keep Artegall from his tasks, then pride ought not to interfere with her love. As Guevara predicts, kindness and obedience may gentle a tyrant.

Artegall hopes that Radigund can be redeemed from tyranny precisely because she is at heart a *queen*. Unlike other love slaves who embrace a tyrannical mistress's domination, Artégall sees advantage in relating to Radigund's royalty. Although many have argued that Radigund allegorizes English queens, little attention has been paid to how Radigund functions as monarch within the text. Judith K. Anderson concludes that Artégall overlooks Radigund's royalty: "Artegall responds not to her as Queen, but as a person – her personhood/womanhood" (Anderson 455). Certainly, the story grapples with male-female political interaction when Spenser writes that Artégall's is "A sordid office for a mind so brave. / So hard it is to be a womans slave" (V.xxiii). But Spenser does not leave the conflict solely in the realm of gender relations; indeed, the domestic and the political almost always overlap in Renaissance political theory. When Clarinda first negotiates with Artégall, he responds in terms of *royal* political discourse:

For well I may this weene, by that I fynd  
 That she a Queene, and come of Princely kynd,  
 Both worthie is for to be sewd vnto,  
 Chiefly by him, whose life her law doth bynd,  
 And eke of powre her owne doome to vndo,  
 And als of princely grace to be inclyned thereto.

(V.xli)

Contra Anderson, Artégall explicitly states that he will appeal to Radigund's royalty. Thomas Smith argues that slaves have no right to petition grievances, so Artégall cannot expect Radigund the slave-master to relent. As Radigund is a queen, however, she ought to possess a royal nobility of mind or "princely grace" which can show mercy. As a

queen, she can hear grievances, and a truly royal monarch hears those who serve her.

Artegall blurs the political distinction between slave and subject, hoping that Radigund will grant him a right to petition. Even so, he must rely upon an intercessor to deliver his petitions, and this is where the story turns tragic.

When Radigund falls in love with Artégall, slavery to a queen looks to become slavery to a lover. But Radigund desires love, not mastery, so she decides to reform herself and free Artégall. Unfortunately for the queen, Spenser disrupts the incipient love affair by adding a self-serving and duplicitous intermediary. By driving a wedge between Radigund and Artégall, the royal servant Clarinda perpetuates Artégall's royal slavery for her own gain and turns his servitude into an allegory on court politics. Clarinda misleads Radigund into terrorizing Artégall when the queen actually intends to befriend him. Furthermore, Clarinda's false reports about the queen cloud Artégall's (and our) ability to interpret Radigund. Clarinda's machinations transform Radigund from a secret admirer to an open tyrant, and they change Artégall from an obedient slave to a deceitful subject. Ignorant of each other's true intentions, both queen and slave are easy prey for Clarinda, who leads them to distrust one another. In terms of love, Spenser shows how lack of intimacy and miscommunication lead to emotional decay. In terms of politics, Spenser allegorizes the danger of rulers who do not communicate directly with their subjects.<sup>93</sup>

Clarinda causes strife between master and slave in order to create a need for her to play go-between and gain access to Artégall for her own pleasure:

Even so Clarinda her owne Dame beguyled,

---

<sup>93</sup> A.N. McLaren recounts the debate over executing Mary Queen of Scots, suggesting that Elizabeth "was misled by 'evil counsellors', men seeking their own private interests rather than forwarding the common weal" (179-80). Also see Constance Jordan's *Shakespeare's Monarchies* which argues that Shakespeare's romances show how absolutism could turn to tyranny when the king is ignorant of subjects' wills.

And turn'd the trust, which was in her assyde,  
 To Feeding of her priuate fire, which boylde  
 Her inward brest...

(V.liii)<sup>94</sup>

Clarinda demonizes Radigund to win Artegall's favor, discrediting Radigund for her own advantage. If slave and queen could directly communicate, freedom and possibly love might win the day. Instead, a corrupt representative misinforms the monarch and keeps the commoners in the dark.

Predictably, deception fails and all three characters lose what they desire. Despite its futility, Artegall himself begins to deceive Clarinda:

So daily he faire semblance did her shew,  
 Yet neuer meant he in his noble mind,  
 To his owne absent loue to be vntrew:

(V.lvi)

Clarinda deceives Artegall; Artegall deceives Clarinda. The queen merely reacts to the intelligence she receives from her advisors. Radigund's reputation emerges unscathed; indeed, one could argue that the servants' treachery makes Radigund appear sympathetic. Only the queen expresses her true feelings, but they are lost in mediation.

With only indirect control over Artegall, Radigund's role begins to dwindle. She no longer aggressively takes initiative or direct control over events; it is as if enslaving Artegall causes her own narrative enslavement. Like Heywood's Omphale and Shakespeare's Antony (or Cleopatra for that matter), Radigund finds the domestic

---

<sup>94</sup> According to T.K. Dunseath, Clarinda represents a kind of Satanic temptation in the wilderness, but this perhaps overlooks Clarinda's own disastrous fall to temptations (138, 140).

intricacies of possessing a (potential) love slave to be all too distracting. Radigund's attention has turned away from building an Amazonian Empire and now fixates on conquering the heart of an individual. The queen literally becomes lost in the story until Britomart kills her, and so inactivity and reliance on Clarinda lead to Radigund's destruction.

What has Artegall gained from his experience? Some critics argue that Artegall develops as a character during his slavery. According to Dunseath, "the moment he is forced upon his inner resources he begins a process of discovery, a growing self-awareness that leads to wisdom" (136). According to Anderson, the highly personal nature of the conflict transforms Artegall from a mere allegorical symbol into a flesh and blood "man" who gets a little dirty when he shifts from applying swift justice as a judge to attempting to uphold it as an individual subject (456); he might temporarily play the criminal as well. In this sense, Artegall experiences the very punishments he inflicts and the crimes he judges. Justice comes to know what it means to be sentenced and violated.

Artegall's slavery recalls the very purpose of his mission. His entire episode with Radigund has been a detour on his quest to liberate Queen Irene from slavery under a conquering tyrant. Apologizing to Irene for his delay, Artegall says that he becomes like her on his way to save her:

But witnesse vnto me, ye heauens, that know  
 How cleare I am from blame of this vpbraide:  
 For ye into like thraldome me did throw,  
 And kept from complishing the faith, which I did owe...

(XI.xli)

Artegall blames Providence for his slavery, and identifies with the victim's bondage. Although Irene bears less responsibility for her enslavement than Artégall does for his own, Artégall knows the victim's loss firsthand. Artégall only fulfills his mission after he has experienced the slave's world and its injustices.<sup>95</sup> And when Britomart slays Radigund, he learns what it means to depend on another's intervention for his own freedom, while we learn that even rulers enslaved by their own tyranny can earn our pity.

---

<sup>95</sup> Moses, a figure of justice who receives the Law from God, also had to experience slavery and disenfranchisement before he could liberate the Israelites from foreign tyranny.

## CHAPTER TWO: ENSLAVED KINGS

Here I stand, your slave,  
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.  
 But yet I call you servile ministers,  
 That have with two pernicious daughters joined  
 Your high engendered battles 'gainst a head  
 So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

(*King Lear*, conflated text 3.2.19)

In a scene of tragic pathos, King Lear describes himself as a slave to slaves.<sup>96</sup> He is the slave of cruel Nature and Nature the slave of his crueler daughters. Earlier, he attempts to win pity from Regan by imagining himself as the slave of Goneril's servant Oswald. When Regan suggests that Lear return to her sister, he protests: "Return with her? / Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter / To this detested groom" (2.4.210-12). Lear hyperbolically professes that he would rather face the shame of slavery to a sycophantic servant than beg his daughter's forgiveness for his alleged crimes.<sup>97</sup>

Lear's profession of royal slavery elicits no filial sympathies from Goneril and Regan, but his plight does generate pity in others. The unfortunate Edgar feels compassion for

---

<sup>96</sup> Ewan Fernie writes: "the unaccommodated, raving king, clothed in soiled robes and crowned with weeds and flowers, makes *King Lear* the most wonderful and resonant of Shakespeare's spectacles of shame...[Lear's] experience is a still more powerful recapitulation of the ritual uncrowning and degradation of Richard II" (175). Fernie further argues that Lear's primary sin is his own sense of shamelessness (or self-pity), but that the king redeems himself only once he "feels" his shame (201). My discussion of Richard II follows shortly.

<sup>97</sup> Harry Berger, who is less than sympathetic to Lear, argues that he focuses on his own suffering to distract himself from feelings of guilt; self-victimization is self-exculpation: "I read this according to the logic of the darker purpose: the necessities are those of self-avoidance; the art by which we keep our guilts pent up can make these vile or base (lower-class) discomforts important to us as diversions from more terrible thoughts" (36).



Lear and associates the king's woes with his own personal betrayal at the hands of his half-brother:

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
 We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
 Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,  
 Leaving free things and happy shows behind:  
 But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip  
 When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.  
 How light and portable my pain seems now,  
 When that which makes me bend makes the king bow...

(3.6.103-09)

An act later, Lear is still a “side-piercing sight” for Edgar (4.6.85). The nameless Gentleman whom Kent befriends echoes Edgar's sympathy and cries out: “A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch, / Past speaking of in a king!” (4.6.198-99). Obviously, the spectacle of suffering can generate pity, sympathy, and compassion, but, in *King Lear*, kingship heightens both the spectacle and the pathos of suffering. This is true for some characters but not for all, not for Goneril and Regan. They insist that the king has brought his suffering upon himself. They deem him more sinning than sinned against, and their intense political ambition helps us to see the political nature of royal slavery.

Do princes resemble slaves because they sacrifice for others or because they care only about their own survival? Does an enslaved king represent royal suffering or tyrannical pathology? Does he bear the burden of rule or of sin? Do individual monarchs submit to their moral limitations or do they surrender to vice? Does a king suffer insomnia because

he fears what might befall his people or because he fears that they might revolt? Answers to these questions change over time in early modern England. That the rhetorical use of the royal slave topos shifts from the mid-sixteenth to the late-seventeenth centuries may be seen in its changing deployment from Bishop Antonio de Guevara's *The Diall of Princes* (translated by Sir Thomas North in 1557) to Lucy Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* (1679). Before the English revolution, literary examples of enslaved kings typically enlist readers' and audiences' pity. There may be a basis for reform, but rarely for rebellion. During and after the English Revolution (especially after the execution of Charles I), monarchists continue to exploit images of enslaved kings to gain sympathy for the Stuart cause, but their polemics are challenged. Anti-monarchists describe enslaved kings in order to shame rulers and depict the unnaturalness of monarchical government. Whereas a sixteenth-century enslaved king often allegorizes Christian rulers who learn to serve rather than to be served, their seventeenth-century counterparts typically allegorize the satanic tyrant who serves only his own desires. However, some authors resist such easy allegory and deploy royal slavery's multivalent meanings to interrogate both monarchy and its opponents.

More than an individual ruler's reputation is at stake, and an interrogation of royalty's prerogatives inevitably leads authors to meditate on egalitarianism. Monarchists argue that cynics forget the humanity behind all the trappings of majesty and that subjects often condemn their kings too quickly. The king who suffers and contends with error is the same as every other person. Royalists hold that even should the king fail in something, his human nature begs for subjects to show him the same mercy that they expect from him in their petitions. However, if a king is as flawed or vulnerable as anyone else, then

(according to the anti-monarchist) he is neither inherently superior to his subjects nor does he deserve supremacy. For the anti-monarchist, rulers suffer because God punishes them for their presumption. The texts that I discuss in this chapter question whether the parity revealed by royal slavery generates sympathy for a victim or disdain for a usurper.

I begin with the sympathetic royal slaves in Guevara's *The Diall of Princes* and Owen Feltham's *Resolves* (1628). Both texts predate the English Civil War and use royal slave images as graphic, didactic examples to inspire sympathy for rulers. Indeed, these texts insist that enslaved royalty is the most pitiable figure imaginable. Guevara uses royal slave images to deflate the ambitions of corrupt princes and courtiers by showing how a ruler's power and luxury conceal his responsibilities and suffering. Guevara hopes to inspire loyalty through pity. Feltham similarly argues that one's sensitivity to suffering is directly proportional to one's nobility; rulers suffer more than anyone else and therefore deserve greater pity. The sympathetic portraits of royal slaves in Guevara and Feltham provide touchstones for royal slavery in Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, both of whom use royal slave images as pathetic devices (although not necessarily advancing monarchist causes). Lucy Hutchinson, however, responds with vehement anti-monarchism in *Order and Disorder* (discussed at this chapter's conclusion).

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Part I and II* offer striking examples of how royal slavery can generate pathos by directing the audience's pity even towards tyrants. By means of characters who criticize Tamburlaine's extreme cruelty, Marlowe encourages his audience to pity even the bloodthirsty, anti-Christian, Turkish monarchs that fall into the terrifying Scythian's hands. If Tamburlaine's cruelty makes even a tyrant appear sympathetic, does Marlowe convince his audience to identify with its political enemy?

Sympathy for a tyrant does not so much advance a monarchist agenda as expose the sympathetic power of royal slavery. Indeed, even Tamburlaine exploits royal slavery's pathos when he steals his prey's status as victims as well their crowns.

Shakespeare also explores the pathetic register of royal slave images in dramas such as *Richard II* (1597), *Henry V* (1599), and *The Tempest* (1611), but also in *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). Richard II debases himself as a royal slave, and although this fails to win his enemies' pity, it powerfully influences his enemies' successors. Henry V expresses pity for Richard and even exploits Richard's royal slave rhetoric in his famous soliloquy the night before the Battle of Agincourt. In this speech, Henry tries to win God's sympathy by closely paraphrasing Guevara's comparison between a slave and a king, but Henry's Guevaran rhetoric comes perilously close to a tyrant's self-pity. Caliban, in turn, mistakenly believes that his royal slavery will earn him pity, but his claims to royalty mostly highlight his base behavior and shame him. All three royal slaves reveal royal slavery to be an ambivalent trope, capable of inspiring pity and shaming. Royal slavery appears less ambiguous in *The Rape of Lucrece*, where Tarquin is the shamed tyrant and Lucrece the enslaved and pitied sovereign. Even here, however, Shakespeare complicates the trope by applying its slave imagery to a prince and its royal imagery to an oppressed (read enslaved) subject.

This chapter concludes with Lucy Hutchinson's anti-monarchical Biblical poem, *Order and Disorder*. The devoted wife of a parliamentarian, Hutchinson self-consciously deconstructs royal slave rhetoric and consistently transforms pity into shame, turning the images of the golden chain and the sleepless king into loathsome curses rather than pitiable burdens. Moreover, Hutchinson undermines patriarchal arguments by first

conceding theories of Adamic kingship and then suggesting that Adam's authority was permanently lost in the fall. Her alternative Biblical genealogy of kingship follows Biblical villains rather than heroes: all kings are actually corrupt slaves in disguise, therefore all kings are shameful tyrants.

### **GUEVARA, FELTHAM AND DISTRESSED KINGS**

The trope of the pitiable royal slave appears prominently in Sir Thomas North's translation of Guevara's *The Diall of Princes*. When Guevara takes his one-man stand against infectious Italianate courtier desires for power, glory, and leisure, he advises princes-in-training to serve their subjects. He argues that a servant-prince will inspire obedient subjects because, as Guevara believes, political harmony requires that all people acknowledge their perpetual and mutual enslavement. Guevara anticipates that his claims will shock freedom-loving Europeans who have fought assiduously in the name of liberty, and he asserts that the seemingly just and charitable desire for political independence stems from a pagan past at odds with Christian philosophy. He blames ancient Roman literature for perpetuating misbegotten notions of an attractive but illusory political liberty and for glorifying rebellion and republicanism (fol 41r).<sup>98</sup> Despite Rome's worldly successes, Guevara believes Romans were misinformed on human nature; to overvalue one's liberty, he argues, is to be guilty of pride. Pagan virtue appears as vice to the Christian. His moralism is not reserved for the people, however. Although

---

<sup>98</sup> See chapter one for a more extensive quotation of Guevara blaming Romans for concepts of liberty. Over a hundred years later, Hobbes also warns his reader against Greco-Roman tales of rebellion in the name of liberty. See also Quentin Skinner, "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery" *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 1-21. Skinner describes a "Neo-Roman" ideology of revolt.

he condemns rebellion, Guevara is not merely an anti-rebellion polemicist. The crown itself is subject to universal slavery; if it conforms to God, there will be no occasion for revolution: “For duringe the time of our fleshelye life, we can neuer withdraw our selues fro[m] the yoke of seruitude. And say not, you princes, for that you are puissant princes, that you are excepted from seruitude of me[n]” (fol. 41). So Guevara acknowledges that real life rulers ignore the truths he expresses. It is easier to describe the ideal prince than to train one successfully.

If princes often fall short of the ideal, it should, according to Guevara, be an occasion for pity rather than rebellion. After all, princes face greater challenges than their subjects and shoulder unseen burdens. Guevara knows full well that subjects will resent princes who appear to escape physical labor, but: “For w[ith]out doubt, it is a thing more untollerable, to haue [princes’] hartes burdened w[ith] thoughtes, then their neckes loden with yrons” (fol. 41). Furthermore, princely pain is inevitable and enduring. A loyal slave might find reprieve if he obeys commands; but the more powerful a prince, the greater the virtue that is demanded from him, and the more virtuously a prince lives, the more he suffers:

If a slaue be good, they take from him some yrons: but to you [that] are princes, the greater you are, the greater cares you haue. For [the] prince that for his co[m]mo[n] wealth taketh care, hath not one mome[n]t of an houre quyete. A slaue hopeth to be deliuered in his life, but you can not looke to be deliuered, tyll after your death. (fol. 41)

Power hardly diminishes high-class bondage; if anything, service to one’s people leaves royalty frantic and distressed:

They laye yrons on the slaue by weight, but thoughts burd[n] you without mesure.  
 For the woful hert is more burdened with one houre of care: then the body is  
 pressed, with twenty pound of yron. A slaue or prisonner, if he be alone, many  
 times fylethe of his yrons: but you Prince that are alone, are more greuously  
 tormented wyth thoughts: for solitary places are arbors, & gardeyns, to wofull and  
 heauy hertes. (fol. 41)

Living without pleasure, a king nonetheless must appear pleased for the sake of  
 ceremony. It is for him to suffer internally, silently, alone.<sup>99</sup>

This solitude is particularly dangerous since the greatest obstacle a prince faces is his  
 own self:

A slaue hath nothing to care for, but him selfe alone: but you that be Princes, haue  
 to satisfye, & please al men. For the prince shuld have a time for him self, and  
 also for those, whiche are aboute him. The diuine Plato saide well, that he that  
 should haue the lest part of a prince, and belonging to a prince ought to be the  
 prince him selfe. For to the end the Prince shoulde be all his owne, he ought to  
 haue no parte in him selfe. (fol. 41)

Like Thomas Smith, Guevara imagines slaves to have no real stake or part in society;  
 their only concern is self-preservation (it goes without saying that Guevara  
 underestimates the un-Platonic reality of servitude). And no one should blame a slave for  
 acting in his own self-interest. Yes, a slave is responsible to a master, but he obeys only

---

<sup>99</sup> Stanley Cavell describes the tragedy of such hidden suffering when he writes of *King Lear*: “Lear and Gloucester are not tragic because they are isolated, singled out for suffering, but because they had covered their true isolation (the identity of their condition with the condition of other men) within hiddenness, silence, and position; the ways people do. It is the enormity of this plain fact which accompanies the overthrow of Lear’s mind, and we honor him for it” (122). Cavell’s point is not the same as Guevara’s, however. This unseen suffering is not necessarily the result of virtue, but the affect on the audience is the same. Milton’s Satan echoes this logic: “Ay me, they little know / How dearly I abide that boast so vain, / Under what torments inwardly I groan: While they adore me on the throne of Hell” (III.86-89).

to avoid punishment or death.<sup>100</sup> A prince, however, who acts out of self-interest (as opposed to the people's best interest) is at best shameful and at worst tyrannical.

Guevara's prince, then, is less self-possessed than a slave. He must meet the infinite demands of countless subjects whereas the slave need satisfy the demands of a single master.<sup>101</sup> Such a worldview marvels that tyranny is not even more common than it is and begs readers not to burden further an already strained political relationship.

More than seventy years after the first English publication of *The Diall of Princes*, Owen Feltham was still depicting the pathos of enslaved kings in his oft-reprinted collection of pithy adages entitled *Resolves* (1628).<sup>102</sup> In his reflection "Misery after Joy," Feltham argues with only minor qualification that fallen kings experience the worst that the world has to offer:

As it is in *Spirituell proceedings*, better neuer to haue beene *righteous*, then after *righteousnesse* to become *Apostate*: So in *temporall*, it is better neuer to haue been *happy*, then after *happinesse*, to be drown'd in *calamities*. Of all *obiects* of *sorrow*, a *distressed King* is the most *pittifull*; because it presents vs most the *frailety* of *Humanity*; and cannot but most midnight the *soule* of him that is *falne*.

The *sorrows* of a *deposed King*, are like the *distorquements* of a *darted*

---

<sup>100</sup> A slave has more privacy than a free citizen since the latter is bound by duties and laws that tie him to his kin and neighbors.

<sup>101</sup> Writing as a mock-Aurelean stoic philosopher depicting an ideal philosopher prince, Guevara is not interested in verisimilar descriptions of slavery or royalty. To ask whether or not kings really do experience more suffering than chattel slaves misses his point. Guevara advocates a proper and peaceful relationship between sovereign and subject; he hardly chronicles early modern lives in this instance.

<sup>102</sup> Owen Feltham (1602?–1668) was an essayist and poet (a minor one). He was a merchant by trade and a member of the gentry (DNB Online). He also staunchly supported the Church of England and stood with the royalists in the Civil War: "Even more impassioned than his poem on the execution of Laud was his reaction to the execution of Charles I, delivered in an English elegy that, after thoroughly berating the actions of 'a perfidious Part of His prevalent Subjects', concludes 'Here Charles the First, and Christ the second lyes'" (DNB Online). According to the ESTC, Feltham's *Resolves, A Duple Century* was printed in 1623 and 1628 by George Purslowe, in 1631 by Thomas Purfoot, and in 1636 by E. Perslowe. All four editions were sold in the shop of Henry Seile. Twelve editions of the *Resolves* were printed by 1709 (DNB Online).



*Conscience*; which none can know, but hee that hath lost a *Crowne*... (Feltham 187-8)

Feltham suggests that a deposed monarch experiences a unique hell on earth, but he can be less abstract. He later contrasts such a king with a Galley-slave: “The *tann’d Slaue*, that hath euer tugg’d at the *Oare*, by a long vse, hath mingled *misery* with *Nature*; that he can now endure it vncomplaining. But when a *soft Wanton* comes to the *Galley*, euery *stroake* is a *wounding Speare* in the *side*...” (Feltham 189). Indeed, as we see, Feltham can also be ironic, casting his king as a former “*soft Wanton*.” He does not, like Guevara, depict *all* rulers as ruggedly suffering the slave’s toil; he concerns himself here only with fallen rulers. But if a wanton’s softness costs him some of the reader’s esteem (and perhaps hints at how the wanton came to lose his crown), Feltham redeems the royal figure by comparing his suffering with Christ’s.

For Guevara, Christ was the ultimate royal slave. God merits Christian devotion precisely because He became a servant: “I haue spoke[n] these thinges, to [the] end, that great, and smal, lordes, and seruauntes, shuld confesse, and acknoweledge the true signorye, to be onelye unto him, who for to make vs lordes aboue, became a seruaunt here beneth” (fol. 41). Universal servitude on this earth becomes a kind of universal sovereignty hereafter; heaven’s population consists exclusively of royal slaves.

This is not to say that all royal slaves go to Heaven; there are tyrants fit for Hell. But how should one balance the desire to punish a tyrant with the recognition that his suffering might elicit pity? Feltham turns to historical precedent and considers famous royal slaves: “For *Baiazet* to change his *Seraglio* for a *Cage*; for *Valerian* to become a *Footestool* to his *proud foe*; are *Calamities* that challenge the *tributes* of a *bleeding eye*”

(187-89). Feltham's Bajazet is a case study in pity, not complicity in his own demise. By focusing on the tragic denigration of royalty, Feltham gives us a suffering king who inspires such pity that we overlook how he fell.

## MARLOWE AND THE SYMPATHETIC TYRANTS

Feltham describes the effects of good Fortune on individual psychology specifically in terms of royal slavery, arguing that bounty can turn predisposed minds towards tyranny. Feltham's response is neither shame nor reproach; rather, it is pity:

Strange is the *inchantment* that the world works on vs, when shee *smiles* and lookes *merrily*...*Fortunes effects* are *variable*, as the natures *she* works vpon: *some*, while their *baskets* grow more full, their *mindes* are higher, and rise: they now know not those *friends*, that were lately their *companions*: but as a *Tyrant* among his *Subiects*, growes *haughty* and *proud*...As *these* rise, so *some* fall: and that which should satiate their *desire*, increaseath *it*: which is euer accompanied with this *unhappinesse*, that it will neuer bee *satisfied*: this makes them *baser*, by being *wealthier*: *Profit* (though with drudgery) they *hugge* with close *armes*. All *vices* debase man, but this makes a *master* a slave to his *servant*, a *drudge* to his *slave*; and him that *God* set over all, thus puts under all. Pittifull! (361)

If commoners and sovereigns are equally susceptible to vices and equally quick to oppress their friends and neighbors, tyrants are no longer lofty, distant oppressors.

Circumstances can reveal tyranny where one least expects it; the tyrant could be a friend,

a neighbor, or even the reader himself. By adding pity to fear, Feltham makes the tyrant potentially tragic.

Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays (1590) likewise show how Fortune raises tyranny, how tyrants are born in the hearts of the lowly, and how one can pity the terrible. The first two issues are evident when the rustic Tamburlaine professes an undying devotion to his friends, and when Fortune sparks his insatiable hunger for power. However, it the last issue, pity for a tyrant, that is most pertinent to a discussion of enslaved kings. Even though Tamburlaine's victims are often the feared enemies of Christian Europe, the brutality that they endure generates pity and disgust. Yes, Bajazeth gets his comeuppance, but, as Feltham noted 30 years later, the effect turns one of the least sympathetic rulers in early modern political imagination into an object of pity.<sup>103</sup>

When Bajazeth appears on stage to meet Tamburlaine, a retinue of "contributory kings" surrounds him. These are rulers who have submitted to Bajazeth's superiority and sacrificed their royal autonomy to the Turkish Empire.<sup>104</sup> They are essentially enslaved kings, but Bajazeth claims that allowing them to carry his car does them honor, and he makes clear his esteem for his contributory kings when he explains to Tamburlaine how far beneath them the Scythian warlord ranks socially. Their status as slaves is largely ceremonial in Marlowe's play; they are slaves in name only. In this sense, Marlowe's Bajazeth hardly appears to be a tyrant. Rather, he fits Constance Jordan's definition of an ideal absolute monarch; he holds those beneath him as legally powerless but refrains from abusing them. Marlowe may expect his audience to recall Bajazeth's reputation for

---

<sup>103</sup> Was Marlowe responsible for Feltham's compassionate stance regarding Bajazeth?

<sup>104</sup> Many early modern English accounts of Turkish slavery observe the irony that the Grand Turk regards all the lesser Islamic kings as slaves. For one example, see Georgijevic, Bartolomej. *The of spring of the house of Ottomanno, and officers pertaining to the greate Turkes court....* London: 1569.

cruelty, but he does not go out of his way to remind them of it. Still, even if one considers Bajazeth's tyranny, it only makes Tamburlaine appear even more tyrannical.

The sympathy Feltham has for the enslaved Bajazeth directly conflicts with William J. Brown's source approach to Marlowe's play. Brown believes that Marlowe "exalts Tamburlaine as a kingly redeemer in contrast to Bajazet the tyrant" (Brown 40). For Brown, audiences familiar with Marlowe's sources must see Bajazeth's torture as just and appropriate. Brown further notes that Marlowe excises a renowned battlefield duel between the two leaders: "In short, Marlowe's Bajazet totally lacks the dignity and bravery accorded the Bajazet of his historical authorities" (Brown 38).<sup>105</sup> This fails to do justice to Bajazeth, and to the playwright who surprises his audience with an appealing and courageous Turkish potentate.

While Brown assumes that Tamburlaine's folk heroism carries over from source materials to the stage, other critics suggest that Marlowe stains Tamburlaine's reputation as a Herculean tyrant tamer. Roger E. Moore observes that Marlowe's additions to the Tamburlaine legend interrogate Tamburlaine's mischief:

Marlowe, however, expands the role of the Damascene Virgins and adds Zenocrate and Calyphas to the story; all of these characters question Tamburlaine's mission and articulate Marlowe's concern for the body and the world at the hands of religious fanatics like Tamburlaine. They are the characters with whom we sympathize, the ones who ask Tamburlaine to consider the inherent dignity of all people—their bodies and their lives—regardless of their ultimate eschatological status. (Moore 149)

---

<sup>105</sup> Brown's Marlowe has read Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, most notably Foxe's account of the peculiar use of Bajazeth as a "footstool." (44).

Of course, Zenocrates's questions are only possible when Tamburlaine is absent. When he reappears, his poetry suppresses her concerns. In this way, Marlowe pits aestheticism against morality to generate more dramatic conflict than any of Tamburlaine's martial efforts. Can the beauty of Tamburlaine's language purge the repulsiveness of his atrocities? Unstoppable and invincible, Tamburlaine does not face many significant obstacles to his desires. Thus, much of the play's drama stems from the audience's own struggle with how it relates to Tamburlaine rather than watching him overcome hopeless antagonists. How will an audience handle the play's ethical conundrums? Will the audience enjoy watching tyrants being tortured or will it pity their suffering? Will it take comfort from seeing rulers shamed, or will a monarch's humiliation be too uncomfortable to witness? Does Tamburlaine's poetry make us, like Zenocrate, forget our pity? Does a Christian audience laugh with Tamburlaine when he offers the starving Bajazeth an empty plate and warns him not to overeat, or does it pray for a Turk (I.4.4.107)?

Tamburlaine and his band certainly appear to enjoy humiliating Bajazeth and causing him pain. According to Brown, Foxe's *Actes* accords the Turk no sympathy because his pain is just punishment for heathen tyranny (43). If deserved, punishment shames and subjects one to mockery and derision—both of which Tamburlaine and his crew heap on caged Bajazeth and his wife. If punishment is undeserved, however, shame may turn into humiliation and perhaps even deflect back on Tamburlaine. Might over-the-top punishment exceed notorious tyranny?

Thomas Cartelli's *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience* grapples with how audiences interacted with or consumed the moral complexities of Marlowe and Shakespeare's plays. In his argument, Cartelli develops a terminology of

“engagement” and “resistance.” Engagement describes heightened attention on the part of the audience, which is conscious and accepting of stage characters’ reality during a particular moment (even if it would not condone such a reality off-stage). Resistance, alternatively, occurs whenever an audience consciously rejects or unconsciously misses some unit of drama (if only because it stops paying attention at some point). For Cartelli, an audience can “engage” with a scene, but only through a particular character’s point-of-view. An audience might “engage” with Tamburlaine’s bravado and self-promotion, but resist Bajazeth’s professions of his dignity in the face of humiliation. Cartelli complicates matters when he suggests that audiences “engage” with characters beyond classical catharsis, the evocation and purging of pity and fear; rather, audiences take “pleasure” and “enjoyment” at witnessing the tragic. Thus, for Cartelli, audiences enjoy Bajazeth’s suffering, even if only subconsciously.<sup>106</sup> Cartelli imagines an audience applauding Tamburlaine’s cruelty to a monarch despite Christian charity because the play leads the audience to “engage...in fantasies opposed to the orthodoxies of a moral order to which most members of the audience would at least be expected to subscribe” (*Marlowe and Shakespeare* 27). If an audience member is divided in response to Tamburlaine’s torture of Bajazeth, Cartelli holds that it is not because we pity the fallen Turk as such, but because it becomes clear to us that a real-life Tamburlaine could be detrimental to our own social advancement (*Marlowe and Shakespeare* 80). For Cartelli, Tamburlaine is so engaging that the audience cannot help but resist Bajazeth.

To defend his admittedly conjectural analysis of early modern audience response to dramatic performance, Cartelli turns to Richard Levin’s very useful catalogue of early

---

<sup>106</sup> Cartelli writes “They may unconsciously permit Tamburlaine’s words and deeds to play upon what Freud would term ‘deeper psychological sources’ of enjoyment of which they may remain unaware even as they find themselves pleasurably aroused by Tamburlaine’s transgressions” (*Marlowe and Shakespeare* 32).

modern references to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. According to Levin, Bajazeth's humiliation is one of the three elements of the play to which early modern authors most alluded when invoking *Tamburlaine*, suggesting that audiences were certainly engaged with these scenes (58). But were they more engaged with *Tamburlaine* or with Bajazeth? Levin would say the former since his goal is to refute what he calls the "ironic critics," those who argue that early modern audiences would have been shocked at Bajazeth's treatment and moralistically condemned *Tamburlaine*. To counter such claims, he shows ample intertextual evidence to suggest that audiences felt affection for *Tamburlaine*, even if he did not necessarily meet their moral criterion of a Christian hero. Because his focus is on audiences' reactions to *Tamburlaine* himself, Levin overlooks passages that evince pity for *Tamburlaine*'s victims. Certainly, texts such as Sir William Alexander's *Doomsday* poem argue against sympathizing with Bajazeth, "Thus that great Monarch was made worse then thrall, / Pryde hated stands and doth vnpitied fall" (O4v qtd in Levin 62).<sup>107</sup> However, who is to say Alexander is not inspired by Foxe or some other history, rather than Marlowe's drama?<sup>108</sup> Levin's other sources are much less hostile. In *Selimus* (1592), Bajazaeth is "That wofull Emperor" (qtd. in Levin 58). Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1599) gives us "Poore Baiazet.... Fortune her selfe is sad to view thy fall" (I.i.187-95 qtd. in Levin 61). Levin does not cite Feltham's lengthy and sympathetic portrayal of Bajazeth (perhaps Feltham fell outside the chronological scope of his project).

---

<sup>107</sup> *The Historie of the Great Emperour Tamerlan* (1597) goes even further to suggest that *Tamburlaine* "was very courteous: onely he desired to abbase the pride of that Turkish Emperour, called *Baiazet*, the thunder of heaven, & would tread upon his head, imitating therein the Diuinity, which pulleth down the proud and raiseth vp the humble" (A4r).

<sup>108</sup> Levin acknowledges that non-dramatic depictions of Bajazeth might influence references to his humiliation (69).

Still, the plays themselves do invite pity for Bajazeth, even if the audience should “resist” such a reading, and despite Cartelli’s insistence that Marlowe, unlike Shakespeare, does not feel compelled to introduce moralistic voices into his plays to critique or guide the audience’s response.<sup>109</sup> True, no one valiantly defends Bajazeth in the cage, but, as Moore notes, Zenocrate does lament the humiliation after the fact. When Zenocrate sees the corpses of Bajazeth and Zabina, she delivers a twenty-five line speech begging “Jove and might Mahomet, / Pardon my love, O, pardon his contempt / Of earthly fortune and respect of pity” (I 5.1.362-64). She also begs “Pardon me that was not moved with ruth / To see them live so long in misery” (I 5.1.368-69). If the audience similarly did not pity Bajazeth when he was alive, then Zenocrate’s guilt might well make some impression on them. Or does the audience resist this long speech? Perhaps they would, but Marlowe is not going to let his audience off the hook so easily. Zenocrate proclaims “Behold the Turk and his great empress!” three times while viewing their corpses (I 5.1.353, 357, 361). One can hardly imagine a more overt cue for the audience to engage with a scene than this command to look at the stage. Has Marlowe laid an emotional trap for the audience, smiling and laughing with them while Tamburlaine mistreats Bajazeth, and then abruptly cutting off the laughter to ask them what was so funny about humiliating torture? We need not imagine a moralizing or didactic Marlowe, only Marlowe *playing* with his audience, turning their own moral codes on them. Marlowe exploits the moral freedom of the stage, as Cartelli suggests, but then, through Zenocrate, he reveals how he has exploited the moral ambiguity of that space and made the audience complicit in the process.

---

<sup>109</sup> For example, Cartelli argues that Shakespeare includes the righteous servant in the scene of Gloucester’s blinding to provide a moral counterbalance to whatever pleasure the audience might take from watching Cornwall’s violence.



What, then, were the lasting effects of Zenocrate's command to stare at a pathetic Bajazeth? Does the audience remember this image when Callapine later invokes his father's name in a bid for pity from his keeper: "Sweet Almeda, pity the ruthful plight / Of Callapine, the son of Bajazeth, / Born to be monarch of the western world..." (II 1.2.1-3)? If the audience does not recall Bajazeth with pity, Almeda does: delivering a sympathetic answer "My lord, I pity it, and with my heart / Wish your release" (II 1.2.5). It is not to undermine an audience's attachment to Tamburlaine to say that Bajazeth, like Lear, might be more sinned against than sinning. We can enjoy (in Cartelli's sense) Tamburlaine and still feel badly for his victims, especially when those victims struggle against his invincible cruelty.

Behavior under duress tells us something about a king's character, and Bajazeth's desperate embrace of his own worth and dignity despite torture and public humiliation may subvert attempts to shame or contain him. Tamburlaine understands this dynamic well: he is willing to absorb his enemies' abuse in order to magnify his own glory. They refer to him as a slave eight times in the two *Tamburlaine* plays, always as a metaphorical insult. In the first instance, Meander plots to trick Tamburlaine's army by throwing gold before them, calling the Scythian shepherd and his comrades "slaves" (I 2.2.67). Although in Marlowe's play he is a lowborn Scythian shepherd, he is not necessarily a legal slave.<sup>110</sup> Rather, Meander assumes that Tamburlaine possesses a slavish appetite and will not be able to resist the allure of shiny objects. Of course,

---

<sup>110</sup> In the English translation of Jean Du Bec's *The Historie of the Great Emperour Tamerlan* (1597), the historical Tamburlaine is actually of royal blood: "He was then of the bloud of the Tartarian Emperors, and hi[s] father Og had for his portion of the Countrey of Satchety, whereof he was Lord" (A4v). Du Bec goes on to explain that historians have mistakenly called Tamburlaine a shepherd because his tribe used livestock as the chief means of determining wealth, but that Tamburlaine himself was no common shepherd (A4v).

Meander underestimates the rebel's ability to appraise worth; Tamburlaine's appetite does not cloud his reason. In the second instance, Cosroe learns that the Scythian has betrayed him and refers to him as "this monstrous slave" (I 2.6.7). That he is "monstrous" suggests that Tamburlaine is spectacular (wondrous even) in his slavery. The third instance comes from the mouth of Bajazeth:

Note the presumption of this Scythian slave.—

I tell thee, villain, those that lead my horse

Have to their names titles of dignity

And dar'st thou bluntly call me Bajazeth?

(I.3.3.68-70)

Bajazeth associates slavery with Tamburlaine's nationality (and with presumption), deriding Tamburlaine's lowly origins. Later, Tamburlaine will transform these unsurprising and predictable insults into signs of wonder.

The Sultan calls Tamburlaine a "slave" twice as he prepares to defend his city against invasion:

The slave usurps the glorious name of war.

See, Capolin, the fair Arabian king,

That hath been disappointed by this slave

Of my fair daughter and his princely love...

(I.4.1.67-70)

For both the Sultan and Bajazaeth, Tamburlaine's "presumption" is *due* to the "monstrous" side of slavery. They believe that a slave's nature is inherently rebellious, which is precisely why slaves must be *forced* into servitude (this idea appears again when

Tamburlaine teaches his son how to drive the royal chariot). By depicting their opponent as a slave, however, the kings inadvertently do Tamburlaine a service; they magnify his achievement and give him greater reason to conquer them. They make his rise to power even more of a wonder, more miraculous, even providential. This reputation as a divine scourge undermines the morale of his enemies, and their assertion of their aristocratic worth merely whets his appetite for what they think he cannot possess.

According to Mark Thurnton Burnett, Tamburlaine's status self-consciousness fuels his need to climb the social ladder: "Tamburlaine freely appropriates the 'names and titles' (I: V.ii. 79) of those he conquers, and anticipates seeing his 'name and honour...spread / As far as Boreas claps his brazen wings' (I: I.i.204-5). Acquiring honour will enable Tamburlaine firmly to establish himself in a society founded on rigid rank distinctions and lineage" (202).<sup>111</sup> While Tamburlaine does desire legitimacy, he also appreciates the utility of his own disparagement.<sup>112</sup> When Zenocrate tells Tamburlaine to punish the enslaved Bajazaeth for his unruly remarks, Tamburlaine responds that he *allows* his enemies to insult him:

To let them see, divine Zenocrate,  
I glory in the curses of my foes,  
Having the power from th'empyrean heaven  
To turn them all upon their proper heads.

(I 4.4.26-31)

---

<sup>111</sup> Burnett's depiction of Tamburlaine's preoccupation with his illegitimacy agrees somewhat with Beatrice Forbes Manz's argument that the historical Tamburlaine "was hampered in the formal legitimization of his rule by his lack of royal descent" (14). Manz acknowledges that he married into royalty to solve the problem, but she emphasizes that his power relies more on his ability to foster "a personal myth based largely in reality" (15).

<sup>112</sup> Compare Tamburlaine, Hal, and the first Brutus, all of whom allow their enemies to disparage them in order to make their ascensions seem more wonderful.

Enduring insults of royal slavery shows his restraint and self-control, but Tamburlaine is also aware that the spectacle of his triumphs depends largely on people's underestimation of his abilities. The more miraculous his success appears, the easier it is for him to sow terror by convincing people that he is the scourge of God. His foes cannot contain Tamburlaine if they do not believe they can.<sup>113</sup>

Concluding that they cannot enslave him physically, Tamburlaine's detractors try to enslave him linguistically.<sup>114</sup> This too backfires, making Tamburlaine look like a sympathetic victim. Consider Ceneus's fateful misinterpretation of Tamburlaine as a Robin Hood figure:

He that with shepherds and a little spoil  
Durst, in disdain of wrong and tyranny,  
Defend his freedom 'gainst a monarchy,  
What will he do supported by a king...

(I 2.1.54-57)

Ceneus believes that Tamburlaine feels victimized, that the shepherd-turned-raider seeks restitution for some royal tyranny. Ceneus then suggests that Cosroe channel Tamburlaine's energies into a force for rather than against the monarch. Ceneus's benign vision of Tamburlaine as tyrant tamer ignores Machiavelli: mercenary forces have a nasty habit of biting the hand that feeds them. An incompetent advisor in a corrupt court, Ceneus encourages Cosroe to view Tamburlaine through a tyrant's eyes, to see how he

---

<sup>113</sup> Describing the historical figure of Tamburlaine, Beatrice Forbes Manz writes "the tradition of the steppe favored the legitimation of personal power, glorifying the self-made man...a successful conqueror was the possessor of a unique good fortune, and to resist such a man was to oppose the will of God" (15).

<sup>114</sup> Ironically, even the name "Tamburlaine" is an attempt to diminish the man. As Harold Lamb observes "Tamerlane is the European rendering of *Timur-i-lang*—Timur the Limper. Timur means Iron, and this alone was his name until his foot was injured by an arrow...The historians of Asia speak of him as Amir Timur Gurigan—Lord Timur, the Splendid—and only as *Timur-i-lang* in the way of vituperation" (28).

can use Tamburlaine as a tool. An audience that witnesses Ceneus and Cosroe underestimate and exploit Tamburlaine is the same audience that is given exclusive peeks at Tamburlaine's worth. Every time characters undervalue Tamburlaine, they set us up to esteem him even more later in the play.

Part II opens with yet another reference (number six) to Tamburlaine's slavery, as Orcanes calls Tamburlaine "slave" (II 1.1.4). Before Tamburlaine had conquered all his foes, his "greatness" was still in question. Because he has gained complete dominance and command, the trope of royal slavery now answers to Tamburlaine's tyranny, not to his base origins. Subsequent references to Tamburlaine's slavishness pertain to his personality rather than his social status. Trebizand refers to Tamburlaine not as a slave directly, but as possessing a slave's nature, cursing Tamburlaine with "burn the villain's cruel heart" (II 3.1.56). Orcanes challenges the "slavish Tamburlaine." (II 3.5.171). These comments return us to the tyrant who is by nature slavish, who rules according to his vices. Tamburlaine's royal slavery changes its pathetic register, becoming an anti-tyrannical trope rather than a device to secure pity for a fallen king.<sup>115</sup>

It is worth pausing here to consider the context and the political ramifications of verbally enslaving Tamburlaine. Royal slavishness calls to mind Platonic definitions of tyranny, but Marlowe does not put this rhetoric in the mouths of Tamburlaine's subjects. One expects rebellious citizenry to accuse bad monarchs of tyranny. One anticipates Brutus and Cassius lamenting the future of Rome's domestic policies under a tyrant Caesar. Those who call Tamburlaine a slave are in a very different position, however. They are foreign rulers or prisoners of war; they are not Tamburlaine's legal *subjects*. For

---

<sup>115</sup> Or, as Cartelli suggests "In the second play, with the stabilization and institutionalization of his power, Tamburlaine often takes on the appearance of his former opponents" (*Marlowe and Shakespeare* 89).

them to call Tamburlaine a slave is to point toward something different than domestic misrule.

The weight of Tamburlaine's rule is felt *outside* his conquered possessions. Tamburlaine sees the potential for a universal kingship, but his view is entirely horizontal. He can imagine his power spreading across a flat map, but he seems to have little interest in extending his power domestically and still less interest in governing commoners; in other words, his kingship lacks government. A.D. Nuttall writes that the play is "all about the toppling of kings;" in fact this is the *only* thing Tamburlaine does (47)<sup>116</sup>. A king in title, Tamburlaine is really only a conqueror.<sup>117</sup> Thus, Marlowe gives us little if any evidence whether or not the people under Tamburlaine's jurisdiction suffer for his *laissez faire* domestic policies. This is not to say that Tamburlaine is entirely oblivious to domestic government. He acknowledges its place at the close of Part One:

And now, my lords and loving followers,  
 That purchased kingdoms by your martial deeds,  
 Cast off your armour, put on scarlet robes,  
 Mount up your royal places of estate,  
 Environed with troops of noble men,  
 And there make laws to rule your provinces.

---

<sup>116</sup> Consider Moore's contrast of Zenocrate and Tamburlaine: "Zenocrate is intimately connected to the earth and its inhabitants; where Tamburlaine sees hordes of unredeemed, expendable people whom he can kill without compunction, Zenocrate sees individuals who live, play, love, marry and raise children. Although Tamburlaine attempts to understand his wife's approach to life after ordering the deaths of the Damascene virgins, he ultimately concludes it is 'unseemly' for him to 'harbour thoughts effeminate and faint'" (Moore 134).

<sup>117</sup> According to Beatrice Forbes Manz, the historical Tamburlaine avoided any royal titles because he was self-conscious that he could not claim a legitimate royal descent; he only referred to himself as "amir—commander" and "He was quick to point out the moderation of his official claims even to people outside his jurisdiction and tradition" (14). In this sense, the historical Tamburlaine parallels Caesar and Oliver Cromwell, two monarchs who refused royal titles.

Hang up your weapons on Alcides' post,  
For Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world.

(I 5.1 521-528)

But "Laws to rule" are an after thought, and they do not apply to Tamburlaine. He nonchalantly orders his contributory kings to make laws but fails to mention what their or his own new legislative powers will entail.<sup>118</sup> As Cartelli writes, "there is nothing particularly reformist or utopian in Tamburlaine's dramatic orientation" (*Marlowe and Shakespeare* 89). Tamburlaine's notion of kingship sidesteps what connects a ruler and nation.<sup>119</sup> He is hardly a king with two bodies. Although he is the conqueror of vast territory, he is like a king without a country.<sup>120</sup> He might enslave himself to desires, but he will not enslave himself to people.<sup>121</sup>

Cosroe alone focuses on the suffering of a nation under tepid leadership, and so it is worth examining his view of kingship:

But this it is that does excruciate  
The very substance of my vexed soul:  
To see our neighbors, that were wont to quake

---

<sup>118</sup> According to Manz, Tamburlaine's people were Mongols descended from Chinggis Khan's tribe who had adopted Islam, but she notes that Tamburlaine's rule was unique in that he did not consolidate power among his own people, instead focusing his attention on erecting "governorships and permanent garrisons" in his territories in the Middle East (1-4). Manz also writes that "Like many other nomad leaders, Temur did not establish a highly structured administration, preferring personal rule over his own followers, and a relatively loose overlordship over settled territories" (12).

<sup>119</sup> Perhaps I should qualify this argument and say that Tamburlaine does not resemble *Western* concepts of kingship and government. Manz shows how his historical antecedent followed a nomadic form of administration and imperial ideology developed by Chinggis Khan (3-4).

<sup>120</sup> Harold Lamb notes that although moderns usually do not refer to Tamburlaine's kingdom by name, it was known as "Tatary" to medieval writers (16) and that a Tatar was "one of the class of high Asia that were named Scythians" (24). See *Tamerlane*. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1928.

<sup>121</sup> Marlowe, then, distinguishes the language of royal slavery from domestic tyranny. If Tamburlaine's tyranny is conspicuous for its lack of domestic turmoil, then Mycetes's tyranny is conspicuous for its lack of royal slave language. We never get to see, hence pity, Mycetes in captivity. Neither do we pity him much when Tamburlaine confronts him. His fall lacks dignity, and it never occurs to him to deploy royal slavery to save face.

And tremble at the Persian monarch's name,  
 Now sits and laughs our regiment to scorn  
 And that which might resolve me into tears,  
 Men from the farthest equinoctial line  
 Have swarmed in troops into the Eastern India,  
 Lading their ships with gold and precious stones,  
 And made their spoils from all our provinces...

(I 1.1.110-122)

The desire to restore Persian glory motivates Cosroe to usurp power, and, unlike Mycetes, he responds nobly to his enemies' ridicule. Here is a prince who at least appears to put his nation's interests before his own. To reward his magnanimity, the Persian soldiers and "gentlemen" crown him as their king, and Cosroe professes to serve the nation and the people, "to wear [the crown] for my country's good" (I 1.1.168). Nonetheless, Marlowe undercuts Cosroe, whose rebellion teaches Tamburlaine to usurp his power just as he usurped Mycetes.<sup>122</sup> Then, to Cosroe's methods, Tamburlaine adds his own style of Scythian terror.

Tamburlaine frightens and he conquers; he is anything but a politician or a patriarch.<sup>123</sup> But as Bajazeth shrewdly acknowledges, Tamburlaine is a "glorious tyrant" (I 4.2.7), a royal slave who is simultaneously a sympathetic tyrant tamer and a fearsome

---

<sup>122</sup> Whether or not Marlowe is concerned about the moral implications of dramatically staging rebellion in his play, other authors were deadly serious on the matter. Jean Du Bec writes that he takes his life in his hands to relate the history of Tamburlaine, comparing it to the Roman histories that Guevara lamented: "Do you not thinke that the Historie of the Romaine ciuill warres hath not beene the occassion of the ouerthrow of many common-wealths?" (A4r-v).

<sup>123</sup> Because he himself is the binding force of his empire, he leaves his empire with nothing to unite it other than his own son's grip. Manz explains that Tamburlaine's success did not transfer to his sons, but observes that a unified national identity was key to preserving the Mongolian institutions that enabled Tamburlaine's to gain power (10).



overlord. Only death has the power to level such a perplexing and magnificent figure. For all of Tamburlaine's pomp and ability to conquer vast empires, he is, in the end, subject to death and disease (and, some might say, bratty children). He is Fortune's darling and he would command the gods, but he cannot overcome mortality. He must suffer Zenocrate's death and then his own. And this, his subjection to death, makes for the final, and most grand, image of royal slavery in the two plays.

Feltham writes that "There is no *Spectacle* more *profitable*, or more *terrible*, then the sight of a *dying man*, whe[n] he lyes expiring his *soule* on his *death-bed*" (L2r). His depiction bears on Marlowe's Tamburlaine:

To see the *Countenance*, (through which perhaps there shin'd a *louely Maiesty*,  
euen to the captiving of *admiring soules*) now altered to a frighthfull *palesnesse*,  
and the terrours of a *gastly looke*. To thinke, how that which commanded a  
*Family*, nay perhaps a *Kingdome*; and kept all in awe, with the mouing of a  
*spongie tongue*, is now become a thing so full of *horroure*, that *children* feare to  
see it...Where in stead of shaking of the *golden Scepter*, it now lyes imprison'd  
but in fiue foot of *Lead*: and is become a *nest of wormes*, a *lumpe of filth*, a *box of*  
*pallid putrefaction*. There is euen the difference of two seuerall Worlds, betwixt a  
King enamel'd with his *Robes* and *iewels*, sitting in his *Chaire* of adored *State*,  
and his condition in his *bed of Earth*, which hath made him but a *Case of*  
*Crawlers*...Who may not from such sights and thoughts as these, learne, if he will,  
both *humility* and *loftinesse*. (L2v-L3v)

Does death teach Tamburlaine humility? Does his death teach us humility? Even in the face of doom, Tamburlaine hitches kings to his son's chariot to show the enormity of his

own power. Whether or not Tamburlaine himself perceives its significance, the image of kings pulling a car like horses recalls figures of subjection to Fortune, God, and Death. Jeremy Burrough's *Moses' Self Denial* (1657) recalls the story of Sesostris, a king of Egypt who, like Tamburlaine, enjoyed having his chariot drawn by four kings:

and one of them had his eyes continually upon the wheel; whereupon *Sesostris* asked him what he meant by it? he answered that it put him in mind of the mutability of all earthly things; for I see, saith he *that* part of the wheele which is now upon high, is presently down beneath, and *that* part which is now below, is presently upon high: where upon *Sesostris* being moved, considering what mutability might be in his own estate, he would never have his Chariot drawn after that manner any more. (D6v)

Tamburlaine, having already been at the bottom of Fortune's wheel, has risen to the top. There is no chance of losing his conquests to another man now. Does Marlowe invoke the image ironically to undermine Tamburlaine's efforts, or is Tamburlaine defying Fortune even in death? Either death proves that Tamburlaine is ultimately its subject, or death serves Tamburlaine by sparing him the shame of losing his good fortune.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE PATHOS OF ROYAL SLAVERY

Seven years after Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays saw print, Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Richard II* (1597) depicted an imperfect monarch walking a thin line between victimizing and playing the victim. Shakespeare does not mask or excise Richard's improprieties, as Marlowe does with Bajazeth. The English king behaves badly

throughout the play, greatly hindering the effectiveness of any pro-monarchical royal slave rhetoric.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, not only is there little to pity in Shakespeare's Richard, Richard seems to prefer it that way. During his surrender to Bolingbroke, he intentionally performs the Guevaran monarch *ad nauseum* in order to shame his successor rather than earn himself pity (if Cassius constructs a straw-man tyrant, this tyrant constructs a straw-man usurper). This is not to say that audiences are devoid of any pity for Richard; there is perhaps something pathetic in his self-destruction. And certainly his death scene invokes some degree of sympathy. Still, Richard is most interesting as a royal slave when he consciously sabotages both himself and the typically sympathetic appeal of an enslaved king.

In his discussion of Richard's deposition, William Slights observes that although "acts make Richard an outlaw and a tyrant, unfit to rule England...this does not mean that our sympathies must rush to the side of Bullingbrook" (244-47).<sup>125</sup> Yes, Slights describes "Richard's subjects turning against him with a unified, human will" (251), but he also suggests that Bolingbroke "joins Richard in becoming well and truly *bawchled* [shamed/humiliated]" (255). Does Richard shame his enemy more than himself? Is Richard more sinned against than sinning? Is his shame pitiable or humiliating? S. Schoenbaum argues that Shakespeare's appeal to conflicting views within audiences

---

<sup>124</sup> Not just royal slavery but enslavement to a king is at issue in *Richard II*. Richard refers to commoners as slaves, "What reverence he did throw away on slaves" (1.4.26-28). John of Gaunt says England "is now bond with shame, with inky blots and rotten parchment bonds" (2.1.63). The Earl of Northumberland stirs rebellion amongst the nobles by invoking language similar to Cassius and Brutus: "we shall shake off our slavish yoke" (2.3.293).

<sup>125</sup> Also see Jonathan Goldberg "Rebel Letters: Postal Effects from Richard II to Henry IV" *Renaissance Drama* XIX. (1988): 3-28. Goldberg notes that Shakespeare's Richard refuses to read the deposition he is delivered, although the speech follows almost verbatim the written deposition that the king is depicted as having read in Holinshed (3-4). Also see Leeds Barroll "A New History for Shakespeare" where Barroll refutes new historicist arguments that the early quarto versions of *Richard II* "suppressed" Richard's deposition speech and instead conjectures that Shakespeare might have simply revised the play to include the speech after the quarto was published (448).

corresponds to historical disagreements as to whether Richard was a pitiable martyr or cowardly tyrant (95).<sup>126</sup> Discussing the famous performance of *Richard II* arranged by Essex's men, Schoenbaum asks "Why *Richard II*? After all, the play hardly comes across as an inflammatory tract in favour of deposition and regicide. Richard in his sufferings is too sympathetic, and ultimately (at Pomfret Castle) heroic, while Bolingbroke in his triumph is too ambiguous" (99).<sup>127</sup> If Richard is, finally, sympathetic, if he does win *our* pity, it is because his rhetoric affects us differently from how it affects Shakespeare's characters.

Any pathos we feel stems at least in part from Richard's repeated self-depictions as a royal slave, even if pity is not the first thing we feel. In fact, his royal slave rhetoric often serves another purpose entirely; it may only be after his death that we recall the pathos of such language. For instance, Richard's juxtaposition of king and slave in his lament "A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey" (3.2.206) is probably self-serving. It is more convenient to make himself out to be a slave to an abstraction, than to Bolingbroke. He can preserve his dignity if he can convince himself, others, and us that he strives against unavoidable, universal forces.

---

<sup>126</sup> According to Schoenbaum, Shakespeare merged two contemporary dramas that presented opposing depictions of Richard: the good king in *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* and the cruel machiavel in the *Woodstock* play (95-96).

<sup>127</sup> Schoenbaum answers his own question by suggesting that it was not the revolutionary aspects of the play that appeal to Essex's camp. Rather, Schoenbaum catalogs a long list of associations between Richard and Elizabeth. Although not exactly arguing in favor of a sympathetic Richard, Leeds Barroll suggests that new historicists have blown the performance of the play for Essex's men far out of proportion in order to depict the play as "subversive." See Leeds Barroll "A New History for Shakespeare" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39.4 (Winter 1988): 441-464 and "Shakespeare, noble patrons, and the pleasures of 'common playing.'" *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*. Paul Whitfield and Suzanne R. Westfall, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 80-124. In both essays, Barroll makes the case that council proceedings were notably disinterested in the performance itself (at which Essex and his main conspirators were apparently not even present). Rather, he suggests that those responsible for selecting the play were enthusiasts of drama and possessed a "naive" and ultimately unrealistic belief that "this medium [was] powerful enough to intensify a delicate political situation" (113).

Like Lear in the wilderness and Guevara's servant-prince, he appeals to the king's natural body: "I live with bread, like you; feel want, / Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus, / How can you say to me I am a king" (3.2.171-73). To juxtapose "subjected" and "king" is to reinforce the royal slave image and to forge a connection between the king and his subjects. Now at least, Richard, who did not identify enough with his subjects, *seems* to ask them identify with him. But does Richard really want his subjects to identify sympathetically with him or is he deprecating his rivals?

As with Bajazeth, it is sustenance that levels king and commoner; a king faces the same stark realities and opposes the same universal forces that all humanity must confront. With good reason, Richard blames his subjects for expecting a broken mortal to achieve some kind of superhuman holiness, but he also implies that the English can hardly expect Bolingbroke, as another mere mortal, to fare any better. It is as if the crown itself causes tyranny, not the man wearing it. Again, Richard reminds us of Guevara, insisting that there is no escaping slavery, whether to other people or cosmic forces, whether one is a king or a subject.<sup>128</sup> While Richard is too accusatory to elicit true pity in this scene, he does effectively embarrass his disloyal subjects and take them down with him through his own excessive parody of a selfless monarch.

Richard's Guevaran rhetoric is further suspect because of its public and histrionic nature. Perhaps Richard is more pitiable when he suffers privately in his prison cell, where he contemplates universal human slavery to fortune. He debases himself in this soliloquy, but his acknowledgement of his own shame can inspire pity:

---

<sup>128</sup> See Hugh Grady on the "instrumentality" of power in *Richard II*: "What do I mean in claiming that the logic of power in *The Prince* is instrumental...that is, the logic of power is a reified logic to which the prince must, qua prince, ultimately submit even while appearing to be utilizing it as his instrument" (65). Even a powerful machiavel is enslaved by something, even if it is just an ideology.

Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves  
 That they are not the first of fortune's slaves...  
 Thus play I in one person many people,  
 And none contented. Sometimes am I king;  
 Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,  
 And so I am...

(5.5.23-34)

When Richard speaks of “treason,” does he refer to his subjects’ betrayal, to his betrayal of his subjects, or to his desire to be a beggar? Earlier, he calls himself a traitor for relinquishing power to Bolingbroke, at the same time invoking another image of his royal slavery:

I find myself a traitor with the rest  
 For I have given here my soul's consent  
 T'undeck the pompous body of a king,  
 Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,  
 Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

(4.1.238-42)

Richard over-eagerly concedes the crown while also reminding his audience that deposing a divine-right monarch perverts God's law. At one and the same time, Richard stages what Robert M. Schuler calls a “*de-coronation*,” and a series of “inversive formal gestures mark Bolingbroke's proceedings as bereft of legality or religious solemnity” (197). Richard's self-debasement steals some of Bolingbroke's triumph and taints the rest. As Harry Berger argues, Richard is “effective in political terms, given what I take to

be his project: to get himself deposed, pick out a likely 'heir' to perform that service, reward him with the title of usurper, and leave him with a discredited crown and the guilt of conscience for his labor" (169). In effect, Richard uses royal slave imagery to poison the crown, thereby committing treason against himself and the *future* king.<sup>129</sup>

Richard, who foreshadows Henry V's laments on the burden of rule, claims that he is all too glad to escape royal service: "Say, is my kingdom lost? Why 'twas my care, / And what loss is it to be rid of care?" (3.2.91-92), "Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down. / My care is loss of care by old care done...The cares I give I have, though given away; / They 'tend the crown, yet still with me they stay" (4.1.185-89). And yet, ironically, kingship still burdens Richard even after he relinquishes authority, and his arrogance and flippancy discourage those around him from sympathizing with him. Out of context, what he says constitutes familiar and agreeable arguments for pitying the royal slave. *How* he frames his arguments suggests motives other than a desire for sympathy or pity.

Richard exploits his abjection to mock his detractors. If his enemies thought he had been too self-centered, then he will play the completely selfless king in a dramatic *reductio ad absurdum*: "What must the King do now? Must he submit? / The King shall do it...Must he lose / The name of King? A God's name, let it go" (3.3 142-45). Richard's subjects win a selfless monarch at a cost to their own dignity because they show no more humility to the completely selfless king than to the tyrant. Richard would have his subjects shame themselves. When he plays the part of martyr-king for the court and

---

<sup>129</sup> Berger writes, "the succession of kings in the *Henriad* is a genealogy of guilt that, seeded in Richard's own self-division, transmits itself with increasing virulence" (Berger 170). That patriarchy transmits guilt rather than authority is the central argument in Lucy Hutchinson's *Order & Disorder*.

claims that kingly “cares” beleaguer his mind (although he deftly avoids detailing what precisely those cares are), he reminds us of Guevara’s prince, whose solitary royal sufferings hide beneath the trappings of majesty. It is in a tyrant’s interest to make a public show of suffering and play the part of Guevara’s internally and invisibly agonized king (the virtuous king prefers to suffer privately).<sup>130</sup> He perplexes us with his reappropriation of royal slave rhetoric. A subtle machiavel, he plays the despot while he professes his own human weakness; he tyrannizes by giving away power.<sup>131</sup>

Does Shakespeare provide his audience a privileged glimpse of genuine Ricardian suffering by staging his soliloquy in a prison cell, or has imprisonment made real the sufferings at which Richard merely played? The interior, psychological nature of royal suffering ultimately may render such questions unanswerable. Less mysterious is how Richard uses his own catastrophe to make himself appear a tragic hero and to make Bolingbroke appear an ungrateful subject. If King Richard cannot win the hearts of his subjects, then he can still win some shred of sympathy from Shakespeare’s audience. If his subjects throw mud on him when he is led in triumph, then the least he can do is dampen the applause at Henry IV’s ascension. Even an enslaved monarch can bring shame upon a rebel. Those who witness Richard’s performance at his decoronation know

---

<sup>130</sup> Berger’s Bolingbroke steals some of Richard’s rhetoric when he “tries to attribute his insomnia to the political burden that accompanies the crown rather than to the moral burden that accompanied its acquisition” (Berger 169). Again, Berger’s assessment of the *Henriad* anticipates arguments I will make concerning Lucy Hutchinson, who suggests that monarchical insomnia is due to guilty consciences rather than paternal worry.

<sup>131</sup> See Berger on mercifixion, the act of showing mercy in order to oblige the recipient, in “Marriage and Mercifixion in The Merchant of Venice: The Casket Scene Revisited.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32 (1981): 155-62. Describing the psychological games Portia and Bassiano play, Berger writes:

So free and generous a gift is nevertheless carefully itemized to remind him of her value and worth, and hence of his obligation. He comes, he says, like one contending for a prize, “to give and to receive”; she only gives, and gives him all, and with a flair for self-advertisement that lays him under a burden of gratitude beyond his means to discharge...She is a Christian, and she knows the power of the charity that wounds (161).



that he plays his selflessness to the hilt. History, however, is a blind witness, and Bolingbroke's successor remembers Richard with more pity.

Richard II is hardly a charmer, yet Shakespeare aims for at least a degree of tragic catharsis on his behalf. If royal slavery aids such an unpopular tyrant, what more can it do for a popular king? In *Henry V* (1599), a king's prayerful lament might even move God to pity. Henry's prayer recalls Richard's prison meditation about the burdens of royalty, and Richard is very much on Henry's mind. For Berger, Henry V's concern for Richard's soul (rather than his own father's) irrefutably proves the effectiveness of Richard's pathetic appeal: "As to Richard, his ultimate victory over Bolingbroke is won on the eve of the battle of Agincourt, when Henry V resurrects his spirit and utters his sharpest, most explicit indictment of his father" (186). What is it that makes Henry think of Richard? Is it pity for the usurped tyrant or the royal slave? Is Henry ashamed of his father's indirect order to murder the deposed king? Or has Richard's tyrannical reputation been rewritten? Whichever drives Henry's thoughts, the self-proclaimed slave-king bears down on the newest monarch precisely when the latter ponders his own royal slavery.

In the morning hours before the battle of Agincourt, King Harry famously laments his princely sufferings, closely echoing Guevara's description of the suffering monarch:

O hard condition,  
 Twin-born with greatness: subject to the breath  
 Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel  
 But his own wringing. What infinite heartsease  
 Must kings neglect that private men enjoy?  
 And what have kings that privates have not too,

Save ceremony, save general ceremony

(4.1.215-22)<sup>132</sup>

The king's human limitations undermine his majesty. He thinks of Christ's suffering when he considers: "What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more / Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?" (4.1.223-24). He questions the logic of the Christian Man-God who would allow himself to suffer more than his creation, and in doing so departs significantly from Guevara. Whereas the Spanish bishop describes a king's burdens to a prince-in-training, Henry describes the king's burdens to God even while acknowledging God's first-hand experience of management and suffering. Such a meditation subverts Guevara's aim, or, as Claire McEachern writes the "play is as vigilant in limiting the scope of common feeling as it is in encouraging it" (46). Shakespeare shows how Guevaran metaphor can lead a king down a path of self-pity, a way that leads to tyrannical self-interest, what Jonathan Goldberg calls Hal's "self-love" ("Hal's Desire" 48), and disdain for the subject. Henry's relations with commoners in particular are already strained; he has signed off on the execution of his former companion, Bardolph, and he fails to convince his troops of his just cause. Even in private, Guevaran rhetoric

---

<sup>132</sup> Compare Henry's royal insomnia and his description of ceremony to the Guevaran overtones of Brackenbury's speech in *Richard III*:

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,  
 Makes the night morning and the noontide night.  
 Princes have but their titles for their glories,  
 An outward honor for an inward toil,  
 And for unfelt imaginations  
 They often feel a world of restless cares;  
 So that, between their titles and low name,  
 There's nothing differs but the outward fame

(1.4.70-79)

Dennis Kezar takes up the issue of the king as private man to suggest that the play (and particularly the debates with which Henry V engages his common soldiers prior to this scene) interrogates the limits of royal authority: "Politically, the 'reason of state' question had raised but not settled the issue of whether and to what extent a prince was subject to private morality, and this debate had taken place in a broader conversation about the distribution of power and accountability between prince and people" (432).

sounds unfitting in the mouth of a king as Henry appears to be both Christ and the Tempter in the wilderness, asking God for mercy while also asking himself why a king should suffer as a martyr when he might live in pleasure as a tyrant. Is this, too, the influence of Richard's spirit?

It is easy to miss how his lament could be tyrannical because Henry seems to disdain the attractive material goods that draw men to crowns:

O ceremony, show me but thy worth...  
 No, thou proud dream  
 That play'st so subtly with a king's repose;  
 I am a king that find thee, and I know  
 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,  
 The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,  
 The intertissued robe of gold and pearl...  
 That beats upon the high shore of this world—  
 No, not all these, laid in bed majestical,  
 Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave...

(4.1.226-50)

But rejecting materialism is not the same as loving one's people; it may even sound like ingratitude. Henry's royal vision of greener grass is not exactly egalitarian or realistic. Rather, he can only imagine happy slaves who live carefree and content: "Who with a body filled and vacant mind / Gets him to rest, crammed with distressful bread; / Never sees horrid night, the child of hell" (4.1.251-53). Henry idealizes servitude and then debases the drudge to make himself more pathetic. In the process, do we not hear some

echo of Richard's revilement of the masses? Who are these blissfully ignorant slaves? Surely not the free English whom Henry drags from their sweet repose to suffer the bloody torment of war with France?

... from the rise to set  
 Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night  
 Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn  
 Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,  
 And follows so the ever-running year  
 With profitable labour to his grave.  
 And but for ceremony such a wretch,  
 Winding up days with toil and nights with sleep  
 Had the forehand and vantage of a king.  
 The slave, a member of the country's peace,  
 Enjoys it, but in gross brain little wots  
 What watch the King keeps to maintain the peace,  
 Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

(4.1.226-66)

Further to his discredit, Henry's speech obfuscates the language of slavery. The slave's labor may be profitable, but only to the master. The slave who has no part in society is hardly "a member of his country's peace." Finally, Henry's slave is transformed into a peasant, as good as an English commoner. Although Henry envies this commoner, his envy is suffused with disdain; the subject is a "fool" whose "gross brain little wots" royal suffering. By driving a wedge between himself and the people rather than embracing his

subjects, the frustrated English king sunders the pity that Guevara expresses in his comparison of slave and king. Mere rhetoric will not earn God's pity—it may in fact hurt Henry's cause.

Critics have had plenty to say about whether Henry is sincere or pulling one over on us, maybe even himself, when he assumes the slave's obsequious stance and begs.<sup>133</sup> While nothing can guarantee his sincerity, he has at least enough humility to appear humble, and nothing in his speech undermines his earnestness the way Ricardian mock-humility would. He certainly pleads that he is Christ's humble and active servant, and he does so while recalling Richard's deposition as pitiable:

Not today, O Lord,  
 O not today, think not upon the fault  
 My father made in compassing the crown,  
 I Richard's body have interred new,  
 And on it have bestowed more contrite tears  
 Than from it issued forced drops of blood.  
 Five hundred poor have I in yearly pay...  
 More will I do...  
 Though all that I can do is nothing worth,  
 Since that my penitence comes after ill,  
 Imploring pardon.

(4.1.274-87)

---

<sup>133</sup> Camille Wells Slights, for one, writes that Henry V “illustrates the basic paradox of the emotional workings of the early modern Protestant conscience, the simultaneous presence of buoyant certainty and abject fear. Protestants stress the confidence of the regenerate conscience, but they also insist on its total humility” (45).

Henry at first strikes a dubious bargaining posture with God, as if paying out doles could buy God's favor. He also recalls that forgiveness is a divine grace when he admits that his charity is "nothing worth." The king realizes that God pardons offenses freely—and that His grace is terrifying precisely because it lacks the predictability of human contracts. Even a penitent sinner cannot barter a pardon through an exchange of charitable deeds, nor can he bribe or entice God. He cannot *convince* God to be merciful, but he can hope for God's pity. Thus, Henry concludes his speech by recalling the service that the monarch pays to the poor as well as his helpless subservience to God as the High King. Here, Henry finally conjoins his sufferings with those of his people, and, perhaps, redeems himself.

Needless to say, not all critics see Henry V as a type for Christ as royal slave. Goldberg notes that what frightens Henry is God's wrath punishing the son for the sins of the father; Henry "proclaims his own perfection and dumps his faults upon those who love and desire him" ("Hal's Desire" 48). Henry does not question his own complicity in instigating this aggressive war (his clerical advisors have already assumed the guilt for him), so any failure must be due to some prior fault. William Leahy suggests that the pathos of Henry's prayer and the glory that his speeches promise distract the audience from his flaws and the gross *faux pas* in his treatment of Michael Williams: "The glossing over of contradiction has been a part of a greater tendency to transmit the idea of Henry V as the perfect monarch, the unifying force in the drive towards English nation-statehood that reached its zenith in the era in which the play itself was written, and which Shakespeare was celebrating" (Leahy 90). McEachern, however, suggests that arguments such as Leahy's emerge from a modernist (rather than an early modernist) skepticism of

national identity and its attempt to make individual king “identifiable for a corporate nation” (36-37).<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, the very flaws that Leahy decries might make the king sympathetic. We can believe more readily in a Henry who is imperfect, and it is to Henry’s advantage to appear human at times.<sup>135</sup> And Leahy overlooks Greenblatt’s own concessions regarding Hal: “the subversive doubts the play continually awakens originate paradoxically in an effort to intensify the power of the king and his war...Unambiguous celebrations of royal power with which the period abounds have no theatrical force” (“Invisible Bullets” 62-63). McEachern might disagree with Greenblatt as well as with Leahy.

Greenblatt concerns himself with theological doubt rather than servitude, but he does invoke paradox to explain how flaws might make Henry attractive. In her exhaustive study of the Renaissance paradoxes, Rosalie L. Colie writes that the original form of the paradox was an encomium on something deemed unworthy, such as baldness or a fly. Enslavement fits such a category. When Guevara and Henry V contrast king and slave in favor of the latter, their texts sound like encomia on slavery; one would much rather be a slave than a king after reading such accounts. According to Colie, the rhetorical point of such counter-intuitive praise is to persuade the audience not of the goodness of the phenomenon itself but of the timeworn goods that are brought to fresh light in the process. One is not supposed to read a paradox on baldness and subsequently shave off all of one’s hair. Likewise royal slave paradoxes do not justify slavery. One is not

---

<sup>134</sup> See McEachern’s essay “Henry V and the Paradox of Body Politic” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45.1 (Spring 1994): 33-56. McEachern’s argument would be useful for comparing Henry V to the Moses since it suggests that the play promotes a common national identity through a identifying with an individual leader.

<sup>135</sup> McEachern complains of critics who deliver “nonsensical diagnosis of a flickering presence of Henry’s personhood or humanity. In other words, it produces a discourse of relative human-ness, when, taxonomically speaking, either one is human or one is not” (37).

supposed to come away feeling less sympathy for slaves because kings suffer more than they do. Rather, the point is that slaves are very pitiable, and, therefore, kings are even more pitiable. The royal slave paradox invokes pity and admiration for a king who patiently endures his lot in life. While enslaved kings are not inherently good as such, kings who humbly recognize their limits have goodness in them. Thus, the ultimate royal slave paradox for the Renaissance lies in God the servant, the greatest becoming least, the most powerful being graciously recognizing his self-imposed limits. This paradox spawns a political theology according to which earthly kings ought literally to serve the needs of all subjects.<sup>136</sup> Thus the royal slave paradox is more than a rhetorical appeal; it is a speech act that requires a king actually to behave like the servant to whom he compares himself. Few kings live up to this ideal, some approach it, and others prove themselves more slave than royal.

Consider Caliban and *The Tempest* (1611), a play in which Shakespeare emphasizes the servitude of the royal slave and which (like the *Henriad*) stages sovereignty, subjection, and usurpation. What is pertinent in this instance is obviously Caliban's claim that Prospero has deposed and enslaved him.<sup>137</sup> Indeed, Caliban employs several of Richard II's tactics in attempts to shame his opposition, but also to garner sympathy from overhearers. Caliban, an actual, physical slave, also vexes Henry V's and Guevara's claims that a king's suffering far outweighs the menial sufferings of a drudge. Can any

---

<sup>136</sup> If all of these reminders that greatest should serve the least sound too much like platitudes, Colie provides a ready answer. She writes that certain highly successful paradoxes can become so ubiquitous in a culture's literature that paradox becomes orthodox.

<sup>137</sup> It has become something of a critical commonplace to note similarities between Ferdinand and Caliban, since Ferdinand is an enslaved prince who assumes Caliban's wood-bearing duties (and also assumes Caliban's would-be role as mate for Miranda). Ferdinand's servitude is a Guevaran pedagogical exercise in humility. Ferdinand must first learn to serve before Prospero can trust him to rule.



king honestly say he suffers more than this perpetually tortured creature?

In his first major speech to Prospero, Caliban curses:

All the charms

Of Sycorax – toads, beetles, bats – light on you,

For I am all the subjects that you have,

Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me

In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o’th’island.

(1.2.340-47)

Caliban’s description of Prospero’s rule is slightly disingenuous. The slave is well aware of the spirits of the island, but he does not describe their political relationship to Prospero. They, too, are not entirely free subjects (at best, Ariel is a kind of indentured servant). Furthermore, Caliban seems less concerned about his forced labor than his property rights. Caliban says “you do keep from me” not “you do keep me from.” Prospero does not merely restrain Caliban—he withholds a possession from his slave, and this makes Caliban unique among Prospero’s servants. The spirits have lost no property, therefore they do not share Caliban’s grievances.

Critics have taken Caliban’s concern for property as their cue to describe seventeenth-century property laws and royal succession. For Patricia Seed, Caliban’s claim highlights differences between early modern British and Spanish property laws and how they affected those nations’ imperialist drives. Similarly, Donna Hamilton argues that Caliban’s rhetoric parodies what could have been heard in the House of Commons, especially with regard to a subject’s absolute right of property. Others, such as Stephen

Orgel, have argued that Caliban's claim draws attention to the legitimacy of his own birth and thus makes the creature a commentary on British succession. While the play is certainly interested in property and succession, it has more interests in slavery than pursuing this tangled legal web in terms of Caliban's rights.

Might Caliban have another purpose in claiming that he is a deposed king? If he is trying to elicit sympathy from Prospero by pointing out their common plight as overthrown rulers, his rhetoric hardly achieves this effect. Perhaps Caliban directs his rhetoric toward an audience of unseen overhearers and intensifies a sense of his loss by casting himself as the fallen king. After all, he has won significant ground within recent critical discourse. Like the blind Gloucester or mad King Lear, Caliban reaches beyond his enemies and wins sympathy from bystanders who witness his harsh slavery.<sup>138</sup>

Caliban's awareness that he is overheard becomes evident in his wood-bearing monologue. He explicitly states, "His spirits hear me, / And yet I needs must curse" (2.2.3-7). Caliban repeatedly expresses his belief that the island's spirits listen to him and that they are also sympathetic towards his cause (although in this instance, he believes they will tattle on him). In the same soliloquy, he claims that

they'll nor pinch,  
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i'th'mire,  
Nor lead me, like a firebrand in the dark,  
Out of my way unless he bid 'em.

(2.2.24-27) <sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> Or perhaps Caliban is more like Richard who dies in a valiant sword fight witnessed only by the play's the audience. Whether or not Caliban is speaking for spirit overhearers, we hear him.

<sup>139</sup> In this speech, he refers to the spirits in the third person, not the second. Whom is he reminding that he is overheard?

Caliban, perhaps naively, imagines that these spirits are like him. They merely follow Prospero's commands and do not act out of their own free will. Believing that the spirits would refuse to harm him if not for Prospero, he calls for solidarity with them. He believes that his freedom rests on building a new nation on the island.

This desire for a slave fellowship influences Caliban's perception of his world. When he begins to interact with Trinculo, Caliban says "Thou does me yet but little hurt. Thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling. Now Prosper works upon thee" (2.2.78-80).

Caliban mistakenly concludes that Trinculo trembles because he resists some unseen force or, at the very least, that Prospero's remote possession of a spirit involves a violent overthrow of that spirit's self.<sup>140</sup> Prospero's drudge restates his belief that the wizard compels spirits to harm him against their wills. The slave projects an emotional bond between himself and what he believes is a controlled spirit, and there is, no doubt, something pathetic about witnessing one so desperate for a connection. When conspiring with Trinculo and Stephano, Caliban further explains (hopefully) that without his magic book, Prospero is "but a sot, as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command. They all do hate him / As rootedly as I" (3.2.94-95). According to Caliban, the spirits would gladly turn against their master if they could; they would also like to restore a Calibanic monarchy. If only in his mind, there is potential energy locked up in these oppressed beings.

For better or for worse, this would-be rabble-rouser has no real rabble to rouse.

Without a nation, he is only a type of quasi-Moses.<sup>141</sup> This is the problem that Caliban

---

<sup>140</sup> Jeffrey Knapp observes that Miranda makes a similar mistake when she first sees Ferdinand (236).

<sup>141</sup> Whether or not Shakespeare consciously uses Moses as a source, the royal slavery of Moses and Caliban is striking. Ania Loomba has observed that Caliban's attire is the gaberline—the same dress that Shakespeare has Shylock wear, perhaps suggesting a Hebraic connection. First Moses' birth narrative

tries to solve through his attempted rape of Miranda. He intends to generate a nation that will respond to his words, peopling the isle with Calibans, a race sprung from his loins and supportive to his claim to be its patriarch and king.<sup>142</sup> Without genetic progeny, Caliban can only hope to appeal to a shared geographical and cultural identity, depicting himself as the former benevolent monarch over the island's spirits. He would be a Moses leading the spirits to liberty after sharing their slavery if he only could stumble upon some *deus ex machina* to plague Prospero (and if the spirits would have him for a leader).

In the same speech in which he depicts himself as a deposed ruler, Caliban says to Prospero "then I loved thee / And showed thee all the qualities o'th' isle: / The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile" (1.2.337-9). This is the Caliban who was a loving and generous monarch—at least by his own report. His royal magnanimity is evident from the generosity which he showed toward his guest Prospero, until that guest usurped his power and compelled him to do that which he had previously done graciously. He was, as others have noted, a prelapsarian Adam—an ideal ruler.<sup>143</sup> Would

---

begins in the context of Pharoah's fear that the Hebrews have become too numerous, a fear that parallels Caliban's threat to people the isle with Calibans. Prolific slaves are a problem that every master race faces when holding a people in bondage. Second, Caliban and Moses face similar circumstances. Their mothers choose to preserve the lives of their sons by a journey across water, despite attempts by the powers that be to have their offspring die of exposure. Third, Caliban's monstrous birth inverts Moses' oft-mentioned glorious birth. According to Prospero, Caliban's father is a devil. As Ruth Mellinkoff persuasively argues, a mistranslation in Anglo-Saxon paraphrases of the Old Testament led Renaissance artists to imagine Moses with demonic horns. Fourth, Moses and Caliban both fight magicians. Fifth, Caliban would call down plagues on Prospero, just as Moses called plagues upon Pharaoh. Sixth, just as Moses led the Jews through the desert, Caliban claims to have guided Prospero from barren wastes to fertile land. Seventh, early modern political theorists viewed Moses as a king—and numerous texts make much of his relationship with Aaron as an allegory for the proper balance between Church and State. The power of Prospero's magic books over Caliban's claim to sovereignty might then provide a negative example of Church/State relations. Finally, and crucially for my purposes, both figures reiterate their loss of princely title for rhetorical effect. Texts such as *Moses, his self-denial* focus on the way Moses gains stature by losing royalty. Caliban, of course, laments his loss of princely title.

<sup>142</sup> Julia Renihard Lupton would suggest that Caliban can never be a Moses figure that forms a nation due to his very being: "by definition, the Creature belongs to Creation, not to Nation" (21).

<sup>143</sup> As Jordan writes, "his history suggests that his appetitiveness was preceded by an earlier and primordial state in which he was ignorant of possession. Lust in any form other than desire for satisfaction of bodily needs appears to have been unknown to him. An innocent and essentially *prelapsarian* Caliban is shadowed

this have made him an object of pity for some early audiences? Did Caliban figure into debates regarding the patriarchal origins of power, debates that would have tremendous significance for republicans later in the seventeenth century? Or do Caliban's claims to Adamic kingship simply backfire, reminding the audience of Adam's just punishment for disobedience? Julia Reinhard Lupton suggests that Caliban possesses both "pre-lapsarian innocence and postlapsarian lawlessness" (14) and that "Caliban's urge toward Miranda links him to Adam's blessing and identifies him with Adam's sin" (19). The characters in *The Tempest* express no sympathy for Caliban because his kingship is an illusion.

Whatever he was before Prospero arrived on the island, he is not Lucy Hutchinson's Adam who revels in his rustic chores (*Order and Disorder* 6.61). Were Caliban the selfless monarch that he claims to have been, it would have been because he did not know he was a monarch. Certainly, he is not the Moses who, commentaries explain, embraced his loss of royalty to rise above base and worldly thoughts.<sup>144</sup>

Caliban's speeches, his soliloquy, in particular, have an intended audience that is obviously meta-theatrical. As I have said, Caliban assumes that he is being overheard by the invisible spirits about the isle, but perhaps also by the play's audience. After all,

---

in his own account of Prospero's arrival" (168). Also see Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan's *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, 1991 (82), and Melvin Seiden's "Utopianism in *The Tempest*." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 31 (1970) 3-21. Caliban is also often linked to Adam through his association with American Indians, whom early modern writers often associate with the denizens of Eden. Julia Reinhard Lupton writes "As a solitary Adam on an island to which he is native, but not natural, Caliban first stood apart from the rest of creation as his 'own king' (1.1.342)" (2). However, she also argues that he is a kind of anti-type to Adam, "whereas Adam's naming project places him at the head of creation, Caliban's language lesson places him *within* creation" (8).

<sup>144</sup> Caliban is also similar to Moses in that both seem aware of a literary audience. Early modern readers sometimes questioned whether, but commonly assumed, Moses was both the author of the Pentateuch and the object of authorship: Moses is both a literary character and an extra-biblical, prophetic intelligence. Early modern biblical hermeneutics require that we consider not only how characters understand other characters' rhetoric, but how readers interpret Biblical dialogue as well. Moses' call to the people of Israel to form a nation is also a call to the biblical reader to form a nation. Moses the literary character does not merely speak to other characters, he also speaks to an eavesdropping audience.

whom is he supposed to be talking to in his soliloquy on the spirits?<sup>145</sup> If we grant Caliban a meta-theatrical awareness, then perhaps his failure to overthrow Prospero should not be counted as a complete loss. He cannot unite the spirits because they are powerless to resist, and they might not even be sympathetic. He does achieve some solidarity with Stephano and Trinculo within the play itself, but his real success has been achieved in the field of criticism where his call has become a rallying cry.

Peter Hulme and William Sherman argue that Caliban begins his conquest of literary scholars in the latter part of the eighteenth century: “Caliban’s insistent claim to the island was beginning to get a more sympathetic hearing in a climate marked by a Romantic interest in ‘natural man’, revolutionary sympathy for the downtrodden, and a burgeoning aversion to the slave trade...” (11). In an extremely thorough theater history of *The Tempest*, Trevor Griffiths argues that the rise of Caliban as a central and sympathetic figure is due to a convergence of Darwinist, abolitionist, colonial, and Imperial thought in the mid-nineteenth century that saw Caliban as a lowly native ripe for enlightenment. Griffiths then traces the theatrical iterations to their eventual consumption and redeployment by Caribbean authors. According to Loomba, “In the early part of the twentieth century, the play was widely appropriated by anti-colonial artists and intellectuals in Africa and the Caribbean” (21). Thus, modern critics have been far more receptive to the appeals of royal slave rhetoric than the fictional audience within the play itself, although little work has recognized Caliban’s appeals as part of a larger royal slave tradition. Hulme goes so far as to say that post-colonial theory often treads dangerously close to describing Shakespeare as prophetic, as having created a Caliban able to appeal

---

<sup>145</sup> One might ask this question of any soliloquy, but Caliban’s is unique in his explicit awareness of a potential audience of overhearers.

to an audience the playwright could not see. Perhaps modern readers perceive that Caliban is talking to them because he sounds as if he is talking to no one in the play. Whomever he addresses, Caliban's royal slavery is tragic in his own mind. He continues to troll for an audience—and for willing subjects.

### TO PITY AND TO SHAME: ROYAL SLAVERY IN *THE RAPE OF LUCRECE*<sup>146</sup>

In the Shakespearean plays that I have discussed, royal slavery generates conflicting responses of pity and shame towards a particular character. *The Rape of Lucrece* takes a different approach. This tragic poem activates royal slave rhetoric to shame Tarquin and to pity Lucrece. Royal slavery sharpens Tarquin's tyranny, showing his interior struggle (and ultimate failure) to resist his own appetites. However, like Caliban's, the Roman prince's appetites are more than sexual. Tarquin violates Lucrece to assert his own political identity, desiring what Shakespeare calls Lucrece's "sovereignty" (69). She responds to his assault by weaving royal slave imagery, hoping to shame Tarquin into behaving as a proper monarch. Described by Shakespeare as a captive, hence enslaved, queen, Lucrece awakens our pity. But her metaphorical royalty complicates recent republican interpretations of the poem.<sup>147</sup> If Shakespeare were offering readers some kind

---

<sup>146</sup> Analysis of *Lucrece* breaks slightly with my chronological narrative. I have chosen to discuss it after *The Tempest* because its republican context sets up my subsequent discussion of Lucy Hutchinson's explicitly anti-monarchical use of royal slavery.

<sup>147</sup> Critics of the poem have explored topics other than republicanism; for example, Heather Dubrow looks at early modern psychology, arguing that "Tarquin puts himself through the paces of a traditional Renaissance debate between reason and will" (Dubrow 128). Catherine Belsey attempts to link the discussion of slavery in the play to the historical Roman practice of slavery as well as the emerging African slave trade. Likewise, Edward T. Washington suggests that the darkness of Tarquin's lust recalls transatlantic slavery (Washington 132). For his part, Derek Hughes objects to depictions of Tarquin as African. In his essay on *Oroonoko*, Hughes condemns critics who see Tarquin's swarthinness as evidence that Tarquin is black or that Tarquin's darkness expresses an early modern bias against dark-skinned

of implicit republican allegory, as critics have suggested, then why does the narrator sympathize with Lucrece *as a queen* at the very moment that he denounces Tarquin as a slave? Through Tarquin, the poem equates an absolute ruler's corruption with a mob's rebellion. Through Lucrece, the poem equates the tragedy of a subject's oppression with a monarch's fall. Although its *moral* sympathies are unequivocal, this *politically* ambivalent poem interrogates the horrors of both tyranny and rebellion.

At first glance, the poem appears to articulate Tarquin's slavery in the language of love slavery rather than political discourse. Marion A. Wells argues that Collatine employs *enaergia*, a rhetorical device that uses imagery to "enthrall" or to "captivate," to enslave Tarquin to an image of Lucrece during the siege of Ardea (par 8).<sup>148</sup> For Catherine Belsey, Tarquin's royal slavery depends on the rhetorical device *syneciosis* (the union of opposed ideas) to refigure his love slavery (323-25). But Tarquin is no Hercules or Antony, who serve the objects of their desire. Antony pledges his sword to Cleopatra, and Hercules kneels before Omphale. They are slaves to love; Tarquin is a slave to desire. He expresses no interest in *serving* Lucrece because he is a love *tyrant*. And language of love masks a desire for power.

The former conceals tyranny because it disguises an appetite for control as an apparent desire to be controlled. When Tarquin first sees Lucrece, the prince metaphorically appears as a prisoner of war, and (as we have seen in the Mosaic commentaries) vanquished captives are synonymous with slaves in classical warfare:

This silent war of lilies and of roses

---

people. Hughes counter-argues that all men in Renaissance painting are depicted with significantly darker skin than their female counterparts.

<sup>148</sup> See Marion A. Wells, "'To find a face where all distress is stell'd': Enaergia, Ekphrasis, and mourning in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Aeneid*." *Comparative Literature*. 54.2 (Spring 2002): 97-126.



Which Tarquin viewed in her fair face's field,  
 In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses;  
 Where, lest between them both it should be killed,  
 The coward captive vanquished doth yield  
     To those two armies, that would let him go  
     Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

(71-77)

Not only is Tarquin's eye "captive" in the war between the colors of Lucrece's face, his captivity is shameful.<sup>149</sup> The eye is a "traitor" and a "coward" fearing to "be killed." Maddeningly for Tarquin, Lucrece is unaware that she has captured him. Indeed, her skin's battling colors war against each other; they are ignorant of their prisoner altogether. If he is slain or captured, it is because he wandered into crossfire on a battlefield where he did not belong. Indeed, there is no honor in doing love-combat with such a dishonorable figure as Tarquin, whose very desire to be conquered and enslaved is shameful to a culture that values freedom over life itself.

Tarquin acknowledges his slavish shame, and he is the first in the poem to employ the word "slave" against himself:

'O shame to knighthood, and to shining arms.  
 O foul dishonour to my household's grave.  
 O impious act including all foul harms,  
 A martial man to be soft fancy's slave.

---

<sup>149</sup> For Katherine Maus, military metaphor "allows Tarquin to depict a rash and lawless act as coordinated and disciplined" (Maus 67-8). However, the poem's imagery hardly suggests coordination or discipline. Tarquin's army is a ragtag militia of slaves: "And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting, / Obdurate vassals fell exploits effecting... / Anon his beating heart, alarum striking, / Gives the hot charge and bids them do their liking" (427-34).

True valour still a true respect should have;

Then my digression is so vile, so base,

That it will live engraven in my face.

(197-203)

Tarquin's self-awareness increases his shame. He knows he is at fault but persists. Love discourse abruptly turns political, however, when Tarquin further wrangles with his conscience and asks: "Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown, / Would with the sceptre straight be stricken down?" (216-17). Intending to dissuade himself from rape, he tells himself that it is foolish to overreach. Doing so can only lead to suffering. But that he casts himself as the rustic beggar under another sovereign power suggests that he has begun to feel sorry for himself, ignoring for the moment that he is a crown's heir.<sup>150</sup>

The image of the beggar and king debases Tarquin at the same time that it puts Lucrece rather than himself in the position of the king defending himself from touch. Thus, even though Tarquin tries to convince himself that it would be base for him to pursue Lucrece, he depicts himself as a courtier lover, desperately trying to achieve a lofty goal far above his deserving. He romanticizes his baseness at the very moment he disparages himself. He revels in his shame. And yet, by imagining Lucrece as a *king*, he desexualizes her attractiveness. It is the royal power she signifies that he desires, not her womanly charms.<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> Tarquin's image of the beggar and the king also foreshadows his potential for tyranny. The king is perhaps justified in keeping the beggar in his place, but what kind of monarch bludgeons a slavish beggar with a symbol of majesty? Tarquin's vision of kingship is harsh, cruel, and jealous.

<sup>151</sup> By imagining Lucrece as an oppressive king, does Tarquin project his father onto her? Is the rape actually a usurpation of Tarquin Superbus's power? Perhaps Tarquin intentionally sabotages his father's reign. Also consider Macbeth's speech on the way to King Duncan's chamber, when he describes "the wolf, / Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace, / With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design / Moves like a ghost" (2.1.53-56). Macbeth as Tarquin desires sovereignty as he invades the bedchamber.

Lucrece desperately tries to unravel, in some cases reverse, the imagery of love slavery. Indeed, the image of a king beating down upstart beggars is precisely what Lucrece *wants* Tarquin to imagine later in the poem, so long as Tarquin is the king and the beggars are his passions. Thus, Lucrece counter-intuitively plays on his fondness for tyranny by challenging Tarquin to turn his tyranny back on himself, to treat his desires as the slaves they are and violently to oppress them as he would her. If Tarquin will not behave as a good prince, if he must be a tyrant, then at least he ought to assume complete control over his subjects, that is, his own desires. Needless to say, his lack of control over those desires is what makes him a tyrant in the first place, so Lucrece is reduced to wielding shame as her last defense. Still, she continually refers to Tarquin as both a prince and a king, insisting that heroic nobility stems from his self control rather than a quest for the unattainable. She tries to divide his baseness from his royalty, facetiously questioning whether Tarquin is really even himself:

‘In Tarquin’s likeness I did entertain thee.  
 Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?  
 To all the host of heaven I complain me.  
 Thou wrong’st his honour, wound’st his princely name.  
 Thou art not what thou seem’st; and if the same,  
     Thou seem’st not what thou art, a god, a king;  
 For kings like gods should govern everything.

(596-603)

This is not to condemn monarchy but to argue for what a king *should* be. Although her pure virtue might not see through Tarquin’s initial dissembling, Lucrece understands she

lives in an imperfect world. She recognizes the gap between how kings should rule and how they actually do. Lucrece is virtuous, not naive. Indeed, her ability to imagine a world of mercy and virtuous nobility (despite her situation) heightens the tragedy of her oppression.

Lucrece's subsequent attempts to school the prince on proper statecraft, even in the face of his tyranny, read like Guevara's political didacticism. She has a sophisticated and practical understanding of power relationships and the distinction between ruling through love and fear:

‘This deed will make thee only loved for fear,  
But happy monarchs still are feared for love.  
With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,  
When they in thee the like offences prove.  
If but for fear of this, thy will remove;  
For princes are the glass, the school, the book,  
Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

(610-16)<sup>152</sup>

Love breeds love, fear breeds fear. The economy of power is reciprocal in Lucrece's worldview, and love is the best currency of proper rule. Lucrece would also have it that power entails accountability. She deploys language of royal slavery, juxtaposing king and vassal:

If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,  
What dar'st thou not when once thou art a king?

---

<sup>152</sup> See the reference to Colin Burrow (in my first chapter) for how these lines allude to Erasmus and other early modern political theorists.

O be rememb'ed, no outrageous thing  
 From vassal actors can be wiped away;  
 Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

(605-609)

Lucrece argues that rulers, like their subjects, are culpable for their sins; but she also argues that rulers bear more guilt because of their loftier station. Just as Feltham argues that royalty increases the intensity of suffering, so Lucrece argues that royalty increases the gravity of sin and dishonor. That is, the depth of Tarquin's slavery is directly proportional to the height of his social status. His royalty calibrates his slavery:

'The baser is he, coming from a king,  
 To shame his hope with deed degenerate;  
 The mightier man, the mightier is the thing  
 That makes him honoured or begets him hate

(1002-1005)

While Lucrece works assiduously to preempt tyranny, at no point does she offer up an alternative to kingship.

Significantly, she warns that Tarquin *will* become a royal slave if he goes through with his evil; she does not condemn him to royal slavery yet. She is careful not to overstep her bounds, knowing that she must maintain some degree of courtesy despite the situation or else risk aggravating Tarquin further. She shames him in potential:

'So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave;  
 Thou nobly base, they basely dignified;  
 Thou their fair life; and they thy fouler grave;

Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride.

The lesser thing should not the greater hide:

The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,

But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root.

(659-65)<sup>153</sup>

In short order, Tarquin reverses that threat of shame back on Lucrece even as she begins to utter one last royal slave metaphor:

'So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state'—

'No more', quoth he. 'By heaven, I will not hear thee!

Yield to my love; if not, enforced hate,

Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee.

That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee

Unto the base bed of some rascal groom

To be thy partner in this shameful doom.

(666-72)

Tarquin silences Lucrece with slavery on her lips; he has already surrendered his self-command to those vassals. Understanding that Lucrece believes it would be shameful to yield to a slave, he threatens that he will leave her corpse with one so that she will appear to have committed the same sin that she accuses him of performing. Violence and terror are not enough to break the virtuous Lucrece, so he threatens to destroy her Roman honor:

If thou deny, then force must work my way;

---

<sup>153</sup> It is not until Tarquin is absent that she fantasizes on Tarquin literally becoming a royal slave: "Let him have time to live a loathed slave" (984).

For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee.  
 That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,  
 To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;  
 And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,  
 Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

(513-18)

Whereas classical sources indicate that Lucrece yields to Tarquin at this point, Shakespeare does not show Lucrece surrendering; he merely lets Tarquin have the last word. But Tarquin's threat is more prophetic than he acknowledges. As Dubrow notes, "slander is a kind of verbal equivalent of rape itself: the powerful overcome the weak, the evil turn the good into images of themselves" (138). Tarquin's words are not merely the verbal equivalent of the rape; he (perhaps unwittingly) makes good on his threat *by* raping her.<sup>154</sup> He threatens to say she has had sexual relations with a "worthless slave," and the imagery throughout the poem shows us that Tarquin is this worthless slave. He would effectively slay both her and his slavish self and leave them both for dead.

After Tarquin escapes, Lucrece bears more of the royal slave imagery. In military terms, Lucrece is Tarquin's captive, his spoils of combat.<sup>155</sup> She even depicts herself as a slave, asking Time,

Why hath thy servant Opportunity  
 Betrayed the hours thou gav'st me to repose?  
 Cancelled my fortunes and enchained me

---

<sup>154</sup> Ian Donaldson acknowledges the paradox that Tarquin's victory is self-destructive, perhaps even a "self-rape" (52).

<sup>155</sup> Maus proposes that the poem takes its own tropes seriously: "Love is not merely *like* war; it is war" (Maus 76). If Tarquin's will is indeed at war with Lucrece's body, then conquering her by force allows him to claim her as a slave, by rights of war, just as he had hoped previously to be taken as her slave.

To endless date of never-ending woes?

(932-38)

If Lucrece is a slave, however, she is also a royal slave. The poem first depicts Lucrece as royal when it recounts Collatine's fateful description of her to his rivals:

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sov'reignty

Suggested this proud issue of a king;

For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be.

Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,

Braving compare, disdainfully did sting

His high-pitched thoughts, that meaner men should vaunt

That golden hap which their superiors want.

(35-42)

Tarquin is incensed not simply because Collatine has the most beautiful and virtuous wife, but because Collatine, a mere noble, dares claim to possess *sovereignty*.<sup>156</sup> This tyrannical son of a tyrant is drawn to Lucrece as an allegorical figure of power, as we see when he views the war of colors on her face:

This heraldry in Lucrece' face as seen,

Argued by Beauty's red and Virtue's white;

Of either's colour was the other queen,

Proving from the world's minority their right;

Yet their ambition makes them still to fight,

The sov'reignty of either being so great

---

<sup>156</sup> Granted, the immediate meaning of "sovereignty" simply means Lucrece's superiority over other women in the contest of virtue, but we see from the account of Tarquin perceiving the war of colors on her face that the word conveys more political meanings to the tyrant-prince.



That oft they interchange each other's seat.

(64-70)

When Tarquin sees her face, he sees a world in terms of “ambition” and “sovereignty” as well as the continual usurpation of one queen by another. Lucrece’s face is a field of glorious battle and political conquest, where Beauty and Virtue appear not in terms of moral worth but in terms of tyrannical desire. This desire deviates sharply from what others have generally assumed were Tarquin’s motivations. For instance, Ian Donaldson argues that “Tarquin may wish to rape Lucrece (Shakespeare suggests) precisely *because* she is so chaste, so invitingly, arousingly, perfect” (49-50). Stephanie Jed, while not referring directly to Shakespeare’s account, indicates that “Salutati attributes the cause of Lucretia’s rape to chastity alone” (7, 44) and that Livy likewise holds that Lucretia’s chastity was what incited Tarquin (9). Where we expect to see the virtue of self-conquest, Tarquin sees mere power. Surprisingly then, Shakespeare’s Tarquin perceives in Lucrece’s body a power that appeals to his own tyrannical and political appetites.<sup>157</sup>

Lucrece’s royalty heightens the pathos of the poem at the same time that it complicates its politics.<sup>158</sup> Ian Donaldson is fairly unique among scholars in his stance that despite the poem’s traditional republicanism, “it is worth noticing, behind and despite this irony, what basic respect for kingship is implied, and how heinous the very notion of rebellion is made to appear, Shakespeare’s royalism is the stronger for being implicit and unapologetic, rooted firmly as it is in the imagery and metaphorical

---

<sup>157</sup> As a queen, she is not divided into masses like Tarquin. The only division Shakespeare makes in Lucrece is between her soul and body, and Lucrece argues that they are inextricable, the queen’s two selves. If the poem were more sympathetic to republicanism than to monarchy, why would it describe its most sympathetic character as a monarch and its least sympathetic character as a collective? Also, not only does Collatine possess a good that the prince lacks, Lucrece herself has a self-possession missing in Tarquin.

<sup>158</sup> As the enslaved sovereign, Lucrece also becomes Feltham’s ultimate tragic figure (only she is a diligent worker and no “soft Wanton”).

language of the poem” (Donaldson 117). Most recent critics, however, would disagree. Stephanie Jed notes that the traditional narrative has virtually always been to defend republicanism and reject monarchy, and most critics have thus assumed that Shakespeare’s poem must in some way subvert monarchy and celebrate rebellion (2). Annabel Patterson concludes that “One might plausibly suggest, then, that the republican motive of the poem, its ‘deep policy,’ as compared to its ‘shallow habit’ of rhetorical display, is itself repressed in the figure of Brutus, whose disguise was only intended to be temporary, biding his time for revelation” (“Framing” 308). Elsewhere she convincingly shows that the poem was appropriated by republicans and (perhaps less convincingly) conjectures that Shakespeare used most of the poem as “psychological and rhetorical filler” (301) to sneak his republican message past the censor (309).<sup>159</sup>

For Catherine Belsey, if Tarquin’s desires take the form of popular rebellion, then this points to Shakespeare’s populism and foreshadows the Tarquins’ exile and the dawning Republic (325-26).<sup>160</sup> According to Michael Platt, Shakespeare encodes an anti-monarchical message in the Argument (Platt 64).<sup>161</sup> Moreover, the intended effect of Lucrece’s lament is to stir rebellion in the reading audience. Platt suggests that “we are being mobilized in a Republican army” (72). True, Lucrece’s extended complaint might

---

<sup>159</sup> Patterson insinuates that the poem, like *Richard II*, connects Shakespeare with Essex’s revolt: “Was it merely coincidence that two editions of the poem appeared in 1600, the year when Essex was under house arrest and formal investigation for disobedience or worse?” (309). Did the poem express a secretly subversive message against the government? Possibly, but in the realm of pure conjecture, the poem could be as useful in sneaking pro-royalist arguments into the minds of revolutionaries attracted to the tale of Lucretia. Perhaps, one might just as easily argue, the real political message is hidden in seeming “rhetorical filler,” a kind of monarchist purloined letter or subliminal message. Any attempt to politicize the poem, whether as republican or monarchist, is fraught with peril. As Leeds Barroll argues in the case of *Richard II*, the poem could be a text that complicates the entire political spectrum, and yet audiences with political agendas appropriate it as their own, missing how it may critique their own point of view.

<sup>160</sup> The advent of the Republic did not entail the crowning of slaves. While a council of “best men” was elevated, imagining them among the “basely dignified” is hardly flattering to a Consul or democracy. Furthermore, Smith describes a democracy as the degeneration of a republic, a form of anarchy.

<sup>161</sup> Platt acknowledges that within the poem Lucrece instructs Tarquin to become a king (Platt 67).

stir hearts to revenge, but Platt provides no evidence that the complaint itself directs the audience towards rebellion or wholesale rejection of a political system. It might just as well mobilize the audience not to commit crimes that can spark revolutions. Furthermore, Lucrece's cry for revenge is directed at an individual—Tarquin—not a system of government. It is not that Lucrece fails to see the tyranny in Tarquin's action, but she sees her rape as a matter of private interests. That is, an individual human being commits the sin of rape; therefore, a human deserves punishment. To attack monarchy instead, to turn attention towards abstract political philosophy, provides Tarquin with a scapegoat. It is Brutus, with whom the poem is notably uninterested, who tries to make Lucrece's suffering about contemporary politics, who places more blame on the system than on its individual members.

Edward T. Washington argues that frequent references to the lower classes, flattering portrayals of servants, and Brutus's servile guise conduce to a social revolt, although for Washington this is the overthrow of a genre, not a government (134). In a more disturbing turn of phrase, Washington writes that Tarquin is "Lucrece's antagonist and literary antithesis, who, in the guise of dark lust, purges Lucrece's 'perfect white' (394) literary hegemony: a bold and transgressive, but also needful action, not unlike the purging of kingly hegemony that describes the broader political theme of the poem" (128). Even ignoring the unsettling description of Lucrece's rape as a "needful action," one looks in vain for a need to purge "kingly hegemony."<sup>162</sup> Rather, throughout Tarquin's *psychomachia* and Lucrece's debate, the poem considers how *unnecessary* the

---

<sup>162</sup> Jed notes "from the earliest historiographic records, some 'erotic' offense is always required in order to justify the overthrow of tyrants" (3). However, Donaldson cites a passage in which Machiavelli suggests that if Lucrece had not been raped, some other scandal would have been the occasion of revolt (104). Patterson refers to the same quote from Machiavelli in order to explain Nathaniel Lee's focus on Brutus rather than Lucretia in his 1680 whiggish play *Lucius Junius Brutus* (*Reading* 300).

Republic would have been if only Tarquin chose to behave like a true prince. Certainly the poem never suggests that royalty enables or excuses Tarquin's misbehavior.

Tarquin's royalty, Lucrece argues, actually makes him *more* likely to suffer ill consequences in the distant future. Even after the fact, Lucrece suggests that royalty will not shield Tarquin. If anything will, it is his *baseness* (not royalty) that she says will protect him when she begs Time,

Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill.

At his own shadow let the thief run mad,

Himself himself seek every hour to kill:

Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill,

For who so base would such an office have

As sland'rous deathsman to so base a slave?

(995-1001)

Here, Lucrece comes up against a frequently acknowledged loophole in slave culture: no one with honor wants to lay hands on an untouchable. Hence, only dishonored Tarquin is fit to take his own life. One sort of shame failed to prevent Tarquin from violating Lucrece and now another sort of shame might even save Tarquin from punishment.

Shame had not previously freed Tarquin from self-enslavement and it remains ineffective as a defense for Lucrece. Still another form of shame will plague her; when she imagines Tarquin's self-slaughter she foreshadows how her own belief in her shame will lead to her own suicide.

Note that Lucrece begs Time for personal revenge, not for the overthrow of a political institution. She, if not modern critics, sees no hope in a republican government that bows

to the self-interests of its lower classes. What hope she has lies in people humbly submitting to true sovereignty and to government under a single, rational head. As Dubrow observes, the poem does not argue for an egalitarian ideal. If anything, “a vision of a corrupt and disloyal society typically engenders in [Shakespeare’s] mind an opposing vision of a Golden Age marked not by the classlessness normally associated with that happy time but rather by loyal and unquestioning service” (Dubrow 96). Shakespeare provides us with two examples of good servants in Lucrece’s employ, but also with a rough and frightening depiction of the commoner militia ready to pillage and rape when given the opportunity. Perhaps, the servants’ goodness stems from their mistress’s example, not their inherent virtue. Although Collatine is technically the patriarch of the household, Lucrece manages domestic affairs while he is busy banging swords. The servant’s goodness relates to their mistress’s virtue: if a slavish prince inspires ambitious slaves, a sovereign mistress inspires noble servants.

The most politically-balanced reading of Shakespeare’s poem comes from Ian Donaldson, despite Patterson’s accusations that his is a pro-royalist argument (*Reading* 309). Patterson takes particular objection to Donaldson’s argument that the truly subversive nature of the poem comes “through subtler and more positive means” by which Shakespeare manages “not merely to neutralize but actually to reverse the story’s traditional significance” (116). Patterson objects to the idea that Shakespeare either could not or “would not want to” question monarchy (*Reading* 309). But Patterson’s retort overlooks Donaldson’s earlier concession that “The poem gives a constant sense of problems perceived, but not solved; of ‘disputations’ which are neither concluded, nor, on the other hand, finely poised in their inconclusiveness...[Shakespeare is] content to

allow the story to drift down its traditional narrative course” (56). Although Donaldson does specifically refer to what he calls “Shakespeare’s royalism,” his point is that much of the “rhetorical filler” which critics are so swift to dismiss as boring poetry weighs heavily against republicanism. Perhaps Lucrece’s royal slave arguments are not heavy enough to tip the scale against millennia-old assumptions about her rape, but they will take us in surprising directions if we listen more closely to them.

*The Rape of Lucrece* does not, then, leave us with a comfortable or clear response to tyranny. Although Lucrece is a subject, Shakespeare’s poem suggests that to rebel in her name is to avenge a fallen sovereign. Thus, the rebel Romans fight for the honor of an enslaved queen, not for the sake of a future Republic. It may be that Lucrece’s faith in monarchy is misplaced; all the pro-monarchical political rhetoric of the early modern world does not save her from Tarquin’s tyrannical cruelty. However, if the language of royal slavery does not save Lucrece from Tarquin, it does win her our pity. Perhaps Shakespeare’s poem is concerned not so much with advocating one form of government over another as it is with interrogating how one would go about writing a tragic poem in a world that no longer knows true kingship or true slavery.

## **FROM PITY TO SHAME: POLITICAL APPLICATION IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY HANDBOOKS**

Although Lucrece’s political rhetoric fails to save her from Tarquin, early modern polemicists continued to apply its principles well into the seventeenth century in order to reform (or even overthrow) monarchs. Indeed, Lucrece’s arguments often sound

anachronistically like early modern Christian handbooks when sin and divine authority slip into her discussion of Tarquin's power:

Hast thou command? By him that gave it thee,  
 From a pure heart command thy rebel will;  
 Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,  
 For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.  
 Thy princely office how canst thou fulfill,  
 When patterned by thy fault foul Sin may say  
 He learned to sin, and thou didst teach the way?

(624-25)

Who is it that gave Tarquin power to command? Surely Lucrece is not referring to Tarquin Superbus. Nor does the figure she describes resemble pagan Jove, himself an imposing adulterer. By introducing moral theology into political discourse, Shakespeare's Lucrece anachronistically refers to a Judeo-Christian God and predictably asserts that political authority requires obedience to supernatural authority.<sup>163</sup> She also articulates an early modern commonplace regarding kings as servants of God and the subjects of death, concepts that figured significantly in the debates precipitating the English Civil War.

Christian concepts inform early modern political handbooks that dwell on kings' subservience to death and God (who look upon all in the world as subjects, king and slave alike). As Guevara recalls, the existence of God turns all rulers into servants to a higher authority—all kings are royal slaves in Divine servitude. Universal subjection to God and death, which may frighten tyrants and subjects into submission, also levels the

---

<sup>163</sup> Christ to Pilate: "Thou coldest haue no power at all against me, except that it were giuen thee from aboue." (S. Iohn XIX.11). The Geneva gloss explicates this line as "Hereby he shewe him, that he oght not abuse his office and autoritie."

ranks of humanity.<sup>164</sup> In his *Family reformation promoted in a sermon on Joshua* (1656), Daniel Cawdrey writes that masters should consider “Their Equality, in regard of God, ye (also) have a Master; and so fellow-servants, Math.24.49...In heaven, servants are admitted there; no respect of person with God; And yet there is far greater distance between God and them, than between them and their servants” (90).<sup>165</sup> William Gouge’s *Of Domestical Duties* (1622)<sup>166</sup> holds that equality in God’s eyes ought to inspire greater compassion from masters: “Knowing that your master also is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him...If masters did duely weigh this point, that, howsoever in regard of outward government there be some difference betwixt them and their servants, yet before God they are as fellow servants, would they be over-rigorous and cruel? Would they not be kinde and gentle?” (Yy1r-Yy2r). While not denying hierarchies among men, these writers assert that the gulf between even the greatest human king and God is so great as to make negligible any distinction among humans. Their demand that kings rule with more mercy and justice is hardly anti-monarchical, but it is certainly reformist.

---

<sup>164</sup> Although somewhat dated, Gordon Schochet’s *Partriarchalism in political thought; the authoritarian and political speculation and attitudes especially in seventeenth-century England*. New York: Basic Books, 1975 canvases the patriarchal debate in the period, including discussion of domestic metaphor and a very useful analysis of Filmer’s primitivist theories. Also see Jonathan Goldberg’s “Fatherly Authority: The Politics of Stuart Family Images.” *Rewriting the Renaissance*. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, Nancy J Vickers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 3-32. Goldberg argues ways in which patriarchalism combines domestic fatherhood with political authority. Equally compelling is S.D. Amussen “Gender, Family, and the Social Order, 1560-1725” *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Eds. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 196-217. Amussen argues that Parliament often became the shrewish wife in such domestic-political allegories.

<sup>165</sup> According to the DNB, Daniel Cawdrey (1587/8–1664) was an upstart non-conformist clergyman in the Church of England whose particularly volatile Puritanism often set him at odds with Laud. He appears to have supported Parliament’s cause, making his the most rebellious of the domestic sermons described in this section.

<sup>166</sup> According to the DNB, William Gouge (1575–1653) was a Church of England clergyman, an “Arch-Puritan” in his strictness, and a famous preacher in his day. The DNB observes that he was opposed to the trial and execution of Charles I as unconstitutional. Although Gouge critiques his king, he does not use it to undermine the king’s authority.



Although they call masters to task for their misdeeds, these domestic handbooks stop short of rebellion. Typically, they encourage the oppressed to plead to God for justice. Cawdrey argues that servants who feel oppressed by unjust masters should seek refuge in God's righteousness: "If their Masters reward them not, God will: if they wrong them, God will right them, upon their masters. He that doth wrong (though a Master) shall receive for the wrong he hath done" (E7r). Joseph Bentham's *The Christian Conflict* (1635) warns masters to treat servants fairly while "Remembering that God will revenge injuries done to them" (X6v).<sup>167</sup> Gouge imagines a Dantean retribution against improper masters: "God will doe the same things to all sorts of masters that they doe unto their servants...If the greatest that be abuse the meanest, they shall not escape. Wherefore, O masters, giue no iust cause of complaint to any seruant" (Yy3r). Telling servants to bear punishments and even wrongs patiently makes for a familiar, anti-revolutionary polemic. Where rebellion is envisaged, it is itself providential.

In *Eikon Basilike*, the voice of Charles constantly tells the people that they should leave their monarch's fate up to God. Milton retorts in *Eikonoklastes* that royalist rhetoric underestimates the true power behind the revolution. Milton invokes Providence and God's justice in relation to Charles's fall: "Who would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all-seeing deity, so little reverence of the Holy Ghost...so little care of truth in his last words...or sense of his afflictions, or of that sad hour which was upon him..." (408). Moreover, writes Milton:

---

<sup>167</sup> According to the DNB, Joseph Bentham (1593/4–1671) was another Church of England clergyman, but only a moderate Puritan whose non-conformity largely centered on a correlation of predestination and personal morality. He was, purportedly, a very conformist of the Puritan clergymen who denounced criticism of Charles I as unfit for the godly. Like Gouge, he uses royal slave imagery to call for reform without revolution.

This the king here denies; adding a fearful imprecation against his own life, “if he purposed any violence or oppression against the innocent, then,” saith he, “let the enemy persecute my soul, and tread my life to the ground, and lay my honor to the dust.” What need then of more disputing? He appealed to God’s tribunal, and behold! God hath judged and done to him in the sight of all men according to the verdict of his own mouth...indeed it is his doomsday-book...the record and memorial of his condemnation; and discovers whatever hath befallen him, to have been hastened on from divine justice by the rash and inconsiderate appeal of his own lips. (420-21)

Such language assures anti-monarchists that they were the body of God’s wrath inflicting punishment on Charles for his crimes against the state. Charles’s sin is that he forgets that the last shall be first—that to be a ruler in a Christian state means to be a servant of God and of all men. Rebellion does God’s will by reducing the greatest to the least.

Christians like Robert Pricke take their paradoxes seriously. In *The Doctrine of Superiorite and of Subjection contained in the fifth commandment of the holy law of almightie God* (1609), he articulates the ethic of the servant-ruler, he who makes himself last without coercion:

Lastly, maisters are instruments and meanes wherby the Lord coueyeth many graces and benefites unto servants...An house, an habitation, together with a lawful calling to attend upon, which is not euery mans case. Secondly, masters do free their servants, and defend them from many disgraces, iniuries & oppressions, which otherwise they should suffer at the hands of them, who are mightier than themselves. Furthermore, maisters direct their servants in a course seruing to their

comfort and benefit: who of themselues, would runne hedlong into a number of miseries & destructions. (M3<sup>v</sup>-M4<sup>r</sup>)<sup>168</sup>

Pricke describes masters as God's "instruments," a term commonly used to describe a slave's status as an inhuman object. While he reinforces seemingly egalitarian notions of universal servitude, Pricke also maintains an Aristotelian notion of a brutish servant class when he suggests that servants would be unable to manage themselves if left to their own devices. Nevertheless, Pricke states explicitly that the purpose of rule is to ensure the welfare of servants rather than the welfare of masters. Such an assumption abuts on a widespread seventeenth-century debate about how humanity came to be divided into subjects and masters, a debate that often revolved around primitivist arguments concerning the origins of society.

In his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Milton argues: "No man who knows ought, can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free, being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were by privilege above all the creatures, born to command and not to obey: and that they liv'd so" (255).<sup>169</sup> While this certainly has the support of biblical tradition—the first man and woman are given dominion over the Earth—these remained matters for the great political theorists (like Filmer and Hobbes) to hammer out. How did the first governments arise? Where does authority and power come from? How do their origins justify contemporary government? These questions

---

<sup>168</sup> According to the ESTC, T. Creede printed Pricke's sermon for sale by Ephraim Dawson and Thomas Downe. The sellers printed the book again in 1616. In 1608, Thomas Creede published a funeral sermon that Pricke gave at the double funeral of Sir Edward Lewkenor and his wife. According to this sermon's title, Pricke had already passed away himself by the sermon's publication. According to the DNB, Sir Lewkenor was a great patron of the puritans, and one of the first aristocrats to take up the cause.

<sup>169</sup> Norbrook notes that Adam's early "kingship" was a problem for Milton: "For a conservative royalist like Filmer, Adam's role as both father and king was a buttress for all subsequent societies based on traditions of subordination and mystery of state. Milton needs ideologically to distinguish Adam's role in the household from the monarch's role in the state" (483).

occupied monarchists, parliamentarians, and republicans throughout the mid-seventeenth century. When parliamentary poets such as John Milton and Lucy Hutchinson sought to answer these questions, they relied on scripture, and this chapter concludes by analyzing how Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* uses biblical royal slavery to undermine patriarchal mythologies justifying monarchy. I turn to *Paradise Lost* in the chapter that follows.

## LUCY HUTCHINSON AND THE CURSE OF KINGSHIP

Well after Charles II's restoration, the widow and biographer of the prominent Parliamentary Colonel John Hutchinson composed a biblical epic entitled *Order & Disorder* (1679).<sup>170</sup> This incomplete poem (only a fraction of which was published in her lifetime) reads less like a religious meditation than like a grand anti-monarchist concession speech. But this is no conciliatory or obsequious concession. It is a scathing and vitriolic lambaste of her conquerors; after the fashion of Shakespeare's Richard II, Hutchinson uses her party's defeat to undermine the authority of her foes. She greets royalist arguments only to subvert them, always hoping that the failed puritan republic will be vindicated by God's final judgment. Leveling ideologies upend class values, and pity for the monarch gives way to disdain as Hutchinson inverts the classical royal slave rhetoric deployed by Guevara and his heirs. This puritan republican woman wields the

---

<sup>170</sup> Colonel Hutchinson was directly involved in Charles I's execution and died suspiciously in the Tower in 1664.

trope of royal slavery to disparage the suffering king and taint his authority.<sup>171</sup> A recurring theme that emerges, however, is that all revolutions are in fact doomed attempts to restore prelapsarian authority. The royalists believe that they restore the power of Adam, the first father, to a patriarchal monarch, whereas republicans believe they are restoring a universal kingship that would have been natural to all human beings before the fall. Divine punishment prevents either camp from ever being fully successful. Although kings might believe that they have restored their Adamic power, the power they wield is actually Satanic and false. Although republicans believe they are overthrowing Satanic powers to usher in a godly government, they discover that God intends to restore His own government Himself at His own leisure, and no human action can force God's hand. For Hutchinson, monarchists cloak usurpation in language of restoration, but, as she discovers, her own political allies likewise use that same language to mask their lack of faith in providence. Thus, neither party emerges clean in this concession, although the monarchists certainly face the worst of Hutchinson's ire.

Hutchinson's primary target (already a frequent point of contention for anti-monarchists) is royalist patriarchy based on primitivist theory. Filmer, for example, traced monarchy's origins back to biblical patriarchs such as Adam and Noah:

This lordship which Adam by creation had over the whole world, and by right descending from him the patriarchs did enjoy, was as large and ample as the absolutest dominion of any monarch which hath been since the creation...Not only until the Flood, but after it, this patriarchal power did continue—as the very name of patriarch doth in part prove. The three sons of Noah had the whole world

---

<sup>171</sup> David Norbrook describes this as a puritan double paradox. The world must be turned upside down because it is already standing on its head—the puritan rhetor inverted monarchist tropes to turn them right side up.

divided amongst them by their father...In this dispersion we must certainly find the establishment of regal power throughout the kingdoms of the world.

(*Patriarcha* 7)

According to Hutchinson, the biblical evidence actually argues *against* kingly power. Emphasizing the universal slavery of fallen man, she depicts all kings as slaves who have disguised themselves with majesty, making earthly royalty a lie, an illusion, and a shameful misappropriation of title and wealth. “Absolutest dominion” is a ruse crafted by and in service to Satan, himself a royal slave. Moreover, Hutchinson’s kings are enslaved to their insatiable appetites; like the Platonic tyrants described by Rebecca Bushnell, they cannot control themselves and so they are unfit to command others.<sup>172</sup>

Hutchinson favors rhetorical political bait and switch. She first concedes the patriarchalist premise that God gave Adam dominion over the earth, then she dismantles his kingship by showing his subsequent slavery. Early on, her poem asserts Adam’s royalty: “And now did God the new-created king / Into the pleasures of his earthly palace bring” (3.189).<sup>173</sup> Adam’s head is “the noble palace of the royal guest” (2.65) and his body is “the earthly mansion of this heavenly guest” (3.37). The prelapsarian Adam is an ideal monarch. When he first encounters Eve, he shares all of his majesty; not seeking to rule over her, he would rule *with* her:

For thee I did my heavenly Father quit

That thou with me on my high throne mayst sit...

that thou mightst reign with me...

---

<sup>172</sup> Bushnell notes that whereas Plato depicts the tyrant as being totally ruled by his own passions, Aristotle qualifies this point by observing that such a tyrant would not remain in power long. Rather, an effective tyrant must retain some degree of self-control in order to mask his more alarming attributes.

<sup>173</sup> In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Adam in terms of a natural absolutism: “His fair large front and eye sublime declared / Absolute rule” (IV.300-01).

As my victorious triumphs are all thine,  
 So are thy injuries and sufferings mine,  
 Which I for thee will vanquish as my own,  
 And give thee rest in the celestial throne

(3.479-92)

The first king is without self-interest. He shares his power and takes on another's sufferings before human suffering even existed. But these ideals do not survive the fall: "So after man th' Almighty disobeyed, / Each little fly durst his late king invade / As well as the wood's monsters, wolves and bears, / And all things else that exercise his fears" (5.395-99). As Eve asks, "Have not our subjects their allegiance broke, / Doth not each worm scorn our unworthy yoke?" (5.415-16). More than a mere philosophical construct or political agreement between humans, Adamic authority held sway over the real and natural world. That Nature no longer attends to kings proves that they lack such authority. It simply was not transmitted to the next generation:

And such alone could Eve to Adam breed  
 Whose sin and curse was fixed in all his seed;  
 And to recover its corrupted fruit  
 It must be set into a nobler root,  
 Its ignominious parentage disclaim  
 And be adopted into a new name

(6.41-46)

Here is the source of Berger's description of Shakespeare's *Henriad*, wherein fathers hand their sons cursed crowns. The inheritance of Adam is sin not power; his "forfeited inheritance was changed" (6.310) from dignified royalty to shameful slavery.

Hutchinson directly refers to the slavery of Adam's sons in her attack on class distinction:

Acknowledging this truth, alas, from whence  
 Doth vain nobility raise its pretence,  
 When the first monarch's sons, in slavery born,  
 Were taught those trades which upstart nobles scorn:  
 The eldest prince to agriculture bred,  
 The next white flocks in the cool shadow fed?

(6.61-76)

Adam's sons are born into royal slavery. Although Hutchinson calls Cain and Abel "princes," she ironically juxtaposes their nobility with their menial labor. Prince Cain labors in the fields, and Prince Abel is a shepherd. So much for the decadent court lifestyle of seventeenth-century aristocracy. Feltham's "soft Wanton" (189) appears shameful next to Hutchinson's prehistoric forefathers. If royalists were really interested in possessing the power of Adam's heirs, then, Hutchinson ironically notes, why do they not live as Adam's sons did?

Having drained Adam of his authority, Hutchinson next divests Noah of his royal mantle. Even as she depicts God bestowing authority on the patriarch after the Flood narrative, she insists on its limitations.<sup>174</sup> God says to Noah,

My delegated power to you I give

---

<sup>174</sup> Hutchinson's text ends in the middle of Jacob's narrative, long before the rise of the Davidic monarchy.



Over the whole creation, those that live  
 I'the watery element, in moist air fly,  
 Walk on the earth or in her crannies lie:  
 To your dominion I subject them all.  
 Let them under your awful terror fall,  
 Dispose them as you please: their flesh is meat  
 As free as growing fruits for you to eat...  
 But men shall slay the murderers of mankind  
 Because they thereby God himself contemn,  
 For in his image he created them...  
 The world's great Sovereign, to man's fallen state  
 Suiting his laws, doth here subordinate  
 Inferior substitutes armed with his sword  
 To punish such as disobey his word.

(8.279-306)

God does not restore Adam's monarchy; He establishes a judicial system suited to  
 "fallen" and "inferior" humans.<sup>175</sup> But Hutchinson blames such sovereign judges for  
 inspiring the criminals that they sentence, as we see from the curse of Ham, where  
 Noah's duty seems more odious than majestic:

Were not the governors first guilty by  
 Foolish remissness or harsh tyranny,  
 Or weak vice which betrays their impotence  
 And gives occasion to the next offence

---

<sup>175</sup> See *Leviathan* on the sovereign's role as judge (124).

Of those who formal majesty despise  
 When sin's base slave struts in the great disguise,  
 Pride and rebellion under their wise curb  
 Would not start out and the whole state disturb.  
 Who sentences his sons his own sins dooms  
 And his own executioner becomes,  
 Cutting those rotten limbs off that were fed  
 With corrupt influence from the unsound head.

(9.228-41)

In Hutchinson's most explicitly revolutionary passage, she both describes Noah as a republican Brutus executing his own sons and shows us how Noah's own drunkenness led Ham to sin. What follows is very much Hutchinson's own. God's curse denies Ham's successors part of Noah's inheritance ("his children, equal to his brothers' born, / Excluded from the special blessing were" [9.277-278]), but Ham establishes a lasting dynasty, a *royal* class rather than a slave class.<sup>176</sup> Thus it is that the least respected figures of the Bible invent or usurp worldly kingship.

Although Cain and his wife found "Worldly State," Nimrod is the first king in title:

Nimrod the regal title first assumed...  
 Ashur, his son, in Nineveh did reign,  
 Who Resen Rehoboth and Calah built,  
 Three populous cities where his subjects dwelt.  
*Thus the first mighty monarchs of the earth*

---

<sup>176</sup> Early modernists have noted how pro-slavery rhetoric has used the "curse of Ham" to justify trans-Atlantic slavery.

*From Noah's graceless son derived their birth.*

(10.10-20, emphasis added)

The first *bona fide* king descends from Ham, whose offspring were supposed to suffer abject slavery. This irony recurs with Ishmael, Abraham's first son by his wife's slave Hagar. Despite Ishmael's questionable legitimacy, "Twelve princes shall spring from his fruitful loins" (14.289). Cain, Ham, and Ishmael, all "slaves," sire princes. Hutchinson derogates royalty by assigning it a dishonorable and disenfranchised lineage, an illicit genealogy. Is God's curse delayed, or is royalty at its very core? Is kingship the shameful servitude to which God dooms Ham's children? At the very least, it is preposterous to Hutchinson that those whom God has explicitly condemned to slavery should take it upon themselves to restore Adam's kingship. They do not restore his power, they usurp it.<sup>177</sup>

Hutchinson's first kings were tyrants by usurpation; they seized titles not rightfully theirs. Having once tasted power, they obsess over how to maintain it and then acquire more. Monarchs become imperial addicts; the descendents of Ham and Nimrod "did they there their ample realm extend, / And other kings to their dominion bend" (10.111-12). They are not content with the illusion of restoration that their false kingship offers; they want more. Their human appetite for power leads kings to disrespect man-made authority. Lacking self-control, their souls are enslaved as Hutchinson progressively delegitimizes royal lineage, royal souls, and royal minds.

---

<sup>177</sup> Milton observes that kings even go beyond Adam's parameters of rule. Adam laments of Nimrod

O execrable son so to aspire  
Above his brethren, to himself assuming  
Authority usurped, from God not giv'n:  
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl  
Dominion absolute. That right we hold  
By his donation; but man over men  
He made not lord; such title to himself  
Reserving, human left from human free.

(XII.66-71)

The mind's slavery to the passions goes back to Eve's punishment in Hutchinson's account. Eve was coequal with Adam and would have sat on his throne with him; now God condemns her to act according to her appetite: "Thy husband shall thy ruler be, whose sway / Thou shalt with passionate desires obey" (5.125-26). But Hutchinson does not merely reinforce misogynistic readings of the Genesis story, she turns the screw by showing women's submission to unworthy male rulers. Men are given superiority over women, but not because they are superior beings:

Constant uneasiness which attend  
 The best condition of the wedded state,  
 Giving all wives sense of the curse's weight,  
 Which makes them ease and liberty refuse,  
 And with strong passion their own shackles choose.  
 Now though they easier under wise rule prove,  
 And every burden is made light by love,  
 Yet golden fetters, soft-lined yokes, still be  
 Though gentler curbs, but curbs of liberty,  
 As well as the harsh tyrant's iron yoke;  
 More sorely galling them whom they provoke  
 To loathe their bondage, and despise the rule  
 Of an unmanly, fickle, froward fool.

(5.136-46)

Hutchinson first invokes "golden fetters" to show how marital burdens can be deceptively attractive, then she compares them to the "tyrant's iron yoke." Marriage and statecraft

blur when Hutchinson describes a tyrant as “an unmanly, fickle, froward fool” who inspires treason in subjects. Whether a husband or a monarch, an “unmanly” tyrant is governed by his passions every bit as much as Hutchinson’s women are. The point of Eve’s punishment is that it ultimately effeminizes the tyrannical royal slave.

Canto Six further interrogates gender relations, showing how sexual desire shamefully effeminizes men. Suffering under tyranny, wicked mistresses desire to restore the queenship of Eve and claim the power that Adam offered his wife. Thus, they prey upon those men who appear to have restored Adam’s power. Lustful kings who shamefully let women rule them are also the weak links that Satan exploits to disrupt God’s will:

Some in the blazing females did inspire  
 As vain ambition human hearts to fire.  
 Then an imperious beauty thinks she reigns  
 When many captives languish in her chains;  
 Then she believes her bright cheeks richly shine  
 When her wan lovers all grow sick and pine.

(6.479-84)

Love-sick kings pervert the gendered hierarchy that God ordered (see Canto Five) just as Satan’s minions pervert eros to enslave the kings whom they previously empowered (for Hutchinson, all worldly power comes from Satan). Satan gives, and Satan takes away. But more is at stake than the king’s soul. Love-slavery devastates God’s creations:

Poor mankind from the first and ever since  
 A thousand woes and troubles have derived,  
 By their ambitious mistresses contrived,

Who first from God seduce their charmed hearts  
 Then keep them captives by those subtle arts  
 The Devil taught them, then their slaves engage  
 In horrid wars through jealousies and rage,  
 In toils and dangers both by sea and land.  
 All undertaken at a whore's command.

(6.498-506) <sup>178</sup>

When passions rule a king's heart, the object of those passions rules his mind.<sup>179</sup> A tyrant believes that he is in control, but it is his lover (and Satan) who calls the shots. Once again, a race that God condemns to slavery controls crowns.

In contrast to royalty's shameful effeminacy, vice, and self-interest stands Adam, who  
 ...although so highly dignified,  
 Was not to spend in idle ease and pride,  
 Nor supine sleep, drunk with his sensual pleasures,  
 Profusely wasting th'Empire's sacred treasures,  
 As now his fall'n sons do, that arrogate  
 His forfeited dominion and high state

(3.626-31)

Hutchinson, then, focuses on responsibility, and on effort and work, or stewardship:

But God his daily business did ordain  
 That kings, hence taught, might in their realms maintain  
 Fair Order, serving those whom they command

---

<sup>178</sup> Norbrook notes that Hutchinson specifically alludes to Charles II's mistress.

<sup>179</sup> In *Paradise Lost*, Michael warns Adam "take heed lest passion sway / Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will / Would not admit" (IX.635-37).

As guardians, not as owners of the land,  
 Not being set there to pluck up and destroy  
 Those plants whose culture should their cares employ.  
 Nor doth this precept only kings comprise,  
 The meanest must his little paradise  
 With no less vigilance and care attend  
 Than princes on their vast enclosures spend.

(3.626-41)<sup>180</sup>

Kings just like serfs, and serfs just like kings, have their *work* cut out for them. Comparing the suffering of the greatest to the meanest, the poem sympathizes with the latter, who exert the same energies for less reward. Rejecting Guevara's sentimentalism, Hutchinson's slaves appear worse off than kings.

Hutchinson also rewrites what Guevara depicts as the cares of the state. For her, a monarch's worries are a guilty conscience's just punishment. Mental slavery arises from jealousy and fear, or, as Hutchinson writes, Cain's "guilt made him mad, suspicious, insecure.../ Such the bright slaves of Satan's empire be" (6.406-13); "What bondage is it evermore to stand / In fear of subjects whom they should command! / Yet tyrants are exposed to this fate, / Who, thinking none love them, do all men hate" (17.369-72). Whereas for Guevara, the cares of a monarch ought to inspire pity, for Hutchinson, they are the penalty for asserting a spurious superiority over others. Power's corrupting influence is simply bondage:

while men think the glorious tyrant reigns,

---

<sup>180</sup> Describing Abraham, Hutchinson writes, "Great ones lived not like slothful drones as now, / But kings fed flocks and councillors served the plough" (12.237-38).

Insulting Vice loads him with weighty chains.  
 Fear, sorrow, sad repentance, envy, hate,  
 Pride and revenge, not only do abate  
 But quite extinguish their lives' chiefest joy,  
 Their rest of soul, their peaceful sleep, destroy;  
 Cares and anxieties like furies still  
 Their wretched bosoms with sad torture fill;  
 Whipped by repentance, they may strive in vain  
 To recall virtue: vice must vice maintain.

(17.359-66)

Majesty is a bluff, concealing hellish and solitary (and also justified) tortures. For Hutchinson, these sufferings should not move us to pity, but to fear seizing power. The king's burden cannot be eased through obedience, as Guevara suggests, but by liberating him from the crown's cares (as Shakespeare's Richard II mordantly argues).

Like Guevara's royal slave, the prince also suffers from lack of sleep. Insofar as Hutchinson is concerned, this is because he fears his people, not because he fears for them.<sup>181</sup> Nor is royal insomnia the paranoia of the occasional tyrant. No king sleeps well because no crown is worn in complete innocence: "all who to the high throne climb / Must wade through blood and strife, check at no crime, / Tread on condemned piety and faith, / Quit every virtue in that horrid path" (17.337-40). It is as if kings have asked the genie to restore Adam's power, but forgotten to ask to restore Adam's contentment. Power alone was not enough to make Eden a paradise.

---

<sup>181</sup> Camille Wells Slight observes that even Shakespeare's Richard III, who proclaims that he has no conscience, suffers from this royal insomnia, or at least bad dreams, for his villainy (39).



If there is pity for kings, it is pity for their Hell-bound souls, since royal repentance is fruitless in the poem. All kings are like *Hamlet's* Claudius; they would repent, except worldly material ensnares them:

Outward enjoyments scarcely by the best  
 At God's command are willingly resigned;  
 So wealth's temptations captivate the mind.  
 Men cannot from their golden fetters 'scape  
 Till their coy souls endure a holy rape  
 Which to himself the Lord by violence draws  
 Even as they enter hell's extended jaws.

(13.106-12)

God must redeem men against their own wills. Hutchinson elsewhere writes that "If the goods of earth distract from heaven.../ they our fetters, yokes and poisons are, / The obstacles of our felicity" (5.628-9). If kings cannot save themselves, God will violently afflict them for their own good, as He did in the time of Noah and during the Babylonian captivity.

The violence and destruction of the Flood and Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Temple explicitly juxtapose royalty and slavery, and they remind us that God and Death do not respect a person's social status. The Flood carries away "the poor man's rags and princes' ornaments" (7.492). All material goods are dross to God, regardless of how humans value them. As we ought to expect, then, when the Babylonians ravage Jerusalem "Down every channel ran a mixed flood, / With streams of royal and of common blood. / The princes were with vulgar prisoners chained, / Lords with their slaves one servitude

sustained” (15.198-200). Whereas the chaotic flood mingles possessions, Nebechadnezzar sponsors a violent consanguinity that returns humanity to a time before artificial classes. The Divine scourge sees all humans as one race; all share the blood of one father. Although kings typically deny their common origins with their subjects, they are forced to acknowledge a common end.<sup>182</sup>

Surprisingly, Hutchinson depicts the flood’s withdrawal in terms of the Restoration. As the floodwaters recede, the mountaintops emerge as emancipated kings:

Yet as a prince who, long in prison bound,  
Comes squalid forth at first, untrimmed, uncrowned:  
So rose the mountains from th’imprisoning flood,  
Their faces slimed, their standards dropping mud,  
When Heaven’s compassionate, kind, refreshing eye  
With its all-clearing glances looked them dry.

(8.35-40)

According to Hutchinson’s overt political allegory, Charles II returns in shame and filth rather than in triumph. If he survives to rule, it is because of divine mercy, not his own merit or power. Hutchinson seizes the opportunity to scold royalty rather than salute it:

But curb, fair hills; O curb your growing pride:  
He who above your covering clouds doth ride,  
Whose pity drew you from your low estate,  
When you insult will cast down your proud height.  
If humbled waters must no more ascend,

---

<sup>182</sup> Exegetes have long argued that the flood represents creation’s return to chaos before God separated its materials.

Thunders will fall which shall your bosoms rend.

Your new-restored glory shall expire,

To ashes turned in the world's funeral fire.

And you, great Lords, who on the mountains reign,

With them shall once more be destroyed again...

(8.45-54)

Hutchinson admonishes both friends and foes. The anti-royalist parties are “humbled waters” that “must no more ascend.” This ascension was the great sin of the English Republic for many anti-monarchists. Parliamentarians (and Cromwell especially) repeated the first parents’ proud sin by usurping power. Now, like their most ancient predecessors, they must submit to rulers. Yet, Hutchinson assures us, this too serves God’s plan (and God favors her party). Worldly monarchy persists because Providence brings good out of evil.

Like Milton, Hutchinson explains Satan’s power through Providence:

An empire which the Almighty doth permit,

Yet so as he controls and limits it,

Suffering their rage sometimes to take effect

Only to be the more severely checked

When he produces a contrary end

From what they did maliciously intend.

(4.95-96)

Worldly kingship (as humanity knows it) is Satan’s brainchild, designed to take away some of his own sorrow: “Hell’s gloomy princes the World’s rulers made” (5.100).

Already an enslaved prince himself, Satan selects fellow slaves to become the early kings. God mercifully permits human and diabolic institutions because He bends them towards His own divine ends, and because monarchy is its own punishment: “A Chief they have, whose sovereign power and place / But adds to’s sin, his torture, and disgrace” (4.83-84).

From first to last, Hutchinson parodies the primitivist legend that the first humans cede all authority to a single ruler. In her account, they do submit themselves to a monarch, but that monarch is no human:

Hell’s oft-defeated Monarch once again  
 In spite of God attempted here to reign,  
 Nor difficulty did admission find.  
 They to his scepter all their power resigned,  
 But with harsh tyranny he them repaid,  
 Uneasy all their yokes and bondage made,  
 Allowed them not one moment’s soft release.

(6.391-97)

When the first monarchs usurped a title that their fathers lost, they sold themselves into slavery to Satan. Satan fell from the greatest of God’s servants to the least, then tried to regain power by enslaving Adam, the king of Earth. The slave sets out to make his own slaves. Likewise, when humans fall from kings to slaves, they satanically enslave their fellow human beings, hoping to forget their own servitude. But enslaving one another only enslaves them even more to Satan, just as enslaving humans further enslaves Satan to God.

These royal slaves attempt to restore a lost glory, but, in doing so, they heap shame upon themselves. Rebellion and usurpation alike are really failed or misguided attempts at restoring liberty. God dooms rebellion not because He favors monarchs, but because a monarch is an instrument of Divine punishment. Either way, taking arms against a monarch resists God's unavoidable justice. Thus, the seventeenth-century English puritan wife devoted to her regicidal parliamentary husband draws the same conclusion as the sixteenth-century Spanish Catholic bishop devoted to the Holy Roman Emperor: because God curses humanity with servitude, restoration is impossible in this life.

### CHAPTER THREE: ENTHRONED SLAVES

“Seruants haue ruled ouer vs, none wolde deliuer vs out of their hands.” (Lamentations 5.8, Geneva Bible)

In the book of Lamentations, God’s cruel scourge is making slaves into rulers; they establish an illegitimate and vengeful authority and are unable to rule properly or justly. Donne’s version, “The Lamentations of Jeremy,” further emphasizes the role of class in the shameful punishment that God inflicts: “Our Fathers did these sinnes, and are no more, / But wee do beare the sinnes they did before. / They are but servants, which do rule us thus, / Yet from their hands none would deliver us.” (V.9-10). Misrule by servants-turned-masters had unmistakable connotations for seventeenth-century authors. In *The Compassionate Samaritan* (1644), William Walwyn depicts the rise of presbyterianism as the topsy-turvy empowerment of a slave class: “But the Presbyters, as it is conceived, will be more violent, as slaves usually are when they become masters” (252). Setting aside the important political-religious debate that Walwyn addresses, what are we to make of the fact that he considers it a commonplace that slaves become vengeful and cruel when they hold sway?

That a slave might make a better ruler defies commonsense to Walwyn, who upholds an early modern belief that a slave in command perverts social hierarchy and dooms society. This is not to say, however, that good slave-kings are without precedent in the period’s literature. Whether good or bad, fictional slave-kings often questioned the balance between royal prerogatives and their limits. What liberties does a crown afford?

What constraints? What are the boundaries of royal power? The slave who becomes a king also raises questions about the nature of power and nobility. Is authority inherent in the king's character, or do institutions (whether natural or supernatural) bestow authority? Is one noble by birth or by action? Can nobility be learned? Can enthroned slaves become kingly, or do they inevitably resort to tyranny?

Obviously, early modern literature as a whole provides no single answer to any of these questions (and many texts directly concerned with these issues refuse to yield an answer at all). Time and again, enthroned slaves attempt to restore divine order or primordial chaos, depending on an author's point of view. Early modern writers more universally agree, however, that restoration is never complete. No object can ever be restored to its original state. In some cases, an incomplete restoration results in a net loss: characters discover that recovered freedom or power leaves them worse off than they were originally. In other cases, restoration genuinely augments freedom and power. Whether an enthroned slave leads a nation to greater order or chaos, and whether royal slavery ends in profit or loss, depends greatly on an author's political vantage point. What Walwyn sees as impending chaos and wrath no doubt looks like Divinely wrought poetic justice to the Presbyterians themselves. Before exploring three major literary texts, I will look at a brief but exemplary royal slave tale related by Sir Walter Raleigh.

In *The discoverie of the large, rich, and bewitful Empyre of Guiana* (1596), Raleigh relates the story of Topiawari, an Indian slave who becomes a king and desires revenge on the Spanish. It is a story about foreign relations, Fortune, and incomplete restoration. It is also an exercise in pathos. Topiawari's enslavement is mentioned twice in the text, first to depict the barbarities of the Spaniard Berreo and later to describe the Indian king's

fear of future Spanish oppression. In the first description, Topiawari's enslavement testifies to his virility and endurance:

After the death of this *Morequito*, the soliders of *Berreio* spoiled his territorie, & took divers prisoners, among others they tooke the unckle of *Morequito* called *Topiawari*, who is now king of *Arromaia*, (whose sonne I brought with me into *England*) and is a man of great understanding and pollicie: he is above 100. yeeres old, and yet of a very able bodie: the *Spanyards* led him in a chain 17. daies, and made him their guide from place to place betweene his countrey & *Emeria* the province of *Carapana* aforesaid, and was at last redeemed for 100. plates of gold, and divers stones called *Piedras Hijadas*, or *Spleen* stones. (Raleigh 152)

Topiawari's intelligence, diplomacy, and extreme age make him attractive to the English (and make the reader detest his Spanish overlords). The Spanish appear even worse to the extent that the Indian's ransom reveals their lust for gold and precious stones. Here, and throughout his adventures in Guiana, Raleigh perpetuates what scholars call "the black legend" of Spanish conquest.<sup>183</sup> Early modern English authors often justified English expansion to the New World by describing Spanish atrocities. The English claimed that their nation would rescue the native peoples from Spanish (read Catholic) oppression. Following such arguments, Raleigh shows how the Spaniards' demeaning and cruel treatment of their guide was a tactical blunder. The conquistadors do not consider that the mistreated slave might be restored to even greater power than he possessed before; they

---

<sup>183</sup> See Thomas Scanlan. *Colonial Writing and the New World, 1583-1671*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Scanlan focuses on English translations of Las Casas *Brevissima relacion* in *The Spanish Colonie* by William Brome in 1583 and *The Tears of the Indians* by J. Phillips in 1656 to show how the English used the Spanish priest's own reports of atrocities to advance English colonial agendas.



do not imagine that their slave could become a king and seek revenge. Politically, Raleigh approves of Topiawari's desire for revenge because it is directed at a common enemy (and he takes the opportunity to warn the English not to jeopardize future expansion by abusing native peoples).

Fortune plays a hand in Topiawari's restoration when it gives the former slave more than he had before, and Raleigh wants to reap some of the profit. When Raleigh meets with Topiawari, the Indian king offers aid to the English explorers, on the condition that Raleigh leave English troops to guard his people. Raleigh declines the offer; he lacks the resources to man a worthy garrison. No doubt, Raleigh is winking at the crown and potential investors in future expeditions. Have no fear of hostile locals, he seems to say, these Indians *want* English troops to march across the New World with their advanced weaponry. They want to share their *future* good fortunes with the English. This does not mean that the Indians in Raleigh's depiction are necessarily naive in their generosity. Topiawari's experience as a slave has taught him the power of European technology; as a king, Topiawari now seeks to use that power to his advantage. This royal slave is as eager to exploit the English as the Spanish were to exploit him. Slavery has taught Topiawari lessons; he is (Raleigh suggests) a better king for having suffered bondage.

If Raleigh still has not persuaded his audience that England could benefit from relations with the Indians, then perhaps he can move them with the pathos of the Indian's royal slavery. When Topiawari's story is recounted the second time, Raleigh adds several descriptive details:

Hee [Topiawari] further alleadged that the Spaniards sought his death, and as they had alreadie murdered his Nephew *Morequito* Lorde of that province, so they had

him 17. daies in a chaine before hee was king of the Countrey, and ledde him like a dogge from place to place, untill hee had paide 100. plates of Golde, and divers chaines of spleene stones for his raunsome, and nowe since he became owner of that province that they had manie times laide waite to take him, and that they woulde be now more vehement when they shoulde understand of his conference with the English...(Raleigh 183)

Now, Topiawari is no longer the chained guide but a leashed canine. Dehumanized and even more enslaved, he ironically repays the Spanish in “chaines” of precious stones, recalling the imagery of bondage. These chains may not be gold, but they function like golden chains, with the Spanish heaping on themselves the burden of managing slaves. That the chains consist of “spleene stones” (perhaps a pun on “spleen”) suggests that, like those who wear golden chains, the Spanish are resented by those beneath them.<sup>184</sup> Further to the Spaniards’ shame in this version, they deceitfully seek to kill the man they freed in order to steal his land. Topiawari appears more pitiful, and Spain appears more shameful. Even if the political strategy Raleigh lays out is unconvincing, England still must rescue her helpless friends from the treacherous Spanish (and in return those friends will conveniently aid England, conquering tyrannous Indian nations that obstruct the way to the city of gold). After all, Topiawari’s amiable relations with the English have endangered his life. How can England turn her back on this generous and sage old man who survived such Spanish horrors?

---

<sup>184</sup> According to Raleigh, spleen stones are so-called for their affect on the human organ: These *Amazones* haue likewise great store of these plates of golde, which they recouer by exchange chiefly for a kinde of greene stones, which the Spaniards call *Piedras Hijadas*, and we vse for spleene stones, and for the disease of the stone we also esteeme them: of these I saw diuers in *Guiana*, and commonly euery king or *Casique* hath one, which their wiues for the most part weare, and they esteem them as greate iewels. (D4v)

Raleigh weaves a tragic tale and pulls at his audience's heartstrings, but he approaches Fortune in a businesslike manner. He is acutely aware of the dangerous long-term effects of oppressing Indians and how the English can exploit Spanish cruelty. Depicting themselves as liberators rather than enslavers, the English anticipate the turning of Fortune's wheel; they are positioning themselves for when those who are enslaved become kings seeking restitution. Raleigh observes that the Spanish plans are short-term, they seek only immediate access to gold. The English, he suggests, must not make the same mistake. While he does not make a moral argument against slavery, he does show how oppression leads to resistance that in turn destabilizes colonial government:

they would as good cheape have joynd with the Spanyards at our returne, as to have yeelded unto us, when they had proved that we came both for one errant, and that both sought but to sacke and spoyle them, but as yet our desire of gold, or our purpose of invasion is not known unto those of the Empire...I woulde rather have lost the sacke of one or two townes...then to have defaced or endaungered the future hope of so many millions. (Raleigh 185)

Raleigh respects Fortune. Those who conquer today are overthrown tomorrow, or, as Feltham writes: "*Man is meerely the Ball of Time: and is sometime taken from the Plow to the Throne; and sometimes againe from the Throne to the Halter*" (244).<sup>185</sup> Topiawari,

---

<sup>185</sup> In a more sinister vein, Milton's Satan considers precisely the advantages of accepting present humility and service for the sake of future power:

O foul descent! that I who erst contended  
With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained  
Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,  
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
That to the height of deity aspired;  
But what will not ambition and revenge  
Descend to? Who aspires must down as low  
As high he soared, obnoxious first or last  
To basest things.

a brutalized slave, becomes a warlike king. Now that the Indians have tasted European cruelty, they will not surrender to another conqueror as easily as they did to Spain. Of course, Topiawari also realizes that the complete restoration of Indian sovereignty and independence is impossible. There is no “undo” command in history; there can be no ignoring Europe after Spanish conquest. Topiawari can never be completely free of Europe, but now he can consciously shape European influence. He can restore some Indian liberty, but some part of that liberty must be dependent on a European alliance. As for the English, they can be part of this change, or they can follow the path of Spain and doom themselves.

Raleigh’s descriptions of Guiana and diabolic Spanish cruelties left an impression on seventeenth-century authors and move us closer to at least one of the major literary examples I wish to discuss in this chapter. As others have noted, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* explicitly considers the Spanish role in Guiana when the poet describes Satan’s voyage to the New World. As Barbara Keifer Lewalski observes, “Milton does formally link Satan’s depredations with those of Spain: Michael’s prophecy refers to ‘as yet unspoil’d / *Guiana*, whose great Citie *Geryons* Sons / Call *El Dorado*’ (11.409-11), an allusion to Spanish Conquests and exploitations of new world lands and peoples in their search for gold” (231). Milton invokes Guiana to cast Satan in the familiar image of the conquistadors of the black legend; Satan goes on a slaving voyage to make the first humans his captives. The Spanish-Satan comparisons are overt: Satan, like Spain, might

---

(IX.163-170)

Satan’s speech relates to Topiawari, who must endure dishonor and play friendly with English explorers in hopes of future revenge, but it also relates to those English who think they should simply impose their superior might on the Indians. Raleigh seems to say that the English, like Milton’s Satan, would do better to lower themselves and serve the Indians if they hope to conquer them later (and in doing so also spite the anti-English arrogance of Spain).

succeed in plundering the New World in the short run, but both conquerors will find their newfound authority shaken when godly forces liberate and elevate the slaves. That being said, Satan is also like Topiawari. Both find themselves in chains, both desire revenge, and both find themselves somewhat more free after their captivity than before it. Still, neither is as free as he would like to be. Topiawari lives with the constant threat of a new Spanish attack, while Satan's liberty rests precariously on God's mercy.

This chapter considers royal slavery in terms of slaves who become kings in three seventeenth-century literary works: *Paradise Lost*; Madeleine de Scudery's *Severall witty discourses* (1661); and William Cartwright's *The Royall Slave* (1639). All three texts describe restoration. Indeed, Milton's and Scudery's texts are contemporary with the Restoration of Charles II. While Milton's devils embrace carnivalesque inversion, hoping to restore their angelic glory in Hell, the poem confirms that such restoration can, in the end, only be illusory. As successful as diabolic government may be in managing internal affairs, God retains all real power. In *Severall witty discourses*, two royal women attempt to restore their royal dignity during or after enslavement. Briseis' abortive restoration in many ways parallels the pseudo-restoration of Milton's devils, whereas Cariclia's super-abundant restoration compares more to Cartwright's royal slave. Because Cartwright conspicuously fails to identify the social class of Cratander, the titular royal slave, his elevation to temporary kingship in a carnivalesque ritual is hardly a proper restoration. However, restoration of a sort does occur at the end of the play, when the Persian king Arsamnes resumes his reign a better and therefore more powerful king than when he started. Two kinds of restoration appear in these three royal slave texts. The first is a pseudo-restoration. Milton's devils and Scudery's Briseis believe they have restored

freedom and power by giving themselves over to self-interest during their enslavement, but these restorations dissolve under the will of superiors. The second type of restoration results in an improvement over the original state of affairs. Scudery's Cariclia and Cartwright's Cratander and Arsamnes arguably experience greater freedom and power as a reward for selfless love during slavery. Neither kind of restoration is complete, but if this truth is sometimes tragic, it occasionally is cause for rejoicing.

### **MILTON: DEVILS CAN'T BE ALL BAD; SALVAGING THE UTOPIAN DISCOURSE OF HELL**

What in me is dark

Illumin, what is low raise and support;

*(Paradise Lost I.22-23)*

Well have ye judg'd, well ended long debate,

Synod of Gods, and like to what ye are,

Great things resolv'd, which from the lowest deep

Will once more lift us up, in spite of Fate

*(Paradise Lost II. 390-93)*

Of all the devils, Mammon provides the best introduction into a Hellish understanding of royal slavery. A crooked and greedy devil who represents both materialism and diabolic inversion, he introduces three key elements to a discussion of royal slavery in the

poem. First, his perverse love of material goods elevates low things (my discussion of his materialism leads into a brief historiography of the “Satan problem” in this chapter).

Second, the devil's commission Mammon to re-create Heaven's splendor in Hell. In effect, he coordinates the devils' efforts to restore their former glory. Hence the devils' acts are evil, but what they desire is good. The *how*, not the *what*, of their desire is the problem. Third, Mammon's efforts to recreate Heaven's grandeur remind us that such a restoration can never be complete; they can at best simulate Heaven. This is, after all, a poem of things lost.

Mammon's proclivity for inversion is nigh pathological; virtually his whole existence focuses on elevating what is low. Alluding to Mammon's biblical association with money, the narrator informs us that the angel had a predilection for base material things even while in Heaven:

Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell  
 From heav'n, for ev'n in heav'n his looks and thoughts  
 Were always downward bent, admiring more  
 The riches of Heav'ns pavement, trod'n Gold,  
 Then aught divine or holy else enjoy'd  
 In vision beatific: by him first  
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,  
 Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands  
 Rifi'd the bowels of thir mother Earth  
 For Treasures better hid...  
 Let none admire

That riches grow in Hell; that soyl may best  
 Deserve the precious bane.

(I.689-92)

Milton does not intend to devalue gold by using it for base purposes, as in More's *Utopia*. Rather, Milton shows how everything in Heaven is on a higher order. If Heaven's pavement is made of far greater stuff than dirt, then the beings who tread that pavement must be far greater than those who tread on dirt. Likewise, gold pavement presumably leads someplace far greater than the terminus of a dirt road. Mammon's error is not that he values gold; it is that he values gold more than the greater good toward which it points. Mammon's appreciation for a good does not make that good inherently evil; he does not fall into Hell because he appreciates gold, but because he loves it more than he loves God. This is an important point to keep in mind when traversing Milton's Hell: devils bend good things toward evil ends, but that does not mean the goods themselves become evil; "neither do the Spirits damned / Lose all their virtue" (II.482-83).

Mammon's goldbuggery is symptomatic of the same inverted value systems that allow enslaved angels to account themselves free kings. If Mammon's desire for gold does not make gold a morally bad thing, then his desire for freedom does not necessarily tarnish freedom's reputation either. Neil Forsyth believes that the narrator is surprisingly uncritical of Mammon, even when the devil rails against Heaven (113). Perhaps the narrator expects his speech to be so blatantly in error that it needs no comment, or, as Forsythe suggests, perhaps the narrator concedes that Mammon's worldview has value to it. Indeed, Mammon's pathology resonates to an extent with the ambitions of the poet. When the poet (who may or may not be the narrator) invokes the Spirit as Muse, he asks



to have darkness illumined and the lowly raised on high. This is the hallmark of royal slave ideology wherein the base servant becomes the royal master. Although Milton's invocation pertains to God's mysteries, it also aptly describes the way his poem very often makes dark and lowly demons appear bright and lofty. The idea that there might be anything good to illumine in Hell is arresting to a reader, and Milton's seeming admiration for and identification with the devils has generated what scholars have called the "Satan problem" in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

It is helpful to put aside Mammon for the moment and recount precisely what this "Satan problem" is and how royal slavery bears on it. The "Satan problem" asks why Milton makes his villain attractive, even to the point of having Satan ventriloquize Milton's own political rhetoric. Having devils speak like republicans seems to invert Milton's own political beliefs, making what Milton is supposed to believe is good seem bad and vice versa. As Forsythe describes Hell's council, "There is something akin here to the democratic politics of the time, and Milton shows a sympathetic fascination with it, more than with the autocratic politics of Heaven" (111). Balachandra Rajan describes the process of reading Satan as similar to reading "two poems," one that sympathizes with Satan and one which condemns him (106). Or, in the context of this chapter: some readers focus on Satan's slavery, others on his royalty.

The critical camps are well known: Stanley Fish and Stevie Davies stand on one side, Sharon Achinstein and David Norbrook on the other. The Fish/Davies camp aims to depoliticize *Paradise Lost* and analyze the poem largely as a Christian spiritual exercise (see, for example *Surprised by Sin*).<sup>186</sup> Fish argues that the "Satan problem" arises

---

<sup>186</sup> David Reid, among others, writes that Davies argument vindicates Milton's Christianity over pagan epics (31). The idea is not without a recent following; see Katherine Calloway. "Beyond Parody: Satan as

because Milton tests the reader's own moral integrity; he is hardly questioning his own political agenda. Davies follows suit, suggesting that political readings miss the point of the poem. These critics focus on Satan's slavery; their arguments require that the audience keep in mind that Satan is evil, a fallen angel keen to enslave the reader. If we identify with Satan, it is because we too are fallen. Achinstein responds that Books I and II are parodies of royalist "Parliament-in-Hell" pamphlets, and Norbrook traces republican allusions to Lucan's *Pharsalia* throughout the poem. Of course, this only makes the scandal worse. Milton puts republican rhetoric in Satan's mouth, and, as Achinstein and Norbrook point out, he does so using royalist tropes. Nonetheless, as Achinstein concedes, Milton undermines royalist arguments by depicting Satan as a monarch and by insisting that devils do not represent true republicanism because they are slavish by nature.<sup>187</sup> Clearly critics have noted the devils' royalty and their slavery; they have not commented on Milton's distinctly royal slave rhetoric. But much of the poem's confusion arises precisely because Milton depicts the devils in terms of a long tradition of this paradoxical trope.

As mentioned earlier, one component of the "Satan problem" is the devils' use of republican speech. In particular, the devils are fond of describing submission to a monarch as royal slavery, and Mammon offers some poignant examples. He uses the term "Subjection" (II.238) in a pejorative sense, suggesting a state akin to slavery, although it could simply mean being subject to an authority. For him, offerings to God in

---

Aeneas in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2 2005: 82-92. Of course Norbrook's discussion of Lucan's influence suggests that Milton is less interested in disparaging the pagans altogether than he is in dismantling Virgil's sycophantic imperialism.

<sup>187</sup> Occasionally, modern critics try to dodge the issue altogether. Michael Davies argues that the Milton is not so much concerned with political ideology in Hell as with conveying the *experience* of the nonconformist: "the concept of exile, which dominates Milton's epic from beginning to end, represents nothing less than a central cultural and political paradigm of the Restoration as a whole" (36).

Heaven would be “servile” (II.244) or slavish, making Heaven as much if not more of a bondage than Hell. According to Mammon, there can be no escape from royal slavery, only a choice as to which type of royal slave he imagines himself as being. This is his existentialist argument against reconciliation with God (as in Dante, Hell’s occupants perversely *choose* damnation). Mammon protests that despite Hell’s punishments, Heaven itself would become a torturous slavery if he should return there, a torture that he expresses in oxymoron. But his language is rife with oxymoronic cynicism when he speaks of “splendid vassalage,” “hard liberty,” and “easie yoke” (II.236-55).<sup>188</sup> He suggests that Heaven tries to fool its inhabitants into pleasurable bondage (as devils do to humans). Perhaps Heaven’s slavery appears despicable to Mammon because God’s slaves are oblivious to the liberty that it steals from them (even though many of the devils themselves become oblivious to the liberty that Hell steals from them). Divine service offends Mammon less than the idea that Heaven’s servitude is deceitful. One can at least see one’s chains in Hell.

Still, Heaven is not all that bad to Mammon. His perception of certain goods in Heaven is key to his attempt (and failure) at restoration. One assumes that the description of “splendid vassalage” is ironic or satiric, but the adjective “splendid” persists. Given his admiration for Heaven’s pavement, Mammon sees splendor in at least some aspects of Heaven, and these are the aspects that inspire him as he constructs the Palace of Pandemonium. However, when he attempts to restore some of Heaven’s beauty in Hell, he also ironically restores and actually worsens the limitations he perceived. Mammon

---

<sup>188</sup> Also see Henry Weinfeld’s argument that the devils paradoxically become beautiful in their very suffering: “Books 1 and 2 do offer the hellish torments instituted by God as pleasurable to an outside observer, but these punishments also possess an infernal grandeur that as often as not ennoble their ostensible victims” (115).

complains that he found Heaven too confining: “Strict laws impos’d, to celebrate his Throne / With warbl’d Hymns, and to his Godhead sing / Forc’t Halleluiahs” (II.241-43). Yet, when he makes his own palace, it is far more confining. Pandemonium is a dazzling perversion of God’s city; it is beautiful, but not big enough to hold the devils in their present sizes. Mammon might desire Heaven’s beauty, but he cannot recreate it perfectly. The devils do not find it ironic that they refuse to make themselves little before God but will eagerly make themselves little to enter their own palace. Their attempt to move from a slavish prison to a royal mansion literally reduces their stature. They do not acknowledge that their new home is more constricting than their old one; therefore, they misperceive Pandemonium just as they misperceived Heaven.

The corollary to the “Satan problem” is what to do with God, whom Milton portrays as an absolute monarch. This is an important problem, since it determines whether or not the devils really are slaves in the first place. The typical solution is to suggest that the devils misrepresent God’s form of government or that God is somehow an exception to Milton’s hatred of absolutism. David Reid suggests that “royal imagery is transported from the human world and enskied so that the feelings of awe and enlargement such splendour arouses are freed from social hierarchy: we are all on the same splendid footing as Adam and Eve are under the majesty of the heavens” (36). Barbara Lewalski concurs, “Milton definitively removes absolute monarchy from earth to heaven, as the only place it rightly belongs” (229). Lewalski further suggests that the entire purpose of depicting God as absolute is to show the absurdity of such images for God: “Milton directly confronts the familiar royalist analogies—God and the king, Satan and the Puritan revolutionaries—and teaches his readers to find those analogies entirely false” (Lewalski

221). Michael Bryson follows suit: Milton consciously understood that “king” was a bad metaphor for God: “Early biblical narratives, in fact, offer ample evidence that conceiving of God in monarchical terms is a human custom, one that according to the Bible originates not with the people of the ‘true’ God, but with those peoples who worshipped the ‘false’ gods of the nations” (118). Hence, Milton does not *really* think that God is a king; he just portrays him as one to make a point. For such critics, God cannot really be absolute, because absolutism enslaves subjects, and God liberates them. The negative aspects of God’s power, then, stems from the devils’ use of Parliamentary rhetoric (rhetoric that such critics also believe is corrupted in demonic mouths). Although Parliament often asserted enslavement under a tyrannical king, such rhetoric simply cannot apply to Heaven.<sup>189</sup> God possesses no royal slaves; even if the angels-turned-devils are slaves, then God does not *possess* them during their exile. If anything, He emancipates them by sending them to Hell, out of His command. At worst, Heaven and God in Heaven need to do a better job of explaining themselves.

If God is not *really* the absolute monarch that He appears to be, critics argue, then Satan must not *really* be the republican that he appears to be. Satan is, after all, the father of lies. According to Norbrook, Satan’s rhetoric can only be “semi-republican...Like Lucan, [Milton] demonstrates how republican ideals can become corrupted by personal ambition” (442). Norbrook, Achinstein, and Peter C. Herman each argue that Satan might represent Oliver Cromwell, the Parliamentary who betrayed the cause and became a monarch in all but title. Norbrook suggests that the seemingly republican council of the

---

<sup>189</sup> For a very thorough survey of Parliamentary royal slave rhetoric, see Quentin Skinner, “John Milton and the Politics of Slavery” *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 1-21.

devils “has been rigged” (453). Lewalksi agrees: “Satan sways the council to his will through the agency of his chief minister and spokesman, Beelzebub” (224). According to Lewalski, Milton is not undermining Republican rhetoric by putting it in Satan’s mouth. Instead, she argues that the context merely makes Republican rhetoric inappropriate, not inherently flawed, and that Abdiel shows how Satan has erected a monarchy and not a republic (227). If the devils are royal slaves, they are slaves of King Satan not God.

The critics I have been citing work hard to preserve Milton’s republican politics. But even Norbrook admits that such an approach is fraught with difficulty:

In Lucan it is clear that Caesar’s adoption of republican rhetoric is merely cynical...His troops are not susceptible to this persuasion. What distinguishes the fallen angels from Caesar’s troops is that they are susceptible to the ideals of liberty. Milton’s first republican readers must have been endlessly perplexed as to how to read Satan’s speeches. Later criticism has been equally perplexed. (444)

Achinstein also takes up the issue of “perplexity,” suggesting that Milton’s repetition of the word highlights the poem’s pedagogical function; it teaches readers through ideological puzzles (212). Perhaps the most provocative move in recent Milton scholarship, however, has been not to look for authorial solutions to authorial puzzles but to embrace Milton’s contradictions.

Satan appears to be a slave, but he also appears to be an oppressive monarch. What is a republican audience to do? Is Satan a political friend or spiritual foe? He is a royal slave, and we cannot easily simplify his double-identity. As Herman asks: “How does one resolve these conflicting and equally plausible interpretations? My point is, you don’t” (Herman 42). Peter C. Herman, Henry Weinfeld, Joel Slotkin, Balachandra Rajan,

and Linda Gregerson all deconstruct the politics in *Paradise Lost*. With regard to Milton's "poetics of incertitude," Herman produces a long list of allusions and metaphors that both republicans and monarchists used to attack each other.<sup>190</sup> Herman destabilizes commonly held assumptions about the text by exploiting Milton's language of uncertainty, places where the narrator asks questions, or uses terms like "or" or "seems." For instance, Herman cleverly undermines the ubiquitous assertion that Satan "rigs" the Council through Beelzebub by noting that the narrator uses an interrogative rather than a declarative to blame Satan; "the foundation for [the Muse's] claims is not fact, but an *assertion*. She does not *know* that the plan originates with Satan. Rather, she *assumes* so, and rather than first-hand observation, relies on a tautology to prove the claim" (95).<sup>191</sup> Herman even suggests that God makes a political error (or perhaps intentionally errs) with the devils and that Hell's parliament seems attractive because it actually works. Although God terrifies his subjects, the devils "agree of their own accords, not because of Satan's superior force" (Herman 93). Herman suggests that critics are too quick to assume that the devils do not sincerely hold a Council; he challenges readers to abandon assumptions that *everything* a devil does must be bad. For Herman, the reader's awareness of Satan's evil does not vitiate Satan's politics; rather, such awareness can make Satan's political discourse more profound.

---

<sup>190</sup> Achinstein acknowledges a wide range of conflicting political uses of Satan, but she does so largely as a concession to counter-arguments against her own thesis. The critics listed above point to multiple meanings to suggest that Milton expects us to consider them all at once.

<sup>191</sup> Although Herman shows that the reader cannot be certain that Satan has "rigged" the Council, he does not explain why Beelzebub would suggest someone explore Earth. Perhaps Beelzebub has been "inspired" on his own, and the Council is just a brainstorm. Because all of the demons seem to express views that would benefit themselves, it might be that Beelzebub has an alternate plan. It could be that Beelzebub anticipates the lack of volunteers for the mission. Perhaps he is merely giving Satan his cue, or perhaps he is actually maneuvering conversation so as to remove his superior from the political scene in Hell. As soon as Satan is gone, the devils are free to do as they please and pursue their individual pleasures in the confines of Hell.

The reason that many readings of Milton miss how Satan's evil can paradoxically highlight Milton's preference for republicanism without glorifying Satan is that critics tend to subordinate the poem's politics to its theology or its theology to its politics. For instance, a critic who subordinates politics to religion qualifies God's absolutism in the poem by first asserting God's moral goodness. Such a critic might say: "If God is all-good, then nothing He can do can be bad. Milton thinks absolutism is bad, but God is absolute. God is greater than absolutism, so God's is a different kind of absolutism...a good kind." The critic who puts greater weight on politics might say: "Milton hates absolutism. The Father in *Paradise Lost* appears to be absolute. If the poem's God does something bad, then the poem does not represent Milton's real idea of God." Bryson suggests that the God in *Paradise Lost* is a cipher designed simply to make a rhetorical argument; it does not represent Milton's actual conception of God. Herman tries to have it both ways: politics and theology cooperate to generate meaning in the poem. One is not subordinate to the other. Satan can do admirable things, such as let his lieutenants speak their minds, and God can do things that should not be emulated, such as terrify his subjects to the point where they rebel. These acts are more meaningful precisely because they appear to conflict with the assumed character of actors.

Using Herman's model, one might suggest that Milton argues that republicanism is so effective that even an evil figure like Satan sees its value and that absolutism is so ineffective that not even an omnipotent and good figure like the Father can use it without hurting His creation. God's absolutism might not be immoral, but (for Milton) asking God to be absolute without alienating His creation is like asking God to make a stone heavier than He can carry. In this sense, Milton's rhetorical strategy is similar to Lucy



Hutchinson's in her poem *Order & Disorder*. Both poets make tremendous concessions to political opponents, but they do so in such a way as to sabotage their opponents' belief systems. Hutchinson concedes (if only for the sake of argument) that royal authority is patriarchal, but she argues that its genealogy descends through the villains of the Bible. Milton concedes (if only for the sake of argument) that God is an absolute ruler, but absolutism proves to be the less effective form of government if the purpose of government is to maintain order and loyalty among its subjects (God's government evidently has some other purpose).

Another reason why critics do not see Satan's government as a true republic is that it becomes a forum for the devils to expose their own tyrannical pathologies and self-interests (and therefore their own royal slavery). When the fallen angels finally hold a parliament for an ostensibly democratic debate on their next course of action, the devils Moloc and Belial employ language of slavery to a tyrant, echoing the rhetoric of Brutus and Cassius. They are still defiant, even in slavery; they still are in a military frame of mind. When considering a second assault on Heaven, Beelzebub regards their enslavement explicitly as spoils of war:

But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now  
Of force believe Almighty, since no less  
Then such could have orepow'rd such force as ours),  
Have left us this our spirit and strength intire  
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,  
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,  
Or do him mightier service as his thralls

By right of Warr, what e're his business be  
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in Fire,  
 Or do his Errands in the gloomy Deep

(I.143-52)

Only in Hell do devils realize God's omnipotence, but Beelzebub admits God's all-powerful nature as a consolation to his pride. A defeat is less ignominious if one's adversary is omnipotent. Later, Moloc, the great advocate of military reprisal, laments that his fellow angels "for thir dwelling place / Accept this dark opprobrious Den of shame, / The Prison of his Tyranny who Reigns / By our delay..." (II.57-60). God might shame the devils, but Moloc desperately asserts his dignity by rendering himself the unjust victim of a tyrant who takes advantage of his rivals' weaknesses (do we see shades of Marlowe's Bajazeth?). Devils cannot understand why they have been left undamaged in Hell. They can understand claiming slaves as battle spoils, but they cannot conceive of the merciful retention of slaves in combat. God must preserve them for some task, not out of charity. Pity is alien to their utilitarianism. Of course, all they can do is conjecture—the devils are as uncertain about their purpose in Hell as they are unaware of God's nature. Nevertheless, it is important that they understand their fallen state as *slavery*, not merely captivity or imprisonment.

That Moloc wears royal symbols further complicates his alleged republicanism. He may lament his slavery, but he appears as a "Sceptred King" (II.43). The image of a republican devil railing against unjust conquest and enslavement but dressed as a conquering king is confusing. It is as if Milton asks the audience to imagine a republican tyrant. But cannot a sceptred slave-tyrant speak his mind as an equal in a republican

forum where all devils appear as princes? In a way, is not every individual his or her own king in a republic? Outwardly slaves, the devils still try to behave like royalty. If they are indeed a parliament, then they are simultaneously a parliament of kings and a parliament of slaves. When Satan's major domo, Beelzebub, arises to conclude the diabolic conference, he similarly conceals his current damnation behind a lofty carriage. Milton depicts him in *noble images* of a strong government official:

Which when Beelzebub perceiv'd, then whom,  
 Satan except, none higher sat, with grave  
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd  
 A Pillar of State; deep in his Front engrav'n  
 Deliberation sat and public care;  
 And Princely counsel in his face yet shon,  
 Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood  
 With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear  
 The weight of mightiest monarchies

(II.300-08)

But Beelzebub the "majestic" monarch is also Beelzebub the slave.<sup>192</sup> Despite the devils' outward majesty, they are in spiritual bondage. The chief devils all assert their servitude and their power, even if each devil defines power and servitude or royalty and slavery differently.

Like Moloc, Beelzebub describes Hell explicitly in terms slavery; however, Beelzebub comes to view their slavery in distinctly political, rather than military, terms:

---

<sup>192</sup> His lack of egalitarianism does not necessary undermine his republicanism, since a republic is not a democracy among equals.

...we dream,  
 And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doom'd  
 This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat  
 Beyond his Potent arm, to live exempt  
 From Heav'ns high jurisdiction, in new League  
 Banded against his Throne, but to remain  
 In stricted bondage, though thus far remov'd,  
 Under th'inevitable curb, reserv'd  
 His captive multitude: For he, be sure,  
 In hight or depth, still first and last will Reign  
 Sole King, and of his Kingdom loose no part  
 By our revolt, but over Hell extend  
 His Empire, and with his Iron Sceptre rule  
 Us here, as with his Golden those in Heav'n.  
 What sit we then projecting peace and Warr?  
 Warr hath determin'd us, and foild with loss  
 Irreparable; tearms of peace yet none  
 Voutsaf't or sought; for what peace will be giv'n  
 To us enslav'd, but custody severe,  
 And stripes, and arbitrary punishment  
 Inflicted?

(II.314-34)

Such slavishness must dull majestic guilt. Certainly torture and punishment do. Beelzebub describes a God generous to the obedient and wrathful to the disobedient; but the devil perhaps reveals more about his own beliefs on domination than the nature of God's power. He imagines God as a strict and unforgiving Emperor who seeks only to maintain a vast Empire (thus, Beelzebub's appearance after Moloc allegorically suggests how tyrannical management emerges after tyrannical conquest and expansion). The devils' suffering is "arbitrary punishment." God's pronouncements are mere whim rather than law, and Beelzebub's near-machiavellian God ensures obedience through the cold and heartless elimination of any opposition. This probably suggests Beelzebub's views of temporal and legalistic authority more than it describes truly divine and merciful power. Beelzebub's political theory focuses on how to enslave securely, not how to rule justly. It is significant, then, that Beelzebub is not the supreme devil.

This honor is, of course, Satan's, who most effectively models Aristotle's tyrant, the tyrant that satisfies his own desires while also satisfying those of his subjects. Satan arrives in Hell wearing a slave's shackles, but it does not take him long to appear royal. He descends into the Abyss, "there to dwell / In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire, / Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms" (I.47-49). Yet, shortly after Satan first tastes bondage, Beelzebub hails him with a royal title: "O Prince, O Chief of many Throned Powers" (I.128). In Heaven, Satan's princely title must have had limitations. He might have been a captain of angels, but he was a captain under God's ultimate command. Only when he is enslaved and out of God's presence can Satan imagine himself a supreme king. As Satan argues: "Here we may reign secure, and in my choice / To reign is worth ambition though in Hell: / Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n" (I.261-63). Hell

becomes a topsy-turvy world, reflecting the grossly inverted values of its inhabitants who seek only to fill their own appetites despite the chaos and disappointment they know such pursuits must bring. It is also worth noting Satan's use of the first person plural. It might function as the royal "we," but it also sounds as if Satan unites himself to the other devils in a collective. He acknowledges his comrades' interests; he recognizes "ambition" (262) as a universal desire among the devils. Rather than limiting his appeals to aesthetic, military, or managerial views of slavery and tyranny, he credits each of the devils' individual desires. Mammon, Moloc, and Beelzebub each have their own unique take on their condition; some devils might share their perspective, but all devils will not. Ambition, however, is something that all devils share; it is an umbrella term that each devil can interpret personally. Rather than seeming to impose himself on the devils, he draws them to himself and earns their allegiance.

Later, the narrator suggests that Satan gains his power through merit, that he ascends from slave to king by way of his diabolic virtues: "Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd / To that bad eminence; and from despair / Thus high uplifted beyond hope" (II.5-7). Merit, titles, and ceremony are perhaps as likely to provoke jealousy as disdain among the diabolic, so he quickly assures his subjects that devils are all still equals and that Hell may be even more united than Heaven was:

...The happier state

In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw

Envy from each inferior; but who here

Will envy whom the highest place exposes

Formost to stand against the Thunderers aim

Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share  
 Of endless pain? where there is then no good  
 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there  
 From Faction; for none sure will claim in Hell  
 Precedence, none, whose portion is so small  
 Of present pain, that with ambitious mind  
 Will covet more. With this advantage then  
 To union, and firm Faith, and firm accord  
 More than can be in Heav'n, we now return  
 To claim our just inheritance of old

(II.24-37)

In the inverted world of Hell, a higher station means greater torment; therefore, Satan argues, none ought to seek to depose him. Those whom the devils most honor are those whom God most curses. Though his motives are suspect, Milton's Satan imitates Christ's call that the greatest be the least and the least the greatest. The greatest in Hell also suffers the greatest slavery—thus, the most royal must be the most enslaved. Perhaps some devils will sympathize with and therefore obey their suffering monarch who courageously bears rule's burden and the brunt of God's anger; perhaps (and more likely) Satan frightens lesser demons from deposing him.

Satan's claim to royalty after volunteering for the mission to reconnoiter Earth is at once humble and pompous. He professes to sacrifice himself for the sake of his subjects while he reminds them of the obedience they owe him. He twice parodies Christ: he would be their sacrificial lamb, but only if they publicly declare him their true king.

Because none of his minions are willing to volunteer for the trek into the vast unknown, the Prince announces that he will bear the burden himself:

But I should ill become this Throne, O Peers,  
 And this Imperial Sov'ranty, adorn'd  
 With splendor, arm'd with power, if aught propos'd  
 And judg'd of public moment, in the shape  
 Of difficulty or danger could deter  
 Mee from attempting. Wherefore do I assume  
 These Royalties, and not refuse to Reign,  
 Refusing to accept as great a share  
 Of hazard as of honour, due alike  
 To him who Reigns, and so much to him due  
 Of hazard more, as he about the rest  
 High honourd sits?

(II.444-56)

This speech reiterates the blatant hypocrisy of Hell's egalitarian rhetoric. Satan ironically claims that his fellows are his "Peers" and yet he asserts his kingship over them. As for his profession that he serve the public interest, it is a perversion of the Christian exhortation to kings to serve their subjects.<sup>193</sup> But this is neither the master who washes

---

<sup>193</sup> Both Sharon Achinstein and Linda Gregerson observe that Satan's spear is compared to Moses in *Paradise Lost* 1.338-44. Thus, Satan is perplexingly identified with the archetypal royal slave and the leader of the Israelite slave revolt. No doubt this is Milton's irony, although as Ruth Melinkoff persuasively argues, a mistranslation in Anglo-Saxon paraphrases of the Old Testament often led renaissance artists to imagine Moses bearing demonic horns. Satan imagines himself a Moses figure, a slave who becomes a king leading his people to a Promised Land, but, of course, Satan inverts the Mosaic role. He leads the devils into worse slavery. Like Moses, one might also say that he calls down God's plagues, although they fall on his own people and on humanity, rather than his "oppressor." Indeed, Satan is also like the Mosaic



his servants feet, nor the king who dies for his people. This arrangement is purely a business transaction, and Satan uses the terminology of those investing in New World exploration and trade. Satan will “hazard” himself, not so much for his followers, but for the honor and temporal power that they will give him. He talks of his “share”—which since he risks all and alone, must mean the lion’s share. Although Satan rebels directly against God, he tries to convince his subjects that he in fact serves them while disguising his tyranny over them. The ability to hide his motives, to make himself appear to serve instead of advance his own interests, makes Satan unique among the diabolic chieftains and explains how Satan becomes the King of devils. The other devils voice their desires too loudly. As Bushnell observes, the Platonic tyrant cannot control his passions, but the Aristotelian tyrant can hide his tyranny to prolong his reign.

Hell is Hell for the devils, but how bad is life under Satan’s tyranny? We never see Satan treating his fellow devil’s cruelly, stealing their property, or compelling them to serve him. Satan might oppress mankind, but he does not oppress his devilish subjects. If anything, everyone seems to get along in Hell. In Pandemonium, a diabolic pun reflects both the chaos Satan intends to sow and also the seeming egalitarianism that his rule promises all of his demonic comrades. Is Satan’s profession of royalty really the end of the devil’s republic, then? Or does Satan become Hell’s benign absentee landlord? He leaves his subjects to manage themselves while he enters the world, as the Father and Christ leave humans to govern themselves politically while they reside in Heaven. Or perhaps Satan leaves them as Charles II left England during his exile. Thus, even if Satan threatens the republic with his kingship, he quickly vacates the throne. The devils, like

---

royal slave in that he experiences three forms of royal slavery: he is an enslaved prince, a slave to a king, and an enthroned slave.

mortals, await the second coming of their king. During this diabolic interregnum, they erect an egalitarian and republican utopia (humans establish monarchies) that does not collapse under its own mismanagement (unlike human institutions). Demonic society appears to possess more civility and stability than our own.

Satan leaves behind him a political system in which each devil pursues his own fractured happiness, and the devils achieve a society in which each individual exists without interference from its government. Far from the chaotic misrule one would expect from a rabble of slaves, the devils actually live together in peace—as even Milton concedes:

O shame to men! Devil with devil damned  
 Firm concord holds, men only disagree  
 Of creatures rational, though under hope  
 Of heavenly grace: and God proclaiming peace,  
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife  
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,  
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:  
 As if (which might induce us to accord)  
 Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
 That day and night for his destruction wait.

(II.496-505)

The devils' very devilishness makes their civility all the more poignant. Evil though they are, they know how to work together and how to construct a government that allows them to pursue their own happiness. Satan recognizes the importance of nation-building, and

he knows how to do it well: “How can Satan drive out Satan? For if a kingdom be divided against itself, that house can not continue. So if Satan make insurrection against himself, & be divided, he can not endure, but is at an end” (Mark III.24; Geneva). Satan is the tyrannical enemy of God and mankind; but Milton’s Satan is also a very effective leader of his own nation. Milton can respect his enemy’s finer points without signing on with “Satan’s camp.” The problem with the devils’ utopia is not their freedom to pursue their own happiness, but the fact that they set their targets too low, thinking anything less than God will make them happy.

In certain respects, the devils’ restoration is actually an improvement over their condition in Heaven. Satan’s subjects are utterly loyal to him; they follow him into and within Hell itself. Satan, unlike the Father, faces no disloyalty from murmuring rebels. Indeed, Satan does such an effective job of unifying the devils as a nation that only God’s intervention can destroy it. Perhaps, then, “illusory” is the wrong word to describe the devils’ restoration. If the devils’ society had nothing to it, if it wasn’t a real restoration in some sense, God would have little reason to interfere with it. Rather, Satan’s restoration is an illusion only because he has settled for a mastery that is bounded by his slavery; he has settled for a lesser good than he had in Heaven and now is even more subject to God’s absolute power. God destroys the devilish utopia because its agents refuse to acknowledge His authority, not because God is opposed to its government. Humans, for that matter, could learn a technique or two from the devils, even improve upon them. For if Hellish government can stave off the sufferings of Hell, why can’t humans thwart worldly suffering?

## SCUDERY'S RULING SLAVES

I have mentioned scholars who argue Satan might represent Cromwell, but as a prince seeking restoration, Satan could just as easily be read as an allegory for Charles II. Satan's banishment parallels Charles's exile: both face afflictions, both declare themselves kings, and both establish courts in foreign lands. Thus, the first publication of *Paradise Lost* in 1667 could be read as a reaction to the plethora of Restoration polemics that emerged in the early 1660s. These texts frequently depict Charles II enduring hardship in order to prove his virtue and right to be restored, and thereby merit himself the crown, just as Satan "merits" his rule by his own virtues (II.5-7). Sin professes to Satan,

Thine now is all this world, thy virtue hath won  
 What thy hands builded not, thy wisdom gained  
 With odds what war hath lost, and fully avenged  
 Our foil in Heav'n; here thou shalt monarch reign...

(X.372-375)

Such verses appear almost verbatim in countless songs to Charles II, as will be evident below. Of course, the idea that Satan alludes to Cromwell or Charles must be inferred. Our understanding of Milton's politics rest most securely on what we know of the man and his tracts, not on *Paradise Lost*. Quite the opposite is true of the overtly biased Restoration tracts and poetry.

What, then, is one to do with a politically ambiguous French author translated into English in the midst of this literary conflict? *Severall witty discourses* (1661) is an

anonymous English translation of Madeleine de Scudéry's *Les femmes illustres; ou Les harangues heroiques*, a text first published in France in 1642. Jane Donawerth has likened these speeches or "harangues" to an exercise in rhetorical progymnasmata, "a speech fit for a specific occasion in the life of a famous historical person, a speech one imagines that the person actually spoke" (20). The two most significant speeches for a study of royal slavery are the *Sixth Harangue: Cariclia to Theagenes – That those who never suffer'd Troubles, a cannot trule tell what Pleasure is*, and the *Ninth Harangue: Briseis to Achilles, That one might be both Slave and Mistresse*. Both of these tales describe royal women attempting to restore their lofty status after enslavement. Cariclia recalls her wondrous rise to greater liberty and temporal power than she knew before her humiliating slavery, while Briseis laments that her restoration is incomplete and is in danger of collapsing.

Scudéry was a prolific and well-known author of prose "novels," to such great effect that Dryden plagiarized her *Ibrahim* for his play *Evening's Love or the Mock Astrologer* (Aronson 155). Recent criticism fastens onto Scudéry's feminist voice and what she can tell us about seventeenth-century women authors and women's rights. But I wonder what it would mean politically for an English author to turn to Scudéry. Both Nicole Aronson and Jane Donawerth find her political identity ambiguous. She had intimate friends on both sides of the Fronde, the infamous aristocratic revolt against royally appointed officers in seventeenth-century France. Although she wrote a flattering portrayal of the Fronde's leaders (who were close family friends), she also dedicated numerous works to Louis XIV and received royal benefits (Aronson 35, Donawerth 5). One hint as to why an English translator would be attracted to Scudéry's text might be found in a panegyric that

appeared in 1660, entitled *The Royal Standard of King Charles the II*. As its title page indicates, *The Royal Standard* was “Written by the Lady Charlette, Countess of Bregy, the Oracle of Wit and Eloquence, and most Illustrious Ornament of the Court of France. And now Translated into English, for the pleasure and satisfaction of all his Majesties Subjects that understand not French.” *The Royal Standard* was one of many such letters from continental authors (as well as English abroad) appearing in 1660 to attest to the exiled Charles’s fidelity to England. Perhaps Scudery’s translator thought that her continental flavor would resonate with other imported works espousing Charles’s cause.<sup>194</sup> Although these texts generally do not describe Charles’s exile in terms of slavery, they do depict his exile as a great affliction and humiliation. If Charles’s sufferings bear upon Briseis and Cariclia’s sufferings (available in 1661), then it would seem that Scudery’s translator appropriated her stories and intended them to be read as Restoration allegories.

### **BRISEIS: LOVE’S MASTERY** <sup>195</sup>

In regard to her complicity (she willingly, if not eagerly, submits herself to Achilles’s wishes as his love slave), Briseis’s story resonates with anti-monarchists’ accounts that Charles II surrendered himself to foreign powers during his exile. There is ample evidence that some English were concerned that Charles II survived his banishment by converting to Catholicism. Some anti-monarchist propagandists asserted that Charles had

---

<sup>194</sup> The dedicatory epistle is perhaps more subversive than one might expect if the text does in fact promote Charles II. It addresses the text to “ladies” and offers them the text as “a glorious Trophy, composed of the Arms, Scepters, and Crowns of so many Monarhs, which your beauties have subdued” (A3v).

<sup>195</sup> Although Briseis’ tale comes after Cariclia’s in the text, I address it first because it relates to *Paradise Lost* whereas Cariclia’s story relates to *The Royal Slave*.

succumbed to foreign ways. According to *Englands Faith's Defender Vindicated* (1660), Charles II's critics scandalously reported that his reign would mean the end of Protestantism: “*and will they make that Apostate, great Papist grown, Charles Stuart, their King?*” (A2v). This text directly confronts these accusations that Charles has sold out the Church of England:

Notwithstanding his Eleven years banished residence to light amongst the chiefest Upholders of Popery; and on the other side, balancing these the large Promises have been made him by the Popish Potentate (the Pope himself) for establishment of him in his Throne and Dignity, provided he would renounce his Religion, and imbrace Popery, weighing his Adversity and Prosperity together: And notwithstanding all these things, that yet he should stand firm and immoveable to his first Principles, denotes his undoubted Resolution to live and die for the Church and Protestants of *England*. (A3r)

Here, the pope reenacts Satan's temptation to Christ in the wilderness by offering Charles II worldly power in return for bowing before him. Likewise, the author of *A Letter out of Flanders* (1660) questions reports that Charles had converted to Catholicism: “I have often wondred whence those scandals of his falling away to *Popery* should arise.” In *The Royal Pilgrimage, or the Progresse and Travels of King Charles the Second* (1660), the author debunks a treacherous report of Charles II attending Catholic Mass: “that impudent fellow *Lockhart* made oath he saw him at Masse, but had the reward of a *Scot*, not to be believed.” If Charles were near a Church, *A Letter to a Member of the Honourable House of Commons* (1660) assures the reader, it would have been as a witness to his Protestant faith: “In a word he is a true sonne of the Church of *England*,

and amongst the Romanists a stout Defender of the Catholick apostolick faith” (A3r). Charles was at the mercy of his foes, and Briseis is in a similar bind. Achilles, like the biblical Satan, paradoxically says he will serve his slave in return for that slave’s abject obedience, and as one expects, such an offer is empty and short-lived. Nevertheless, it is an attractive offer, and early modern English writers could easily imagine Charles following Briseis’ example.

I am not suggesting that we *infer* that Briseis is some kind of anti-type, only that she parallels hostile depictions of King Charles II. Briseis does what Charles II’s detractors accused the exiled king of doing. These detractors argue that the return of Charles would not be a true restoration because Charles had been won over by papists in his foreign travels, just as Briseis can never truly restore her power once she willingly surrenders to Achilles’s desires.

If the English would have been quick to denounce such royal slavery in its monarch, Scudery is more forgiving (or at least more ambivalent) of Briseis. Scudery writes that Briseis “without doubt deserved to be together both Slave and Mistris” (229). This is ambiguous praise, the sign of a paradox that, as Briseis argues, can be solved by love. Who better to serve, than one who does so lovingly? Who better to command than one who loves through service? So Briseis would have it; but is Scudery’s attitude ironic?

Although Briseis is mostly sympathetic, a Restoration royalist might detect one significant mistake on her part: complicity with her own slavery. Briseis’ plight resonates with depictions of Charles, but she no less parallels the English people, particularly those who abandoned royalty in the face of an ostensibly powerful and benevolent republican



government.<sup>196</sup> Restoration texts repeatedly describe as foolish (though sometimes understandable) the complicity with which many English embraced the Parliamentary Interregnum and Cromwell's Protectorate.<sup>197</sup> Unfortunately, allegory does not allow one tidily to argue that Achilles represents either Cromwell or the Parliament. To an anti-monarchist or a constitutionalist, Achilles could easily represent an absolute monarch who promises to serve his subjects in return for their complete submission.

My interest in Scudery, however, is in how her *royal slaves* parallel other Restoration texts. According to some Restoration authors, while the English people thought that they were restoring their primitive freedom under Parliament, they were in fact paving the way to further tyranny. In *The Strong Man Ejected by a Stronger than He* (1660), the author suggests that England sans royalty was a veritable slave state, but a slavery that the English willingly accepted. The otherwise freedom-loving English apparently were duped into slavery because pleasure and worldly goods distracted them. They are like Milton's devils, content with Hell's republic. *The Strong Man Ejected* cites classical precedent for Parliament's devious exchange of liberty for slavery:

It was *Crassus* his counsel to *Cyrus* that that if he would hold the *Lydians* in *Slavery*, he must let them *sing*, and *play*, and *drink*, and *dance* and *dally*, and such pipes Satan wants not, that a *dead sleep of carnal security* may fall upon his *Vassals*, and that they may for the present live in peace: *A wretched and*

---

<sup>196</sup> Countless restoration poems and tracts describe the Interregnum as bondage and slavery, for example *The Loyal Subjects Teares, For the Sufferings and Absence of their Sovereign* (1660); R. Braithwaite's *To His Majesty upon his Happy Arrival in our Late Discomposed Albion* (1660); and Lady Charlette's *The Royal Standard of King Charles the II* (1660).

<sup>197</sup> Of course, if Briseis does represent English people complicit with the Parliamentary government, then it is a far more favorable depiction than such figures usually receive. In *A Declaration and Vindication of the Loyal-Hearted Nobility, Gentry, and Others of the County of KENT*, the signers want to distance themselves from the "few disloyal, factious, and seditious time-servers" who sullied the reputation of their county.

*miserable peace* that ends in *ruine and destruction*...If *Pharaoh* be at peace with the *Israelites*, it is a sign they are his *Bond-slaves*. (C1r-v) <sup>198</sup>

Briseis has made a similar blunder. By playing and dallying with Achilles, she has underestimated her own slavery. The mastery she thought she possessed as his lover was an illusion; she rests in a “carnal security” that Achilles’ appetite for her will keep her safe (although Briseis describes their relationship in loftier terms). Indeed, sensual desire plays both in Briseis’ experience of love slavery and in Restoration literature that describes the fall of English subjects to Parliament’s temptations. In *A Congratulatory Poem on the Miraculous, and Glorious Return of that unparallel’d King Charls the II*, Alex Brome writes

silly souls, that were  
Caught with vain shewes, drawn on by hope and fear,  
Poor undiscerning, all believing Elves,  
Fit but to be the ruin of themselves;  
Born to be *cozen’d*, trod on, and abus’d,  
Lov’d to be fool’d, and easily seduc’d.

(B2v)

Shakespeare, Brome is not. But his perhaps less than immortal verses make a point similar to *The Strong Man Ejected*, that the English have succumbed to their worldly desires and appetites; like Briseis’ folly, their sexual revelry makes them forget who is really in charge.

In trying to make the best of a bad situation, Briseis is like the English who thought they would benefit from service to the new government. In a *Letter from a Person of*

---

<sup>198</sup> Feltham refers to this story in his *Resolves* (2).

*Honour in FRANCE*, the author writes of the English who have sworn allegiance to Parliament: “that party is still lyable (as not having the benefit of the Laws) to the thralldom and lash of every Innovator and Power whatsoever; witness their *Decimation* by the late Tyrant, who renewed their sorrows at his pleasure.” The lines bear uncanny resemblance to Briseis’ claims that Achilles is her “Tyrant” who grieves her with “alterations” (read innovations) to her situation.<sup>199</sup>

Briseis protests that she retains her royal dignity even in her slavery, and she attempts to shame Achilles for respecting neither love nor his duties. She might also be shaming him by describing when he kissed her manacles. Nevertheless, her fury suggests a degree of self-humiliation when she admits that she freely allowed Achilles to use her body. In *The Restauration. or, A Poem on the Return of the Most Mighty and ever Glorious Prince, Charles the II* (1660), Arthur Brett comments on “base Tyrants, who disgrace / Royalty of the Royal race; / That keep mens bodies free and safe, / But they’le oppress their nobler half” (B2r). Briseis believes she is free and secure, but willing submission to Achilles dissolves her invisible nobility. Hopeless and helpless against Achilles, she feels like a fool for having believed his promises of freedom, the same promises which Restoration authors claim rebel leaders made and then exchanged for thralldom.

Briseis erroneously believes that she is restored to freedom even though she is still a slave. Lust compromises restoration. Having achieved a temporary erotic mastery over her master, she accepts it as a replacement for her lost political freedom.<sup>200</sup> And somewhat like Milton’s Satan, she deludes herself into believing that her newfound mastery within slavery can make up for her loss of dignity. No less than Satan, she finds

<sup>199</sup> Also see Herman on how “innovation” was considered a political evil in the Restoration (101).

<sup>200</sup> Like Cleopatra, Briseis discovers that world politics affect her sphere of influence and limit the extent of her erotic power. Achilles is leaving her for a Trojan princess.

herself vulnerable to a harsh and powerful master in the end. Those who thought they could empower themselves by embracing the Interregnum government were betrayed by their republican leaders.<sup>201</sup>

Didactic as Scudery may be, Briseis' harangue is more than a cautionary tale of how *not* to be restored. The heroine ultimately argues for the necessity of love in political relations, hence invoking a familiar seventeenth-century ideology. According to Briseis, a government based on love perpetually recreates the joy of restoration for both rulers and subjects. By joy of restoration, I mean the emotional satisfaction of regaining what was lost. By continually returning power back to the other, a loving ruler regenerates this feeling in the subject who has lost power. This gift leads the subject generously to return power to the ruler, who starts the cycle over again. One cannot demand power back, but one comes to rely on and expect its return. If this cyclical joy of restoration is ever-increasing, then the feeling of loss when the cycle is broken can be, as Briseis discovers, devastating.

Briseis juxtaposes political images of royal slavery with the joyful experience of personal, romantic love. She asserts that a successful government ultimately depends on something as simple as feelings, arguing that emotional love will keep even the most powerful absolute ruler from tyrannizing over the completely disenfranchised. Although the slave had been a princess, she argues that love, rather than class, determines her worthiness to rule Achilles:

if I were not only a slave, but the daughter of a father that had been such himself;  
and on the contrary, though your Empire were as great as the whole Earth, though

---

<sup>201</sup> For more on how political dissenters after the Restoration used the language of exile and slavery, see Michael Davies "'Heaven's Fugitives': Exile and Nonconformity in the Restoration" *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture*. Ed. Sharon Ouditt. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2002.

your Province were the Mistris of the whole Universe...that could not hinder but that *Briseis* would be Sovereign; and *Achilles* would obey her, if *Achilles* could truly love. 'Tis one of the most illustrious marks of loves puissance...to make us behold Queens in fetters, as well as Kings in chains, when two amiable persons are truly touched with this noble passion. (214)

The problem with this political ideology of love slavery, as *Briseis* discovers, is that love cannot be guaranteed in government. *Briseis* herself acknowledges this flaw:

You are without doubt my master, your actions and your words do testifie it enough: and passing very far beyond the limits of the legitimate power of my Master, you become my Tyrant, and make me suffer punishment, unworthy both of your self and me. But whatever Pride you have, and what ever humility you would have me to have, I cannot forget in wearing your fetters, that I should wear a Crown; that I was not born such as you would have me die; that my hand was destined for a Scepter, not for a chain and that in taking away my Throne you have not taken down my heart; as we receive Kingdomes and Empires from the hands of fortune; so she being avaritious and capritious, can take away again what she had bestowed...(209-10)

First, she argues that *Achilles* is a tyrant because he overstepped the limits of his power (the constitutionalist definition of tyranny), and then she argues that this transgression stems from his passions (the Platonic definition of tyranny). She accepts him as a legitimate master and does not suggest that his tyranny voids his power, but she observes that he suffers losses nevertheless.

Briseis insinuates that Achilles' behavior changes her love into disdain. Here, the seventeenth-century English reader might see the discontent that precipitated both the Revolution and the Restoration:

We preserve that even to our graves; we can [be] at liberty in the midst of slavery; & make it, in fine, triumph over tyrants as well as tyranny. Do not expect therefore, that I should continue to complain poorly of your infidelity; that I should let fall any shamefull tears, that I should add to my disgraces, that of not being able to undergoe them. No, *Achilles*, no...I consent, *Achilles*, I consent. Whether perforce, or voluntarily, no matter, if so be you are pleased; if so be you appear my master, if so I appear your slave; and that I voluntarily indure your inconstancy without murmuring...But do not expect that I will suffer you to goe on from inconstancy to pride, and from pride to disdain; that you should reproach me of my chains, which onely your cruelty makes me wear; and that you should treat me unworthily...(210-11)

This reads like Guevarra's recommendation to remain obedient to a monarch so as not to incur his further wrath. She might even provide Achilles with an example of how to be a good master by being a good slave. More significantly, however, she argues that the *feelings* of loss and abjection cost Achilles her goodwill.

Briseis suggests that Achilles was aware of this political-emotional dynamic when he wooed her:

What, *Achilles*! doe you remember no more already, that I have seen you kiss my chains with respect, and not dare kiss the hand that ware them? that I have known you think it a glory to obey her, whom you might have commanded? that I have

found you entertaining her as a Queen, whom now you use as a Slave? and finally, that I have beheld you captivated by your own captive? whence comes then so strange an alteration? Was I more at freedom than I am, or am I more a slave than I was...have we interchanged our conditions one with another...(212)

When Achilles restored her power (if only metaphorically), Achilles knew that the joy would win his captive's loyalty, and she duly gave her "consent" to her own slavery and to Achilles' appetite. Now, their relationship is a loveless contract. Achilles might not lose her service, but he has lost joy (even if he does not recognize it).

*Antony and Cleopatra* and the Hercules and Omphale narratives have already shown us that even a self-professed love-slave must receive some favors or else love will grow into cold disdain. Briseis acknowledges that her love slavery to Achilles must be nourished if she is to endure her captivity: "for in fine, one may be both Captive and Mistris; but one cannot remain a captive without being Mistris, after the once having had the glorie of being so..." (223). A sustainable (perhaps even progressive) government relies on a love in which each party elevates the other through mutual restoration. If one party withholds that love, society plummets disastrously into tyranny and chaos.

Briseis leaves us in an ambiguous place, then. On the one hand, she discovers that she has mistaken lust for love. She discovers that her restoration has been an illusion, and that she has been at the mercy of a deceitful tyrant all along. On the other hand, she is like Lucrece, clinging to love and royalty in the face of tyranny. She is a woman who errs in her attempt at restoration, and yet she does not surrender all hope that true restoration is possible. She is like a fallen Charles or a complicit subject who abandoned hope in a

complete restoration and settled for something less, but she also professes an idealistic absolutism based on love.

### **CARICLIA: ENSLAVEMENT MAKES BETTER RULERS**

In a letter to a friend, Scudery wrote that Theagene et Chariclee, Theogene et Claride, and L'Astree were the most influential narratives of her youth: "These are the true sources from which my mind has drawn happiness" (qtd. in Aronson 23). Perhaps happiness is drawn from such stories because Theagenes and Cariclia are rewarded for hoping in a better future rather than settling for freedom-in-slavery. Like Briseis, Cariclia is a princess who finds herself enslaved to foreign powers and even finds herself subject to sexual advances during her exile. Unlike Briseis, however, Cariclia does not acquiesce to her master's erotic desires. Out of her love for Theagenes (also in bondage), she refuses to submit herself completely to her master. That being said, Cariclia obeys as far as her morals allow; she is, for Scudery, a paragon of love and virtue. Indeed, Cariclia's harangue suggests that slavery galvanizes her virtue and enhances her sensitivity to pleasure and happiness. Thus, Cariclia and Theagenes's tale is a typical tragi-comedy or romance. Their adventures bring deep sorrow, but their suffering makes their ultimate joy seem all the greater in contrast.

There may be more at work in Cariclia's worldview than the experience of having been a slave, however. Recalling their high lineage to Theagenes, Cariclia refers to "the illustrious race of *Perseus*, from whom I am descended, and the noble blood of *Achilles* from whence you sprung" (Scudery 145). Cariclia is born royal; her enthronement is a



restoration of an enthralled princess. Indeed, Cariclia herself uses the language of restoration to characterize her coronation as Queen of Ethiopia: “It seems to me that I have conquered the Kingdome which Fortune *restores* to me” (Scudery 143, emphasis mine). Surely her noble birth and upbringing influence her character, hence her perception of the world. Scudery’s point here is not that *anyone* can become a king, but that the path one takes to the throne counts a great deal in determining what kind of ruler one becomes. Following a route common to Restoration literature, Cariclia matures as a result of her afflictions and complicates our understanding of nobility.

A 1661 tale of two royal lovers who are tricked into exile and suffer countless torments on their road to wondrous recovery cannot help but resonate with Restoration literature of the previous year. Theagenes and Cariclia’s suffering constitutes a made-to-order allegory for the oft-mentioned persecutions of Charles and the English royalists during the Interregnum. Royalist versions of Charles II’s story often conveyed a similar sense of wonder, contrasting his bloodless restoration with the countless trials he encountered during the Civil War and exile. Moreover, the fidelity of the two lovers in the face of adversity matches the professed loyalty between Charles II and his royalist allies, while the unlikely and fortunate reunion of the two lovers at the tale’s end correlates with the restoration of the English monarch and people. Just as Cariclia grows in the face of adversity, so Charles is said to be a better king as a result of his exile. For Charles, as for his fictional avatar, affliction is pathetic, pedagogical, and providential.

Always pathetic, Restoration literature describes Cariclia-like afflictions everywhere one looks. *The Royal Pilgrimage of His Sacred Majesty King Charles the Second, or, the Second Part of the Royal Oak* (1660) delivers “the sad rehearsal of some remarkable

persecutions, through which his Sacred Majesty hath passed during the space of 12.years” (A2r). *The Mystery of Prophecies revealed* (1660) compares Charles II’s sufferings to King David’s woes during Absalom’s revolt: “Secondly what King except our Sovereign, who ought to be, and is another King *David*, did ever ride on so many clouds, that is; on so many calamities, what man but he then can be the man on the cloud, that is to be advanced by the Antient of days?” (A3v). *Englands Faiths Defender Vindicated* (1660) resonates with the Cariclia’s tale by pointing out how uncommon it is for a royal person to face such worldly suffering:

That notwithstanding his being born a Prince to all the Dignities and Honours of the Crowns and Scepters that his Predecessors have swayed; His being Banished from all these, and all the Pleasures and Delights of fruitful *England*, of which he had had some small smach before his perpetual determined Exile; That he should be forc’d to fly for Refuge to Strangers, hurried and tossed, upon the restless wheel of Fortune, from one place to another, out of one perilous danger into another, nothing but fears and dangers encompassing him on every side... (A3r)

G.S.’s *Britains Triumph* (1660) offers up more of the same, but in verse:

*Charles!* Sone of *Charles*, thus enters *Englands* Stage,  
Whose birth (his *Saviour* like) a Starre did show,  
An *Omen*, that he first should feel the rage  
Of Persecutors, and should glorious grow,  
By suffering first, this was our *Princes* Fate,  
Whome Hells Afflictions led to Heavens Gate.

(A4r)

Here, as elsewhere, Charles's afflictions are not only providential, they make Charles II a better monarch.

Hence, affliction is pedagogical. Cariclia explicitly argues that she is a better princess for having been a slave. In this regard, Scudery presents a surprising corollary to Feltham's argument that greatness increases one's sufferings; she would have it that lowliness increases one's sense of pleasure. To have had to work and endure to achieve the crown is to have enhanced one's achievement: "In fine, my dear and beloved Theagenes, we have run a glorious Race, at the end of which we finde a Crown, which is no less glorious" (141). The challenges no less than the pleasures of rule mean most to those who previously have lived without them. In a rhetorical set piece reminiscent of Feltham's depiction of the "soft Wanton," Cariclia says that those who have known only royal pleasure have an impaired ability to perceive the world:

one is accustomed to a Scepter, as well as to an iron chain; the Throne is no better to those people than an ordinary chair; and there are those that wear a Crown upon their heads, who yet hardly know whether they have it on, or are adorned with it or no. Those Princesses, who being born in the purple, and have always worn a Royal Mantle; who, even from their cradles to their graves, have always stood under the Canopy of state, within the Ballisters, and amidst the Pomp and Majesty, cannot compare their satisfaction to *Cariclia's*... (Scudery 143)

Not only does a life without corporeal suffering lead princes to take their power and wealth for granted, it limits their understanding of true suffering and true pleasure. When she compares her life as a queen to her life as a drudge, she professes that royalty does not seem so bad after all. But there are graver implications for complacent rulers, and

among these is tyranny. What kind of king forgets that he wears a crown? What kind of king expects his subjects to array him in finery and does not appreciate its value? Such a king has no idea what his subjects suffer nor what their suffering spares him. Such blissful ignorance is but a short step from tyranny.

Restoration literature repeatedly makes Cariclia's argument that affliction deepens one's perception of the world and its goods. Just as Cariclia finds royalty's pleasures sweeter since she tasted slavery's bitterness, *Anglia Rediviva: A Poem on his Majesties Most joyfull Reception into England* (1660) hopes that Charles "may know / No sorrows, but what are already past, / To give your present Joy the higher Taste" (A4v). Suffering will intensify Charles's joy and instill virtue, making him better equipped to rule unruly England. In *Astraea Redux. A Poem on the Happy Restoration & Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second* (1660), John Dryden insists that Charles II's sufferings have made him wiser and more cautious:

Nor is he onely by afflictions shown  
To conquer others Realms but rule his own:  
Recov'ring hardly what he lost before  
His right indears it much, his purchase more.  
Inur'd to suffer ere he came to raigne  
No rash procedure will his actions stain.

(B2v)

Employing a Davidic allusion, *Englands Redemption or a Path Way to Peace* (1660) suggests that England should beg God to "restore our gracious King *Charles* the second to his Hereditary Crown, whose Youth thou hast seasoned with the Afflictions of King

*David*, and clouded the Morning of his and our happinesse, with the Misery of an unchristian Exile, which hath made him the fitter for his Throne, and thy Mercy” (A3v).

In *Englands Gratulation on the Landing of Charles the Second* (1660), the poet also describes Charles II’s exile as redemptive: “whom heaven hath try’d and brought out of the fire / And layd him low to raise him up the higher / That to the wondring world he is become / The Grace and Glory of all Christendome” (A3r).

*The Royal Pilgrimage, or the Progresse and Travels of King Charles the Second* (1660) provides still another variation on the theme that divine powers punished England and used Charles II’s exile as an opportunity to improve his royal qualities:

Now what obstinate perverse disobedience can object any thing against this our rightful Sovereign, whom so great experience, the knowledge of all places, men, and manners, acquired by his own view, have so fitted and accomplished to Reign and Rule well, it having been the only study in his Exile: God hath made him the better, and we the worse by his absence. (A4v)

It is a common refrain among Restoration authors that self-imposed slavery worsened England’s state of affairs, while forced exile strengthened Charles’ character. B.T.’s *Policy, No Policy: or, the Devil Himself Confuted* (1660) argues that England languished as Charles grew in virtue and self-mastery:

For my Master, those ingenuous and candid principles connaturall to him are so improved by his afflictions, the experience of the inconstancy of this transitory world, those true sparks of Religion and pure Conscience which seem to flame in him, and the sweet consent his Majesty takes in his innocent retirement, that he can seem to project nothing in his return to *England* (as he hath often seriously

express himself) but the saving his unnaturall children from that inevitable ruin  
and misery they will bring upon themselves and the three Nations... (A2v-A3r)

Fate seems to repay Charles at England's expense, but this is ultimately a story of mercy, not justice. Charles promises to share the reparations England has paid him when he sits on the throne.

Restoration authors repeatedly make a point of how Charles II's education secures a better future for the English. *A Letter to a Member of the Honourable House of Commons* (1660) gives a prudential spin to Charles II's improvement, promising that the new king will be merciful and understanding, "He being sensible of other mens sufferings in his long sufferage under the severe discipline of his own"(A3v). And R. Braithwaite's *To His Majesty upon his Happy Arrival in our Late Discomposed Albion* (1660) notes another practical political benefit; having seen the inside operations of numerous European courts, Charles has learned how kings can be inconsistent: "You have found how Kings / Are oft-times mutable as other things /In their affections" (A4v).<sup>202</sup> Lady Charlette also suggests that Charles II's exile provides him with valuable international intelligence: "he hath learnt out of the different politicks of his allies all that might one day conduce to make Him obeyed through esteem, and serv'd through love and inclination...if he were not their King by *Birth* he should be by *Election*" (A3r). In *Englands Iubile: Or, A Poem on the happy return of his Sacred Majety, Charls the II* (1660), the experience gained through affliction does more than make the king a better leader; it ensures England's salvation:

---

<sup>202</sup> Joad Raymond devotes an entire essay to the significance of rhyming "king" and "thing" in political poetry. See "The King is a Thing." *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 69-94. Raymond shows how the seemingly ubiquitous rhyme effaced royalty's majesty by making it an object, but concludes by showing how monarchists appropriated the device against Interregnum leaders.

Who, whilst thou didst (from hence excluded) stand  
 The pittied wonder of each Forraign Land:  
 Learn'st by commanding Passions how to sway  
 A Nation more rebellious far than they;  
 So that the Schoole which thou wert tutor'd in,  
 Though thy disease, our Antidote hath been.

(A3r)

This and all of the 1660 royalist commentary clearly saw the Restoration as more than a mere return to the way things were before the Interregnum. It was to be the beginning of a new and improved monarchy; indeed, the Revolution inadvertently made the monarch even stronger than his father. Charles I may have been one of Cariclia's complacent rulers, but Charles II promised England a modest and humble king. Royalists believed that because Charles II had faced bitter Carician exile and slavery, the restored king would better appreciate the sceptre and would rule more effectively than his predecessor (whom royalists idolized as a martyr). Cariclia's harangue suggests that the new king, unlike the old king, has passed a test of character and therefore *deserves* his title.

That is to say, Cariclia weighs the right of inheritance against merit:

I have conquered the Kingdom which Fortune restores to me; it seems to me, that  
 I hold it by my vertue, and not by my birth; and it seems to me, that my merit has  
 given to me, all that which my love will make me give your merit...[T]hat which  
 we gain by our industry, or generosity, is infinitely more precious, than that which  
 we hold from nature... (Scudery 143-4)

“It seems” to Cariclia that her merit and virtue have gained her the crown. Scudery concedes that the merit, virtue, and industry which Cariclia and Theagenes have shown in their repeated captivity, enslavement, and suffering do not directly lead to their restoration nor do they guarantee political savvy or effective administration. Fortune as well as princely patience and fidelity will translate into gifted rule. But the benefits of merit, and in particular virtue, are what the English Royalists harp on.

Several argue that Charles II’s virtues are all the more noteworthy for the way they contrast with his plight and with the treachery of the English rebels. *The Strong Man Ejected by a Stronger than He* suggests “Thus did the Stars of his Vertues shine most clearly in the *Dark Night* of his *Exilement*” (D4v). *To the King upon his Majesties Happy Return* uses similar light imagery: “Your Banishment, which Your Foes did designe / To cloud Your Virtues, made them brighter shine. / Thus Persecution did but more dispence / Throughout the World the Gospels influence” (A2v). In *The Restauration. or, A Poem on the Return of the Most Mighty and ever Glorious Prince, Charles the II* (1660), Arthur Brett attributes Charles II’s triumph over his ill-fortune to his virtues: “In Patience’s and Vertue’s Field / [Charles II] Has conquer’d Fate, and it doth yield” (A4v). Dryden’s *Astraea Redux* similarly describes virtue’s might, alluding to Roman *virtu*, or manliness and military prowess:

Unconquer’d yet in that forlorne Estate  
 His Manly Courage overcame his Fate,  
 His wounds he took like *Romans* on his brest,  
 Which by his Vertue were with Lawrells drest.

(B1v-B2r)



The anonymous *A Congratulation for his Sacred Majesty* (1660) easily overtops Dryden:

The Heart where Love enthroned sits and lives,  
 And greatest Injuries forgets, forgives;  
 That Magazine of Humane Policy,  
 Patterne of Patience, Prudence, Piety:  
 Once the Contempt, but now the Worlds great Wonder;  
 A King of Peace, and yet a King of Thunder:  
 A Done of Suffering, but now Triumphant,  
 By Patience learn't the Art of Overcoming

(1)

*A Letter out of Flanders* (1660) is amazed that Charles II has maintained a healthy disposition toward the world despite his long exile. It concludes that his virtues are such that “there is no reward under heaven above his Merit” (A2v). In *A Letter to a Member of the Honourable House of Commons* (1660), royalists assert that they would appoint Charles king even if he were not the heir due to his proven character: “had he no Title of inheritance legally transmitting it to him, from a lingure discent of his royal Progenitors, his merits would seal him a lawfull Patent to it” (A2v).

Caroline virtue also consistently benefits from Divine Providence. While Cariclia attributes her success to virtue and Fortune, the Christian royalists were quick to acknowledge Divine Providence as the Restoration’s guiding principle. *London and England Triumphant* (1660) asserts that

A valiant and more virtuous Prince  
 England could never boast

Circled about with providence  
 Sent from the Lord of Host...  
 This is a great deliverance,  
 just at the latter day,  
 When as the King in sorow sate  
 and kingdome was inflam'd,  
 God rais'd him to a Throne of State  
 For now the King's proclaim'd.

(1)

A royalist could hardly hope for more proof in the divine right of his monarch to rule. In *The Kings Return A Sermon Preached at Winchcomb in Gloucestershire upon th Kings-day* (1660), Clement Barksdale argues that England must account the wondrous and improbable return of Charles II a miracle:

Suppose a King, a religious King, be forced from his Throne, and live as a banished man, persecuted and almost forsaken, how apt are we to look only upon the rebellious, cruel, ambitious party that cast him out...and in the mean, not consider at all the Providence of God, who thus afflicts the King to try his Patience, to exercise and improve his Graces, to prepare him for the greater Glory, and make him the greater blessing and more welcome to his people? (A2v)

*Orthodox State-Queries* (1660) justifies Charles II's Restoration by describing it as the will of God: "Whether *Charles Stuart*, since it hath pleased God to lead him though a series of such various kinds of providences, and to indue him with a spirit of admired admiration on the one hand, as well as continual patience on the other, be not in great

reason to be judged as a fit a person (of his age) to sway a Scepter, as any Prince in Christendome?” In a dramatic scene entitled *The Black Book Opened, or Traytors Arraigned and Condemned by their own Confession* (1660), a loyal cavalier scolds Parliamentarians on the eve of Charles’ return: “A Pox upon you all, His Royal Person who hath been by Providence preserv’d and escaped many dangers (especially at Worcester fight) and a pursuit preserved (by God himself to be King)...Whom God defend now from such slaves as you, *God save the king.*” *A Letter from a Person of Honor in France* (1660) asks “And then tel me, if you can, if this doth not proclaim Monarchical Government to be the Will of God and our Savior?” The royalists were deeply invested in depicting Charles II as one whom God had laid low and brought high. Perhaps more significantly from a political perspective, depicting restoration as providential enabled royalists to justify a monarch as God’s representative (rather than His scourge). If a royalist author could convincingly portray the Restoration as a miracle, then he could argue that God actively supports monarchy, and, more importantly, He prefers it over republicanism.

Indeed, God’s bounty overflowed, giving the English even more than what they asked for or merited. That God would give the English a better king than the one they exiled seems paradoxical. The English would hardly seem to *deserve* such a reward (and many of the descriptions of Charles II indicate that it is not what the people deserve that matters). If bad subjects benefit from Charles’s restoration as well as the good, then that is just another sign of God’s mercy. But royalists were already primed for such gracious restoration arguments before the Civil War even broke out. The idea that providence and

virtue could reform even a corrupt nation, restoring power to a monarch and order to the state, is at the heart of William Cartwright's *The Royal Slave, a tragi-comedy* (1639).

### CARTWRIGHT: ROYAL SLAVERY AND TRAGI-COMEDY<sup>203</sup>

The genre of William Cartwright's *The Royall Slave, a tragi-comedy* is, like its title character, an oxymoron. Tragi-comedy, or romance, is an aesthetic hybrid. This double genre spawns a host of opposing elements in Cartwright's play: the hero's noble suffering contrasts with the supporting cast's slapstick drunken revelry, fatally jealous husbands confront chaste neo-Platonic wives, harsh captivity ends with bloodless revolution, decadent patriarchs fear armor-clad women. But to what end did Cartwright employ the image of the royal slave in this play written specifically as an entertainment for Charles I? What political work was this tragi-comedy doing in its two performances before the king?<sup>204</sup> To what end does Cartwright recast English political figures as Persians with subversive shaming rituals and Greeks with vexed national identities?

In *Shakespeare's Monarchies*, Constance Jordan argues that Shakespeare uses tragi-comedy in particular to explore absolutism, both critiquing potentially abusive power and exemplifying how an ideal absolute monarch can usher in new peace and order. As

---

<sup>203</sup> Ending with Cartwright breaks the chronological flow of this chapter. However, the themes of *The Royall Slave*, notably the questions of national identity, solidarity, private interests, and rebellion, relate more closely to those of the subsequent discussion of *Oroonoko*. Furthermore, *The Royall Slave* has an apparent royalist slant, as I have argued for Scudery's translation, and as has been argued for *Oroonoko*. All these considerations make it a suitable thematic transition into this project's conclusion.

<sup>204</sup> Dedicated to Charles and Henrietta, the play's prologue explicitly compares the foreign court to Charles's: "A forreigne Court lands here upon your Shore, / By shewing its own worth to shew yours more" (A2r). However, in *Theatre in Crisis*, Martin Butler argues that Cartwright's play serves as an entertaining indictment of Charles's court, calling for reforms and re-establishing proper rule as the focus of throne. In his essay "Royal Slaves?", Butler observes that (despite the play's repeated performances for the court) Laud requested that *The Royall Slave* "not be allowed to get onto the *common* stages (that is, the public stages)" (8). Critiquing the king privately was apparently a different thing than critiquing him publicly.

Jordan shows, Shakespearean tragi-comedies often begin with corrupt monarchies that politically enslave their subjects, but they end with reformed monarchies that restore liberty (usually through *deus ex machina*). By following the lead of his late dramatic predecessor, Cartwright's tragi-comedy anticipates England's civil strife and subsequent restoration. Through the superlative example of its selfless protagonist, the play argues that mutual service and a sense of commonwealth are the only means by which individuals can hope for peace and security, but Cartwright's optimistic view of achieving national security is not without its own qualifications.

Arsamnes, the Persian king, chooses to shame Cratander, an enslaved prisoner of war, through a carnivalesque ritual. He appoints the slave to replace him as king of Persia for three days before execution. Because the Persians are confident that Cratander's slavery expresses an inward slavishness, they assume he will spend his last days in carnal pleasure, squeezing the last drops of sweetness out of a life that will soon be cut short. They could not be more wrong. Cratander has lost interest in worldly pleasure; he reads philosophy. When, like Briseis, he is offered power in the midst of slavery, he accepts; but he does not use his new and temporary powers to indulge his senses. Rather, like Cariclia, he continues to serve Persia loyally. Choosing virtue over licentiousness, Cratander creates a whirlwind of just and beneficial governmental reforms that threaten the corrupt aristocratic status quo. And in the process, he teaches the Persian monarch how to be a proper king. Having learnt to serve properly (and having gotten favorable signs from the heavens), the Persian king spares Cratander. The play ends with the restored Persian king wiser and more just than he had been before. Cratander, who returns to Greece as its new satellite-ruler, will generate similar reforms there (but not

without certain unresolved problems). Restoration in both cases entails an ostensible improvement on what had come before.

Prior to Arsamnes' restoration, the Persians cannot quite figure out how to interact with Cratander and whether or not they should obey him. Having planned merely to play a game of obedience, they find that recreation has become deadly serious. They are in a bind because of Cratander's dual nature as king and slave. His carnivalesque coronation does not erase his slavery. When the nobles debate how they should react to Cratander's temporary but strict rule, they are as divided in their reactions as he is divided in his character:

**Masist.** You'l obey him then?

**Hyd.** I don't obey

Him, but the King; as they that pay their vowes

Unto the Deity, shrowded in the Image.

**Masist.** True, 'tis the King's will he should be obey'd

But hee's a Slave; the man lookes personable,

And fit for Action, but he is a Slave;

He may be noble, virtuous, generous, all,

But he is still a Slave.

(B4r)

Hydarnes literalizes the king's two bodies: there is a true king and an acting king. This courtier suggests that Cratander is merely the acting king; he is the "image" of kingship. By comparing this parody of the king's two bodies to the practice of idolatry, Cartwright hints at the deeper theological underpinnings of divine right monarchy, the belief that

faithfulness to a monarch is an expression of fidelity to God who granted that ruler power. As long as one's master did not command one to perform a sinful act, one was obliged to serve even an evil master (or a substitute) out of reverence to God.

Masistes' initial response is not quite as philosophically cloudy as Hydarnes's. He dismisses any authority that Cratander has on the grounds of class, refusing to accept that carnivalesque ceremony can transfer legitimate authority to Cratander. For Masistes, if a master ought to be obeyed because of his station, regardless of his merits, then a slave ought *not* to be obeyed because of his station, regardless of his merits. Cratander's detractors remind his would-be allies that the Greek is still a slave even while he is "king." If they cannot corrupt him, they can tarnish his authority by suggesting that true obedience to a slave is inconceivable in a shame culture, even in a carnivalesque context. But it is selfishness that motivates Masistes' refusal to believe that a slave could possess power. He is unwilling to follow a royal slave who would reform the court and deprive him of his corrupting influence there, and Cratander's slavery provides the nobles with the loophole through which to avoid adherence to the king's will (whether that king is Cratander or Arsamnes).

Masistes easily perceives how slavery limits Cratander's newfound royalty, but he fails to see how Cratander's virtue is self-limiting. Having been enslaved, Cratander believes that every royal edict he pronounces must serve Arsamnes. Hence, Masistes is more correct than he realizes; Cratander very much sees himself as slave *and* king. However, Cratander's self-imposed boundaries and his lack of self-interest make Cratander a superlative monarch. In his insightful reading of Cartwright's play, Paul Scott Gordon argues that one of the central allusions of the play is to Charles I's

conscious efforts to present himself as a disinterested monarch. According to Gordon, “interest” was a highly loaded word in anti-monarchical literature in the 1630s and 40s. Cratander is interested in honor, which will accrue to him if he properly serves his master. At times, this means finding indirect ways to act in Arsamnes’ best interest, since the king’s desires are not always ennobling. By creatively disappointing his master’s expectations, Cratander devotes his talents and wisdom to Arsamnes; this slave is always looking out for the king’s good.

Why should a prisoner of war become so obliging to his conqueror? Although lacking self-interest, Ephesian Cratander discovers that it is in his homeland’s best interest to improve Arsamnes’ character. When the two first meet, Cratander defiantly argues that Arsamnes cannot claim true victory over the Greeks so long as they mentally resist Persian domination:

**Crat.** ’Tis a discourse o’th’Nature of the Soule;  
That shewes the vitious Slaves, but the well inclin’d  
Free, and their owne though conquer’d.

**Arsam.** Thou dost speake  
As if thou wert victorious, Not Arsamnes.

**Crat.** I [do] not deny your Conquest, for you may  
Have virtues to entitle’t yours; but otherwise,  
If one of strange and ill contriv’d desires,  
One of a narrow or intemperate minde  
Prove Master of the field, I cannot say  
That he hath conquer’d, but that he hath had



A good hand of it; he hath got the day,  
 But not subdued the men: Victory being  
 Not fortunes gift, but the deservings Purchase.

(B2v)

Arsamnes' corrupt and self-serving court has no appeal to Cratander, and he is ashamed that morally inferior enemies have physically conquered him. However, Cratander believes that if he can transform Arsamnes into a truly worthy master, then his submission could be justified: "my intent is only / To perfect great *Arsamnes* Conquest, and / In that be beneficiall to my Country" (E4v). If you cannot beat them, reform them.<sup>205</sup> Thus, Cratander's good, Ephesus' good, and Arsamnes' good are all interlinked in a new commonwealth. By the end of the play, Cratander intends willing service to be a compromise. His split Ephesian and Persian loyalties are evident when he is confronted by Greek agents. Cratander tells the Ephesian spies who would have him betray Arsamnes that their planned rebellion is folly:

Your forces are so weakned, that you cannot  
 Regaine a perfect Liberty: your Friends  
 Begin to fall off too: all that you can  
 Expect now, is to settle these your evils,  
 And live protected as a weakned friend  
 Under the Persian shelter: still preserving  
 Your Lawes and Liberties inviolate.  
 A thing yet rather to be wish'd for,

---

<sup>205</sup> In this regard, Cartwright's play offers a rich text for post-colonial discourse, arguing for ways in which a colonized people can influence the master culture.

Then compass'd.

(F3v-F4r)

He fatalistically acknowledges that the Greeks have no military hope against the Persians who have doomed the Ephesians to servitude. The Greeks can unwillingly serve an unfit ruler, or they can willingly serve a worthy master. If they can achieve the latter, the Ephesians can preserve their “Lawes and Liberties”—the essence of their national identity.

The Greeks are preoccupied with nationhood and their national identity, but Cratander warns the Ephesian agents that their treacherous tactics dishonor them: “O Phocion! / Such men as you have made our Grecian faith / Become a Proverbe t’expresse Treachery” (F2v). Likewise, Cratander also scolds the inebriated Greek slaves for giving their nation a bad reputation:

Doe but consider,

(If that at least you can) how Greece it selfe

Now suffers in you; thus, say they, the Grecians

Do spend their Nights: Your vices are esteem’d

The Rites and Customes of your Country, whiles

The beastly Revelling of a Slave or two,

Is made the nations Infamy.

(E1r)

If slavery diminishes the other Greeks’ character, it burnishes Cratander’s. Slavery makes him appear more noble or royal, but he avoids their shame because he is mentally

prepared to face affliction. His recourse to Greek philosophy upholds his virtue under enslavement; Greek culture is both the means and the end of preserving itself.

Even Persians can see the practical benefits in preserving Greek culture. When the Queen of Persia leads a women's revolt to spare Cratander's life, she begs her husband to free the Greeks so that they may preserve their national identity while under Persian protection:

Here I must dwell, Arsamnes, ty'd by great  
 And solemn Vowes, (our Gods do now require it)  
 Till you shall grant that the Ephesians may  
 Still freely use their antient Customes, changing  
 Neither their Rites nor Lawes, yet still reserving  
 This honest Pow're unto your Royall selfe,  
 To command only what the free are wont  
 To undergow with gladnesse. I presume  
 You scorne to have them subject as your owne,  
 And vile as strangers, Tyrants conquer thus.

(G3v)

Atossa defines a tyrant as a ruler who does not identify with the people he rules. The good ruler identifies with the people, and they reciprocate when that ruler unites with them and shows that he values their culture. Echoing Cratander, the Persian Queen argues that true royalty inspires subjects who happily and willingly serve their ruler. Deprived of their identity, the Greeks will become base slaves of little use to Persia.

Cratander succeeds and Greek culture survives, but Cartwright insists that the Ephesians must reform themselves as well. Just as Cratander seeks to reform Arsamnes so that he himself might have a master worth serving, Arsamnes desires worthy servants: “See, there comes one / Arm’d with a serious and Majestique looke, / As if hee’d read Philosophy to a King: / We’ve conquered something now” (B2v). Defeating inferior and ignoble warriors gives Arsamnes little honor. Winning noble minds would glorify Arsamnes’ power and give him an asset worth his entire kingdom. Thus, when the Persian priests declare that the Persian gods no longer desire Cratander as a sacrifice, Arsamnes makes Cratander a king to the Ephesians, hoping that he will improve their condition. Once again, the royal slave reforms. Cratander, having reformed Arsamnes and the Persian court, now promises to make Greece more Greek than when the play began. Both the least Ephesian and the most Ephesian of his countrymen, he redefines what it means to be Greek by establishing a stricter law. What independence remains for the Ephesians will be drastically altered by the new, more stoical regime under Cratander.

### **THE RETURN OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN <sup>206</sup>**

Potential problems with Cratander’s governance are already obvious in Persia. Although he wins the hearts and minds of many Persians, he fails to win over the corrupt courtiers. Nor can he persuade his own countrymen to follow him. How is it that Cratander appears charismatic to some and repellent to others, especially to his fellow slaves? One answer might reside in Cartwright’s thoughtful analysis of slavery itself.

---

<sup>206</sup> Leaving behind restoration, this section looks ahead to the final chapter, a discussion of Oroonoko’s failed slave revolt. Because Cratander and Oroonoko fail to identify with their fellow slaves, they prove unable to lead them.

Cartwright's play focuses on the individual's experience of slavery, dwelling on how chains weigh on an individuals' conscience. From chain imagery it is only a short step to consideration of political service, servitude, rebellion, and reformation. Cartwright suggests that Cratander fails to empathize fully with his fellow Greeks' slavery, and, as a result, they fail to see how he strives to help them. Slavery traumatizes the minds of the Greeks, stripping them of their identities and blinding them to circumstances beyond their immediate needs.

In the opening scene, drunken Greek slaves sing an abject ditty about drinking in prison. They try desperately to restore their sense of freedom through debauchery. Their song suggests that drunkenness is liberating, that it helps one to forget suffering—"Ther's liberty lyes in the bottome o'th' Bowle"—but the lyrics say otherwise. The sounds and sights of slavery bubble to the surface: "Our Dungeon is deepe, but our Cup's so too" (B1r). And the chains continue to make themselves felt: "Then drinke wee a round in despite of our Foes, / And make our hard Irons cry clinke in the close" (B1r). Try as they may to subsume clinking chains in their revelry, the noise made with every drink confirms the persistence of their misery. "Drink" can no more drown out the "clinke" than the tragic "cry" of the "Irons."<sup>207</sup>

It is not surprising that the stoical Cratander zeroes in on these chains when he reprimands the Greek slaves for their misbehavior. He scolds them: "Cannot / The chayne and hunger kill those seedes of evill, / But even in the midst of your misfortunes, / your sports must be the robbing of fair honour, / And Rapes your Recreations?" (D1v).

---

<sup>207</sup> The Clink is the name of a prison in Southwark. According to William Prynne's *The Popish royall favourite* (1643), the Clink held religious dissenters such as puritans and Catholic priests. Printing a series of letters and warrants written to the "keeper of the Clink or his deputy," Prynne complains that Charles showed partiality to Catholic priests held in the Clink, freeing them after brief imprisonments despite holding Puritan preachers for longer incarcerations.

Whereas most of the Greek slaves see their chains as an excuse to behave without moral restraint, Cratander believes that bondage and suffering test one's mettle and are opportunities to show one's true honor. According to Cratander, the best way to restore liberty is consciously to ignore the chains, not to blot out their memory through sensual overload. But when the Greek slaves finally do conceive of slavery as a state of mind more than physical bondage, the results are disastrous. The Greek slave Philotas plots to betray Cratander, perverting Cratander's own philosophy of interior liberty: "We doe enslave our selves; We can b'as free / As is Cratander, though not so malicious" (E3v). A little philosophy is a dangerous thing. Like Caliban with Stephano and Trinculo, the slaves convince themselves that they have passed out of slavery, when in fact they now serve the aristocratic Persian troublemakers. Or are they like Briseis, thinking that they have regained power even while the Persians exploit them? Unsurprisingly, they set out to assassinate Cratander, thinking that this will complete their self-emancipation.

For Cratander, however, self-restraint is freedom from desire. Lack of restraint is vice. We see this when Queen Atossa drops a golden chain in Cratander's path as a sign of her admiration for him. Without knowing its origins, he dons this love token because he comprehends its allegorical significance: "a chayne? Why this / Is but an exprobaton of my late / Distressed fortune. 'Tis rich yet, and Royall; / It cannot be the wealth of any, but the Throne" (D2r). He recognizes the gold as his power and outward freedom, but he also acknowledges how its links represent his deceptive slavery. The chain is a restorative that keeps Cratander focused on his current plight. The golden chain reminds Cratander that power requires self-restraint and that a good ruler is bound internally if not externally. To wear a symbol of power and honor binds one to honorable use of that

power. When Hippias argues that Cratander should no longer hold himself bound to Persia, Cratander answers:

I am so still; no sooner did I come

Within the Persian Wall, but I was theirs.

And since, good Hippias, this pow'r hath only

Added one linke more to the Chayne.

(D3r)

Power, according to Cratander, is another form of bondage, complete with its own obligations and duties. For his part, Arsamnes has not worn his golden chain well. Therefore, it has gone to another, and now the Persian believes he must confront an upstart slave and a rebellious wife (even though both serve him more obediently than he can imagine). Those who are truly loyal serve Arsamnes despite himself. He has won neither hearts nor minds, and the Greek's iron chains only signify how precarious his rule really is.

The royal slave custom is supposed to re-affirm that the Persians conquer truly and honorably, as opposed to exploiting a lucky victory. It is a controlled experiment designed to investigate the spiritual and moral worth of the Persians compared with other nations. Removing a slave's shackles and appointing him ruler follows from the assumption that, given royal scope, a slave will show himself to be not only morally inferior but harmless, too. In a sense, the royal slave is supposed to show how superfluous chains are. The reason Arsamnes picks Cratander is because the slave's mysteriously noble physiognomy presents an unexpected challenge. If the *best* of the Ephesians is inferior to the best Persian, then how much more inferior must the rest of the

Greeks be.<sup>208</sup> But Cratander's noble behavior ultimately subverts the whole game and the whole basis of Persian superiority. The slave whose shackles it is safest to remove is the most dangerous to a corrupt state. The slave who is most loyal to his master brings an unworthy master the greatest shame.

The royal slave's superiority as monarch infuriates the jealous king as much as a wife's potential infidelity, and Cratander does appear to one-up Arsamnes' in the bedroom as well as the palace. Of course, the fact that he does not take advantage of the king's bedroom makes him seem all the more frustratingly good to Arsamnes. Because pride prevents a ruler from admitting his faults and another's merit, Arsamnes binds himself to error. Atossa gently persuades her husband to acknowledge Cratander's virtues in a way that does not detract from his glory: "Vertuous Cratander / Shewes forth so full a Transcript of your life, / In all but his misfortunes, that methinks / You may admire your selfe in him, as in / Your shade" (F1v). Of course, there is more of a disparity between Cratander and Arsamnes than the slave's misfortunes. If Arsamnes had Cratander's noble mind, then he would not doubt his wife or envy the slave. However, Atossa offers the king a way to use Cratander as a model without the shame of publicly acknowledging his weakness. By suggesting that Cratander is a "Transcript of your life," Atossa indicates that Cratander is as Arsamnes *had been* before his courtiers corrupted him or as he *could be* if he would rouse himself out of tyranny.

Arsamnes' need to reform becomes more urgent as Cratander-mania sweeps through Persia. Cratander has yet another set of chains, but these he wields rather than wears (or

---

<sup>208</sup> Thomas Cartelli makes a similar argument regarding Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* in *Repositioning Shakespeare: National Formations, postcolonial appropriations*, New York: Rutledge (130). According to Cartelli, the "primitive" behavior exhibited by the royal slave Oroonoko and "the most promising Africans" justifies enslavement.



perhaps he does both). Masistes complains that “He is growne the talke / And sight of all the Court: h’hath eyes chain’d to him, / And some say hearts: nor are they meane ones, such / As he may steale without being miss’d; but those / The theft of whome turnes sacriledge” (C1r).<sup>209</sup> Masistes is most likely alluding to Queen Atossa’s attentions, depicting her as a love slave whose eyes and heart are in bondage. This language makes her gift of the golden chain all the more suspicious to less than pure minds.<sup>210</sup> Indeed, Cratander’s virtue has infected “all the Court” with a wondrous love-sickness. If eyes and hearts are “chain’d” to him, if the nation is uniting around Cratander rather than Arsamnes, then Cratander could lead a successful revolution (as any good student of Machiavelli could observe). The astute and scheming courtier sees that Cratander must be stopped, but this political foresight presents a problem: to let Cratander die now will make Arsamnes look like a frightened tyrant assassinating a rival. To let Cratander live is to gamble on the sincerity of his virtue; to kill him, however, is to guarantee the disdain of the people and to set them against a tyrannical Arsamnes. Cratander’s fame has turned the tide and deflected the shame of royal slavery back on the Persian leaders. Mercy will preserve Arsamnes’ power and show he is neither jealous nor afraid of Cratander. Thus, the king learns that mercy sometimes can make him look stronger than tyranny.

---

<sup>209</sup> Masistes’ depiction of Cratander compares with Sir Thomas Wilson’s depiction of another royal slave, Hercules, in the preface to his *Art of Rhetoric*. Indeed, Wilson’s Hercules also matches Cratander’s wisdom and usefulness as a royal advisor:

And therefore the Poetes do feyne that Hercules being a man of greate wisdom, had all men linkt together by the eares in a chaine, to draw them and leade them euen as he lusted. For his witte was so greate, his tongue so eloquente, & his experience suche, that no one man was able to withstand his reason, but euerye one was rather driuen to do that whiche he woulde, and to wil that whiche he did, agreing to his aduise both in word & worke, in all that euer they were able. (Aiiiv-Aiiir)

<sup>210</sup> Masistes insists that what is most perverse about her slavery is her social station; a queen has been reduced to bondage and become herself a royal slave.

That Cratander finds it easier to reform a foreign king than his own people has political significance, given the play's historic context. Martin Butler, for one, argues that many of Charles's court entertainments, including *The Royall Slave*, critiqued Charles's governance. While the play's major dramatic question ostensibly centers on Cratander's survival, its resolution depends on a monarch skillful enough to enable distinct political entities to coexist peaceably under one government. Arsamnes learns to tolerate different national identities and cultures within a single empire. By the end of the play, Cratander has so impressed Arsamnes that the king is willing to grant liberty to his conquered subjects so long as they remain under Cratander's demanding guidance. The Persian recognizes that his own honor is dependent on the virtues displayed by his subjects—virtues they can display only if they are free.

But if Cartwright's play is a critique of government, it also criticizes government's critics. Cratander challenges cynics who depicted Charles as an enslaving tyrant; the play advocates allegiance to one's master, despite misrule. Whereas rebels might use slavery's shame to inspire their fellow subjects to revolt, Cratander stoically asserts that true freedom is in the mind, where no government can seize it. Those who lament their slavery and use it as an excuse to disobey appear like the foolish Greek slaves. Hence, Cartwright expects toleration on the part of political victims as well as the victimizers, and he would have us scrutinize subjects' motives as well as monarchs'.

When Cratander considers how to deal with the raucous Greeks, he meditates on how their behavior reflects on his reputation as a ruler: "These Slaves must be repress'd; the giddy People / Are ready to transpose all crimes upon / Him that should moderate them; so perhaps / Their faults might be accounted mine" (D2r). On one hand, the failings of

the “People” stem from their ruler’s mismanagement (this corresponds to the case for Charles’ misrule). On the other hand, the “People” may be too quick to blame the monarch for their own misdeeds. Does Charles resemble the corrupt but redeemable Arsamnes, or the selfless but slandered Cratander?

Cartwright acknowledges corruption but advocates peaceful reforms; his play does not support insurrection, although it does include two problematic revolts. In one instance, rebellion is reduced to an absurd parody of Sophocles’ *Lysistrata*. Arsamnes’ wife Atossa arms the women and demands Cratander’s life and freedom, but no real military action takes place. Her revolt is more a matter of civil disobedience and shaming than it is a distaff *coup d’etat*. The other attempted revolt is a comically bungled slave uprising when the captured Greeks try to assassinate Cratander. Amidst this farce, the selfish and greedy slaves forget their weapons. Acting out of self-interest they act against their own best interests. If anything, they serve the interests of their corrupt masters, the jealous nobles who seek to restore their own power by removing Cratander. In Cartwright’s play, rebellion does not achieve social justice for the many. If anything, it would satisfy the aristocracy’s self-interest at the slaves’ expense. Even if the slaves did successfully overthrow Cratander, the nobles would continue to oppress them. The courtiers use the rhetoric of slavery and tyranny to distort Cratander’s reign, appealing to the slaves’ base desires with promises of revenge, wealth, and women rather than loftier egalitarian or national ideals. *The Royall Slave* is a warning to anti-monarchists and monarchists alike.

In his *The Diall of Princes*, Guevara argues that the way to topple a tyrant is not to overthrow him, but to kill him with kindness. Guevara recommends shaming the monarch into reform through obedience rather than reminding the tyrant that he is a monster

(Moses prayed for Pharaoh even though Moses knew Pharaoh's case was hopeless). True revolution (according to such royal slave narratives) entails true service, hence Cratander focuses on the true monarch that Arsamnes might become, not the tainted ruler he is.

The play's end is not without its problems, however. What does the future hold for Cratander? Will the Greeks even accept his iron rule, or will they see him as a Persian puppet? There remains some hope for justice, but only a modicum of liberty and independence, and even less of a possibility of ever really returning home. The Ephesus to which Cratander returns is not and cannot be the same Ephesus that he fought to preserve.

Cratander's unidentified social class also poses a challenge to his capacity for rule. Butler observes that the play is unique in that the ennobled slave never reveals himself to be a prince in disguise (32-37). If Cartwright imagines him to be every man, then any man who has resolve can become a king, and the *Royall Slave* seems finally to favor meritocracy. So merit gets its due, but can anyone be king? Is the play egalitarian, or does the intractability of the Greek slaves prove they are inherently unfit to be full members of a society?

It has become something of a truism that the early modern period had no moral position on slavery because it did not directly condemn the practice as inherently wrong. Scholars often observe several justifications for slavery in the period, such as Biblical precedent (the curse of Ham) and Aristotelian philosophy (the idea of human brutes). However, *The Royall Slave* demonstrates the difficulty of determining who is suited or unsuited for enslavement. Cartwright probably does not have a proto-abolitionist agenda, but he does observe that the decadent Greek slaves behave in a crude and beastly manner

because they are doomed to certain death. They do not behave as the men they once were. Cratander is not necessarily *naturally* superior to his fellow slaves. Greek education shields him from becoming slavish, and it is education that he hopes will save Ephesus from Persian tyranny. The other Greeks fall when faced with death because they have not been taught philosophy, not because they are bestial by nature.

The play is a thought experiment about slavery's effects on commoners and nobles alike. For Cratander, enslavement is simply not an acceptable option. He does not shun slavery for its harshness, nor does he seek to avoid enslavement because it offends his honor. Rather, he sees enslavement as cultural extinction. He overcomes slavery for Ephesus' sake rather than for his own. Insofar as liberty is a means of expressing Ephesian virtue, liberty is a good for Cratander. Inversely, insofar as slavery curtails the ability to be virtuous, it is an evil.

Cratander laments his fellow slaves' seeming incorrigibility because their experience of slavery has damaged their Ephesian identity. The base Greeks do not reform under Cratander, even after he releases them from prison. They do not understand that their only hope lies in self-restraint:

O! wee must walke  
Discreetly, looke as carefully to our steps,  
As if we were to dance on ropes, with Egges  
Under our feet: wee have left off shackles,  
To be worse fetter'd

(E2r)

That freedom from external restraint requires heaping more restraint upon oneself is simply too counter-intuitive for the Ephesians. It is a concept that one must learn, and Cratander does not have time to teach it to them. Here, then, is a place where Cratander may err. His fellow prisoners can leave the prison, but he does not (or cannot) stop their execution. They may walk the streets of Persia, but they are not Persian. They see little chance that Cratander will return them to Greece, and therefore lose their sense of Greekness. They are men without a nation. They are dead men walking. Without a sense of commonwealth, they fall to immediate self-interest and, ironically, their own self-destruction.

**CONCLUSION: *OROONOKO, the Royal Slave***

**OROONOKO: THE FAILURE TO FORM A NATION**

And be there never so great a Multitude; yet if their actions be directed according to their particular judgements, and particular appetites, they can expect thereby no defence, nor protection, neither against a Common enemy, nor against the injuries of one another. For being distracted in opinions concerning the best use and application of their strength, they do not help, but hinder one another, and reduce their strength by mutuall opposition to nothing: whereby they are easily, not onely subdued by a very few that agree together, but also when there is no common enemy, they make warre upon each other for their particular interests. (Hobbes 118)

Published in 1688, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko, the royal slave* acknowledges the misery of mid-century transatlantic slavery and makes that slavery a signifier for England's fractured national identity. Indeed, divisions were so deep that the English would depose and replace their own monarch in the same year that Behn published *Oroonoko*. Like the seventeenth century itself, the novella climaxes in rebellion, but the slaves' revolt collapses. Having persuaded the rebels by appealing to their self-interest rather than the collective good, Oroonoko fails to unite the slaves under a new national identity.<sup>211</sup> His is a rhetorical failure; he neither offers the slaves a nation worth defending nor accounts for the power of love. Anything but members of a commonwealth, the slaves surrender when they find that their personal interests are in jeopardy: family values take precedence over aristocratic ideals when the slaves' wives and children advocate surrender and the slaves

---

<sup>211</sup> By national identity, I mean both a set of defining characteristics that a society can use to describe itself and individuals' convictions that they are part of a social entity.

submit for their sakes. As soon as love becomes literal love slavery, the slave owners can overcome the rebels. Hence, while Behn encourages us to identify and sympathize with Oroonoko as a suffering prince, she would have us acknowledge that his failure to unite the slaves stems at least in part from royal self-interest, which is to say, from tyranny.

The analysis of *Oroonoko* that follows consists of three parts. The first summarizes the novella and addresses contemporary race discourse in terms of blackness and slavery. The second part discusses Behn's description of the divided self. Characters repeatedly find their personal desires at odds with their national identities, and, subsequently, these characters engage in sophisticated rhetorical strategies to harmonize their public and private selves. Behn pits self-interest against national identity (and therefore liberty) long before Oroonoko becomes a victim of the English slave trade. When Oroonoko arrives in Surinam, this dynamic of private over public interests only dooms his revolt. The third section examines Oroonoko's triple royal slavery (he is a king's slave, an enslaved king, and an enthroned slave) in order to show how Behn uses the language of royal slavery to express theories of tyranny, questioning whether repression or anarchy is the worse of two evils.

A brief summary of the novella is in order. The first half concerns Prince Oroonoko's adventures in his African homeland of Coramantien where he struggles with his impotent grandfather king in a lopsided love triangle for Imoinda. After the king virtually imprisons Imoinda in his harem, Oroonoko's friends convince him to steal into her bedchamber to consummate private vows with the still-virginal maiden. When he discovers that his grandson has slept with Imoinda, the king sells her into slavery, reports her dead, and makes peace with the prince in anticipation of upcoming wars (the means



by which Coramantien traditionally amasses chattel slaves to sell to the English). After grieving for Imoinda's supposed death, Oroonoko befriends a treacherous English slaver who traps him and sells him in Surinam. The rest of the tale takes place in Surinam where Oroonoko (now Caesar) is conveniently reunited with Imoinda (now Clemene). Oroonoko endures his slavery because his royal status preserves him from manual labor and because his love for Imoinda makes him feel at liberty. When Imoinda becomes pregnant, Oroonoko fears the perpetual servitude of his royal line and instigates a rebellion, but the English Governor Byam swiftly (if haphazardly) crushes the revolt. Now desperately running out of options, Oroonoko slaughters Imoinda to spare her and their offspring from future humiliation. The story concludes with Oroonoko's public execution and mutilation.

My discussion of Oroonoko's royal slavery will benefit from an abbreviated account of recent critical arguments that the abortive revolution reflects Behn's ambivalent attitude toward, and financial dependence on, the slave trade. The novella has been said to use race and class to justify Behn's own commerce in slaves. Thus Moira Ferguson writes that Behn was an "advocate for slavery" (*Oroonoko* 339-40) and that the revolt's failure indicates the heavy hand of Behn's imperialist ideology:

As long as humane traffickers (not seen as a contradiction) and philanthropic plantation owners (ditto) run the institution and felicitously convert pagan Africans to Christianity and hence to "civilized" values, the slavery and the slave trade can blend harmoniously with the aristocratic ethic. (*Oroonoko* 343)<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>212</sup> If Behn justifies "philanthropic" slavery, why does Oroonoko refuse "Christian values?" Why does Oroonoko refuse to discuss the Bible or entertain thoughts of religious conversion? If the best of slaves (indeed, a slave who is practically a type for Christ) refuses to accept Christianity, then what hope could colonists have in converting his inferiors? In fact, according to Richard Ligon, English colonists in

According to Margaret Ferguson, Behn justifies the slave trade based on Aristotelian natural slavery—the idea that some classes of humans are so brutish that slavery is in their best interest. This Ferguson’s Aphra Behn

is far from joining the tiny group who voiced criticisms of the whole system of international trade based on forced labor... the literate white woman who spoke *for* some oppressed black slaves...did so with extreme partiality, discriminating among them according to status (the novel sympathizes with *noble* slaves only, depicting common ones as “natural” servants and traitors to Oroonoko’s cause)...(“Juggling” 217-23)

Elliot Visconsi also notes Behn’s partiality to “the right rule of natural superiors like Oroonoko” (688). And Anita Pacheco argues “what some have taken to be emancipationist outrage is in fact concern for the prerogatives of class...Behn is repelled not by slavery per se, which is unobjectionable when it involved common people, but by the enslavement of a prince, born and brought up to command others.” Indeed, for Visconsi, Behn’s novella is a polemic against *white* lower-classes, “a degenerate race of colonial rapists, thieves, and barbarians” (688). Gary Gautier also focuses on class rather than slavery:

One of the things that has struck many readers about Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* is that this novel seems to accept slavery as quite natural even as it mocks the racist idea of white superiority. This double theme, which may seem somewhat

---

Barbadoes were forbidden to convert the slaves because it would make them unfit for servitude (Christians ought not to enslave Christians). As Derek Hughes notes “Seventeenth century slave owners were reluctant to baptize their slaves, in belief that it would manumit them...” (Hughes 17). To teach *Oroonoko* about orthodox Christianity is to subvert the slave system, perhaps even provide a coded guide for escape in the form of Exodus.

contradictory, is quite coherent if...slavery is mapped into the conceptual space of this novel as a function of class, with race as a detachable issue. (163)

For these critics, Oroonoko's failed rebellion and his subsequent disparagement of his fellow slaves indicate Behn's personal adherence to a royalist and colonial status quo. But this is to impose Behn's alleged ideas about race and class onto the narrative before fully taking into account how the narrative itself explains the rebellion's failure. Rather, the novella suggests that race, class, and slavery are not inherently connected. That is, Behn repeatedly argues that the values we assign to slavery (whether through race or color) are arbitrary.

Behn draws on contemporary racial ideologies when she discusses the aesthetics of blackness. *Oroonoko* defies common assumptions when it ascribes beauty to blacks, if not blackness. For example, when describing Oroonoko, Behn writes "bating his colour, there could be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome" (81). He possesses "native beauty so transcending of all that gloomy race" (79). Comparing Oroonoko to his "gloomy race," Behn gives little indication she intends "race" to refer to anything other than "black" (although "race" had other meanings than color in the period). Describing the Coramantien harem, she writes: "for most certainly, there are beauties that can charm of that colour" (79). This defense of black beauty only makes sense in terms of early modern assumptions that light attracts and darkness repels.<sup>213</sup> However, in *Oroonoko*, aesthetic prejudice against blackness does not prevent English colonists from begging Imoinda for her love (Trefry admits that her virtue protects her from rape). For Behn, it was perfectly reasonable to assert that "they had the most

---

<sup>213</sup> For further consideration, see Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness*.

charming black that ever was beheld” (110). When, earlier, Behn refers to Coramantien as “a country of blacks” (78), she lifts blackness out of the aesthetic realm and centers it in the realm of national identity.

The racial discourse in Behn’s Restoration text, then, often parts with that of her literary predecessors in the Renaissance. Ania Loomba remarks that somatic definitions of race were inchoate in Shakespeare’s day, noting that the playwright himself only vaguely hints at modern notions of race in terms of color when he describes Caliban (Loomba *Shakespeare, Race, Colonialism* 35). For early modern English people, race was intricately bound up with every imaginable classification, whether class, gender, religion, aesthetics, nationality, or family (Loomba 24-35). Likewise, Joyce MacDonald recommends that we detach our

discussion of race from a discussion of dark-skinned people, not only because this concentration on color as the chief determinant of race is a modern rather than a Renaissance phenomenon, but because assuming race is only about skin color leaves whiteness—the physically unmarked category, the engine which drives and dictates racial definition and stratification—immune from examination. (“Women and Race” 43)

Behn begins to sound “modern.” She is acutely aware of blackness and whiteness and refers overtly to Europeans as “white” throughout her text. But she also scrutinizes whiteness and decides that it has no intrinsic value. Black Oroonoko surpasses whites in any European art. Certainly, *Oroonoko* can reify whites and blacks; but blackness does

not unify the slaves, and Oroonoko does not use race (as color or more broadly defined) to unite them before the revolt.<sup>214</sup>

In *Oroonoko*, blackness recalls slavery because all of the slaves are black, but Africans are not slaves *because* they are black. For instance, Behn writes that the English spare the Indians from slavery because (as Raleigh had suggested) it would be unwise to make them enemies, not because Indians are superior to blacks in some great racial chain of being (Behn 78). Race is no guarantee of freedom or slavery. Indeed, Behn writes that Oroonoko's French tutor technically retains his freedom not because he is white but because he is baptized. As Behn suggests, the English lament that "they could not make [the French tutor] a slave, because [he was] a Christian" (112).<sup>215</sup> Race does not fully explain enslavement, and readers are left to wonder how much longer religion can safeguard the French tutor. Once Christians actively seek ways to enslave other Christians, will even the English be free in the future? Thus, Behn's novella is as invested in English freedom as African slavery. Nor should this surprise us, given that, as Dymphna Callaghan has argued, early modern authors used marginalized persons as protagonists to reinforce already established ideologies rather than mimetically to reconstruct the Other (13).

Behn's much-discussed blazon of Oroonoko describes Oroonoko's blackness to shock the reader into an awareness of his other more conventional traits; it serves as a classical rhetorical paradox.<sup>216</sup> Behn herself acknowledges that praise of Oroonoko's beauty might

---

<sup>214</sup> If race relates to family, as Loomba suggests, then race leads to the revolt's failure.

<sup>215</sup> If baptism spares the French tutor, then Behn's attempt to Christianize Oroonoko and Imoinda looks less like "philanthropic" slave mastery and more like downright subversion of the colonial enterprise.

<sup>216</sup> See Rosalie Colie's *Paradoxia Epidemica*. Colie explains that classical and humanist rhetoric used the form of the paradox to write inverted encomia on otherwise unpraiseworthy themes in order to reinforce what should be the status quo. Paradoxes praising baldness, or flies, or Erasmus' famous *Praise of Folly*, are designed not so much to praise their object, as to find entertaining ways to remind the reader of the

be surprising, given his color, but she aims not so much to rattle European aesthetic sensibilities as to reinforce what truly makes Oroonoko beautiful: his noble physiognomy which reflects his noble soul. Rather than assert the universality of European values, Behn shows they are not intrinsically “European.” Oroonoko certainly did not develop his noble *face* through European instruction. Indeed, that black face is well suited to a royal slave because blackness, like the trope, paradoxically attracts and repels the English.

### IDENTIFYING WITH THE DIVIDED SELF

Oroonoko’s origins reflect the oxymoronic nature of the royal slave. His grandfather is an impotent king. His father was “one of these dead victors...conquering when they fell” (Behn 79).<sup>217</sup> The identities of Oroonoko, his father, and grandfather ask us to entertain contradictory thoughts. But if we find Oroonoko’s identity perplexing, we are not alone. The novella repeatedly draws attention to characters’ uncertainty regarding Oroonoko’s identity as well as their own. The Surinamese, whether British, African, or Indian, all face the same conundrum: is Oroonoko a prince in fetters, or is he a slave whose lineage

---

value of beauty or wisdom. For his part, Derek Hughes trenchantly argues against reading the blazon as an attempt to impose whiteness on the black body, focusing especially on Oroonoko’s famous Roman nose:

For many, this nose reveals Behn’s deplorable incomprehension of the Other; for Hendricks it ‘schematizes an optic dichotomy’ whereby Behn breathes to other passers the secret of her own racially mixed ancestry (‘Alliance and Exile’, p. 269). No one considers that Oroonoko’s hybridity of form might prepare for the cultural interplay of African and Roman which increasingly ensnares him; the possibility of artistry is out of bounds. (Hughes 8)

<sup>217</sup> If Oroonoko does stand for Charles II or James II, perhaps this dead father is Charles I. Despite his many detractors before and during the Civil War, the theatrical grace with which Charles I underwent his execution won back much sympathy, especially since his enemies had not entirely agreed upon taking the life of the monarch. Perhaps Oroonoko recalls his own dead father when he gives his visceral response to the story of Charles I’s execution: “he had heard of the late Civil Wars in England, and the deplorable death of our great monarch, and would discourse of it with all the sense, and abhorrence of the injustice imaginable” (80). Of course, Oroonoko’s own “deplorable death” at the hands of English commoners makes him as likely to be a figure of Charles I.

is royal? These need not be mutually exclusive realities, but they typically vie for supremacy. Oroonoko is a foreign dignitary, and he is property. He inhabits the moral world of romance and the pre-capitalist world of commodity exchange and entrepreneurship (Visconsi 690). To the extent that Surinam reflects England, is the latter a land of aristocratic romance or of deadening mercantilism? How does a monarch unite a nation of royalists and fallen republicans? How does a royal monarch maintain his nobility when he himself engages in trade? How does royalty unite with the people and remain distinct from them? With its tragic conclusion, Behn's story does not provide us with a gratifying answer.

Oroonoko's slavery alienates him from free subjects, and his royalty alienates him from slaves. As Oritz notes,

Behn's novel attempts to sustain more than one narrative, an attempt which is encoded in the doubleness of the novel's title: *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave*...Behn's narrative mirrors and reenacts Oroonoko's transformations from prince to slave...the narrator's references to Oroonoko oscillate between terms that recall his African status and those that call attention to his enslavement...Oroonoko evolves from a "Royal Youth" who happens to be a "Slave" to a "Slave" who is only sometimes known as a "Prince."

But this is perhaps to overestimate Oroonoko's "transformation." Oroonoko's slavery in the New World expresses his less obvious bondage in Africa, and his enslavement stems *from* his royalty. In a metaphorical slavery, Oroonoko often finds that his public identity thwarts his private desires. His royalty requires him to obey the distinctively Coramantien customs that mark his national identity, particularly with regard to Imoinda. The noble

African prince must embody Coramantien customs even though he wants desperately to tear himself away from them. Hence Oroonoko is a royal slave long before he meets the English trader. And yet his Surinamese bondage stems from his royalty as well, his aloofness frustrates his chances of uniting the slaves.

Can we see Oroonoko as chattel and a prince simultaneously, or must we focus on one aspect of Oroonoko's identity at a time? Visconsi argues that Behn's text "force[s] its agents to choose between" competing ideologies that render Oroonoko either chattel *or* a tragic prince (690). It is true that characters often must choose how to perceive Oroonoko, but sites of persuasion in the text play a role that critics have overlooked.<sup>218</sup> Within the novella, rhetoric becomes the essential tool with which Oroonoko motivates the Surinamese slaves; he cannot *force* them to act since he has neither the political agency nor the firepower to threaten potential traitors. Oroonoko must *persuade* the slaves to revolt. The world of *Oroonoko* is steeped in rhetorical combat, between characters and within characters, as they constantly debate what is true, what really happened, how they should perceive the world, or how they should act. Over and again, Behn's characters half-believe, refuse to believe, or believe simply because a version of reality appeals to their desires. Consequently, Oroonoko's revolt depends on his ability to convince the slaves of a new world for which they should sacrifice their lives and families.

Oroonoko's uncanny rhetorical skills seem to suit him to the task of persuasion: "whoever had heard him [Oroonoko] speak, would have been convinced of their errors, that all fine wit is confined to white men, especially to those of Christendom" (81).

---

<sup>218</sup> Perhaps critics overlook persuasion because Behn often summarizes these scenes of characters persuading one another rather than directly quoting persuasive dialogue.



Anyone who heard him “would have confessed that Oroonoko was capable of reigning well, and of governing as wisely, had as a great a soul, as politic maxims, and was as sensible of power as any prince civilized in the most refined schools of humanity and learning, or the most illustrious courts” (81). He is a superb rhetorician.<sup>219</sup> However, the narrator does not say that he *would* reign well, only that his auditors would have *believed* him *capable* of it based on his public speech. Does Oroonoko reign well when he convinces his whole retinue to submit to the English slaver? Where is his capacity to lead when his rebels surrender? If the popular assessment of Oroonoko is true, does this mean Oroonoko is not to blame for the failed revolt? Perhaps slavery’s effects are too great even for rhetoric and charisma to overcome. Or cannot a brilliant speaker make a tactical error? For some, Behn’s praise for Oroonoko’s leadership abilities make his fellow slaves appear all the more inferior when they fail him, but such a reading neglects Oroonoko’s own flaws. To address these issues, it is useful to consider some of the chief sites of persuasion in the text.

While still in Coramantien, Oroonoko’s friends persuade him to rebel: “But it was objected to him, that...Imoinda being his lawful wife, by solemn contract, ’twas he was the injured man, and might, if he so pleased, take Imoinda back, the breach of the law being on his grandfather’s side...it was both just and lawful for him so to do. This reasoning had some force upon him...” (86). If their arguments are sound, it is surprising that they should only have *some* force. This qualification suggests that the narrator never

---

<sup>219</sup> Oddvar Holmesland argues that “Oroonoko at first lacks circumspection, skepticism, and knowledge about the real world. Through his experiences of the colonizers, however, he is divested of his naivete” (Holmesland 69). However, I find that Oroonoko is well aware of the real world and treachery; he need look no further than his own grandfather to find harsh realities and duplicity. It is just that Oroonoko’s honor prohibits him from breaching etiquette.

quite justifies Oroonoko.<sup>220</sup> One wonders about these friends' political backgrounds. They could be sincere, or they could be machiavels. Significantly, Oroonoko yields to their rhetoric because "He loved so well that he was resolved to believe what most favoured his hope, and to endeavour to learn from Imoinda's own mouth, what only she could satisfy him in: whether she was robbed of that blessing, which was only due to his faith and love" (86). He accepts his friends' logic because it suits his desires, not because he believes in their arguments.<sup>221</sup> Oroonoko does not believe he can justify rebellion, but desire for Imoinda leads him to rationalize. He will risk a national scandal on account of his personal interests. If we forgive his lovesickness, it is because chivalric romance appeals to us and Oroonoko has not yet mastered his youthful passions. But we can see the potential for tyranny.

Oroonoko's passions get the best of him with far more disastrous results when his guilt leads him to accept imprisonment under the English slave trader. When the Englishman fiendishly captures the Coramantien prince, a belief in divine jurisprudence convinces Oroonoko of his captivity's justice: "[Oroonoko] would often sigh for Imoinda, and *think* this a punishment due to his misfortune, in having left that noble maid behind him that fatal night in the otan, when he fled to the camp" (Behn 105, emphasis added). Oroonoko persuades himself that he has betrayed Imoinda and imagines his enslavement as retribution. When the trader removes the prince's shackles, Oroonoko has

---

<sup>220</sup> Powers of persuasion mingle with mesmerism when Behn describes the Indian witch doctors. Among the Indians, "peerie" use "legerdermain tricks and slight of hand...and by these tricks makes the sick believe that he sometimes eases their pains... for almost all their diseases, they cure the patient more by fancy than by medicines..." (123). Here, Behn observes the power to *convince* people of what they desire to be true.

<sup>221</sup> When Oroonoko debates with the Surinamese slaves, he does not consider their love attachments as possible motivators but as potential obstacles (which they turn out to be). Rather than telling his fighters to take arms for the sake of their women, they are to reject any woman who does not understand a man's need to acquire honor.

the opportunity to free himself, but refuses to do so. Behn suggests that Oroonoko's sorrow is so great that he wants to be enslaved, and he does not mind that others must suffer for his own guilt.<sup>222</sup>

Persuasion is central to this scene. Oroonoko persuades himself that he is being punished, and he persuades friends to eat. The captain persuades Oroonoko to trust him again, swearing by the Christian god. Oroonoko replies that "punishments hereafter are suffered by oneself; and the world takes no cognition whether this god have revenged them, or not, 'tis done secretly, and deferred for so long...I speak not this to move belief, but to show you how you mistake, when you imagine that he who will violate his honour, will keep his word with his gods" (104). Oroonoko argues that Christianity lacks rhetorical persuasiveness because it lacks empirical proof. He believes that divine punishment must include public shame, such as he experiences in his enslavement. Thus, he will take the captain at his word as the captain is a man, not as he is a Christian. Oroonoko's skepticism actually mirrors that of the "doubting captain" (104), since both desire tangible evidence. The worldly trader knows too much to anticipate anything but treachery from Oroonoko; yet, he does not know whether Oroonoko really believes in such invisible, transcendent truths as honor. The trader doubts when he should believe, whereas the prince has faith in doubtful things.<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> Perhaps Oroonoko even knew that the English trader intended to capture him.

<sup>223</sup> Is Oroonoko merely naive? Oroonoko has no reason to suspect that his long time business partner has any ulterior designs. But he does have reason to intentionally throw himself into a trap, if he were suspicious. Even after this deceit, Behn describes Oroonoko as still vulnerable to ruses. When the English assign spies to Caesar posing as attendants, "Caesar looked upon it as a mark of extraordinary respect, and was glad his discontent had obliged them to be more observant to him" (115). The narrator's tone may be ironic. Behn previously notes Oroonoko's growing suspicions regarding his promised emancipation. Perhaps Caesar plays the game, pretending that he does not realize the attendants are spies, and Behn's first person narrator is the one who is duped.

Persuasion of the divided mind spills over the page, however, when Behn's narrator invites the reader to judge the English slave trader: "Some have commended this act, as brave in the captain; but I will spare my sense of it, and leave it to my reader to judge as he pleases" (102). Facts are not being disputed in this instance, but their value is subjective. Will the English praise treachery or will they praise virtue? Behn claims that she will not try to persuade the reader one way or another, which is perhaps a rhetorical dodge. If the scene does not speak for itself, then perhaps Behn's point is to make us notice what kind of people would praise the treacherous captain. Would such readers bring shame or honor to our company?

In the world of honor that Behn constructs, servitude brings shame. Should a prince be shamed, he shames his whole nation if not his whole race with him. Thomas Cartelli argues precisely this point when he discusses Behn's depiction of Oroonoko's mad violence despite the civilizing influence of European learning: "Oroonoko's failure to sustain this development, however much this failure may owe to the actions of corrupt Europeans, tends to exemplify the intractability of even the most promising Africans, and thus to justify their continued subjugation and containment" (130). If a British commoner brings shame upon a prince, are white commoners then superior to black princes? Quite the opposite is true in Behn's novella. Oroonoko's nobility under his English masters' bestial torments deflects shame and turns it on the masters. What the English see as Oroonoko's humiliation actually becomes their disgrace, but Behn is careful to assert that all English are not bad. Certain colonists recognize his royalty and evade some of Byam's dishonor. The English are divided in their response to the royal slave.

Behn observes unavoidable conflict in a society that values royalty, freedom, and unity. How can a monarch unite subjects if they are free to pursue their individual interests? How can a monarch unite his people when he claims to be separate from those people by royal birth? Ever aloof, Oroonoko only occasionally allies himself with the other slaves: “Come, my *fellow-slaves*, let us descend, and see if *we* can meet with more honour and honesty in the next world *we* shall touch upon” (107, emphasis added). Egalitarianism abounds in his famous rebellion speech: “my dear friends and fellow sufferers, should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished us...are we, by chance of war, become their slaves...No, but we are bought and sold” (126). But as Anita Pacheco argues: “Concern for loss of dignity need not betray a humanitarian spirit. It can instead be seen as symptomatic of the psychology of honor—a regard for human dignity rooted not in compassion, but in pride...His argument, like his motive, is self-referential; the slaves are merely necessary means to an end.” Despite his claims of solidarity, Oroonoko conspicuously avoids associating with common slaves except when they become useful to his goals, and Oroonoko drops his egalitarian rhetoric once the revolt fails. Of course, all along the reader knows that even if the *English* have not conquered slaves in war, Oroonoko has. In reminding the slaves that he was once their enemy, he also reminds them of their national differences and their difference from himself.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> The international aspect of human trafficking creates a significant problem for colonial identity. What nationality is a colony that consists not only of expatriates, but also of slaves from countless nations? Furthermore, what happens to identity when an uncontrolled indigenous population lives within or passes through the same geographic region? The English settlers obviously have tenuous control over the Africans and strained relations with the Indians, so was Surinam ever really English even before it was lost to the Dutch?

Oroonoko's surrender, as reported by Behn, is a longwinded argument for natural slavery and a complete turnaround from his egalitarian harangue. Oroonoko begins with a scathing critique of white society and Christianity:

But Caesar told him, there was no faith in the white men, or the gods they adored, who instructed them in principles so false, that honest men could not live amongst them; though no people professed so much, none performed so little; that he knew what he had to do, when he dealt with men of honour, but with them a man ought to be eternally on his guard, and never to eat and drink with Christians without his weapon of defence in his hand, and, for his own security, never to credit one word they spoke. (130)<sup>225</sup>

Whether or not Oroonoko believes this, readers must have seen the hyperbole, despite critics who often conflate the enraged prisoner's views with the author's. Byam and his ragtag militia are treacherous, but even Oroonoko has previously admitted Trefry's virtues. Oroonoko's French tutor and companion is admirable, if heretical. And "men of any fashion" supported Oroonoko's revolt and would not aid Byam in his capture.<sup>226</sup>

Oroonoko, and to an extent Behn, exaggerate to make a point. Corruption in white society does exist and it does require reform. Behn exposes how the sins of the few sully England's reputation; she is not justifying slavery. If Oroonoko's attack on white Christians is hyperbole, so is his complaint against Surinam's black population.

---

<sup>225</sup> This assault on white men as a race comes too late, however, to unify the slaves as a black nation.

<sup>226</sup> "And 'tis not impossible but some of the best in the country was of his counsel in this flight, and depriving us of all the slaves, so that they of the better sort would not meddle in the matter" (128). Is Behn suggesting that those "of the better sort" are early abolitionists when she says they would deprive their fellow settlers of all the slaves?

If scholars have been too quick to read Oroonoko's egalitarian speech as Behn's abolitionist manifesto, then perhaps they have been equally hasty to read Oroonoko's furious castigation of his fellow Africans as Behn's justification of transatlantic slavery:

As for the rashness and inconsiderateness of his action he would confess the governor is in the right, and that he was ashamed of what he had done, in endeavouring to make those free, who were by nature slaves, poor wretched rogues, fit to be used as Christians' tools; dogs, treacherous and cowardly, fit for such masters, and they wanted only but to be whipped into the knowledge of the Christian gods to be the vilest of all creeping things, to learn to worship such deities as had not power to make them just, brave, or honest. In fine, after a thousand things of this nature, not fit to be recited, he told Byam, he had rather die than live upon the same earth with such dogs. (130-31)

Oroonoko's emotions drive his invectives. He claims they are cowards, but why should they put faith in his rather tenuous escape plan once he has imperiled the last worldly goods they enjoy as slaves? The enslaved prince does not offer milk and honey to their posterity; he offers them an opportunity to return to Coramantien conquest. Oroonoko, once their enemy, has never experienced the slaves' toil or the sufferings of the disenfranchised. Indeed, it was Oroonoko who sold them into slavery.

As mentioned earlier, Oroonoko's derision of the lower classes has led some critics to suggest that Behn supported Aristotelian arguments for natural slavery. There is no question that class plays a part in nobility and honor during the revolt, and that social class influences one's ability to ransom oneself from Coramantien slavery. Behn writes that the last two slaves to fight alongside Oroonoko are his wife Imoinda and Tuscan, "a

tall Negro of some more quality than the rest” (126). The rest of the Surinamese slaves were largely purchased from the ranks of prisoners of war whose families could not afford ransom.<sup>227</sup> It is poverty, not cowardice, that leads these men to New World slavery. They do not fear their masters or whips (as Oroonoko claims); if anything, Behn writes many of the slaves wounded by whips continue to fight. The slaves surrender when “the women and children” whom they have brought with them “ran in amongst their husbands and fathers” and begged them to “Yield, yield, and leave Caesar to their revenge” (129). The African slaves surrender for the sake of loved ones, not out of fear of their masters.<sup>228</sup> They value the lives of their family more than glory. Is this slavish or honorable?

Tuscan describes the high value that the Africans place on family when he protests against the revolt: “Were we only men, [we] would follow so great a leader through the world. But oh! consider, we are husbands and parents too, and have things more dear to us than life...” (126).<sup>229</sup> Oroonoko replies that “honour was the first principle in Nature that was to be obeyed” (126), but his argument is hypocritical to the extent that he has consistently placed his love for Imoinda above his own honor. Love keeps the Africans enslaved; their desire to preserve their families leads the blacks (common and royal alike) to submit willingly to their chains.

---

<sup>227</sup> Africans are sold as slaves because they cannot purchase their liberty, not because they are racially inferior.

<sup>228</sup> Behn’s depiction of the revolt alludes to Livy’s account of the Sabine women charging the battlefield in order to force a peace between their Sabine fathers and Roman husbands. It is unclear how the female slaves appeared on the island. Behn explicitly states that Oroonoko’s grandfather sold Imoinda and Onahal into slavery, but she also states that Surinam is supplied with slaves through Coramantien military conquest. Did Coramantien take these women as spoils or are they all undesirables from Coramantien? Most likely they must come from a completely unrelated source, and may not even be the same nationality as their men.

<sup>229</sup> This appeal to the integrity of the family unit anticipates the pathos in much of the abolition rhetoric of the nineteenth century. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is an apt example.



Family has still more explanatory value in Oroonoko. It is not as a *man* that Oroonoko seeks liberation, since he is content to endure the name of slave so long as he is only Caesar. But when Caesar becomes a father, he seeks emancipation. He sees the rebellion as a means of securing freedom for his posterity, but his familial bonds also contribute to his final submission:

But Trefry and Byam pleaded and protested together so much, that Trefry believing the governor meant what he said, and speaking very cordially himself, generously put himself into Caesar's hands, and took him aside, and persuaded him, even with tears, to live, by surrendering himself, and to name his conditions. Caesar was overcome by his wit and reasons, and in consideration of Imoinda, and demanding what he desired, and that it should be ratified by their hands in writing, because he had perceived that was the common way of contract between man and man, amongst the whites. (131)

Caesar is “overcome” by Trefry’s “wit and reasons,” but his thoughts of Imoinda influence his behavior here as they did when he rebelled against his grandfather. Imoinda overcomes Oroonoko’s concern for honor.

Behn writes that much of Oroonoko’s speech against his fellow slaves is unfit to be read (for that matter, Behn presents only a paraphrase of his speech rather than a quotation) and that reason prevails afterwards. Even if his vituperations were not irrational, they are at the very least hypocritical since he attacks the slaves for preferring love just as he did (although he does not admit it). He does not acknowledge the power of love in his abusive speech; he says the slaves are cowards rather than admitting that they surrendered because they valued their loved ones above their own honor, just as

Oroonoko has done so many times before. He is guilty of the same love as the common slaves, and it is love that perpetuates his slavery, not his social class or courage. But Behn does not condemn love as base. She does not make the comparison between Oroonoko and the common slaves to tarnish Oroonoko's nobility. Rather, slavery for the sake of love appears to absolve the slaves' shame. To have chosen otherwise, to have abandoned love for the sake of honor (a typical Cavalier theme) appears too cruel here. The chivalric knight might pursue honor, but only because he lives in a society that can reward him for it. The slaves are part of no society or nation; honor has no appeal to them.

Although Oroonoko's rhetoric successfully rouses the slaves to revolt, it fails to achieve long-term solidarity among the slaves because its appeals are all based on individual identity and personal interest. Oroonoko argues that

no man would pretend to that, without all the acts of virtue, compassion, charity, love, justice and reason, he found it not inconsistent with that, to take an equal care of their wives and children, as they would themselves, and that he did not design, when he led them to freedom, and glorious liberty, that they should leave that better part of themselves to perish by the hand of the tyrant's whip. But if there were a woman among them so degenerate from love and virtue to choose slavery before the pursuit of her husband, that such an one ought to be abandoned, and left as prey to the common enemy. (127)

Telling a husband to abandon even a "degenerate" wife is perhaps not the most convincing argument to slaves who have confessed that their only interest is their family. Moreover, to have to unite the slaves through a "common enemy" is to concede that they lack a common ancestry and a common background (again, Oroonoko was once that

common enemy himself). While the slaves share a common desire—to protect their families—this is insufficient to build a group identity. Although Oroonoko is Coramantien, the rest of the slaves are Coramantien’s conquests—their homelands go unnamed. Even Tuscan is identified as a “Negro,” not an Ethiope or a Numidean.<sup>230</sup> When Tuscan asks Oroonoko about his long-term plan, the royal slave answers that they will “plant a new colony, and defend it by their valour” (127). At last, Oroonoko suggests building a maroon colony—a state of escaped slaves. However, Oroonoko goes on to say “and when they could find a ship, either driven by stress of weather, or guided by providence that way, they would seize it, and make it a prize, till it had transported them to their own countries” (84). And do what? Does Oroonoko believe that the slaves can simply go home to life as they knew it before slavery? He has formed a temporary alliance, not a permanent nation.<sup>231</sup> Should anyone not be able to return to his or her homeland, “At least, they should be made free in his kingdom, and be esteemed as his fellow sufferers. They bowed and kissed his feet at this resolution” (127). Oroonoko does not offer the slaves much of a future. They will be honored only for having been slaves with Oroonoko. They are not offered a heritage or a promised land; rather, whatever identity they had will be eclipsed by Oroonoko’s royal slavery.<sup>232</sup> The slaves respond positively to his offer, but none of these considerations outweigh their concerns for their

---

<sup>230</sup> As mentioned earlier, Richard Ligon observed that that the English exploited the national and linguistic differences between slaves to keep them from conspiring against their masters. This might explain Jamoan’s disappearance from the story once Oroonoko’s coterie is sold into slavery. Members of Oroonoko’s party might have been divided among separate plantations. But one does wonder what language these slaves speak when amongst each other.

<sup>231</sup> Smith argues that no nation can be established on the basis of a temporary alliance. Nations depend on parties at least believing their contract is permanent. Also see Hobbes: “Nor is it enough for the security, which men desire should last all the time of their life, that they be governed, and directed by one judgement, for a limited time; as in one Battell, or one Warre” (119).

<sup>232</sup> As Aaron Wildavsky argues, Moses’ inability to enter the Promised Land proves that he serves the people instead of ruling them whereas Oroonoko suggests that some slaves should accept his rule when he returns to Coramantien. Oroonoko, unlike Moses, is extremely self-interested.

wives and children. And thus the many are thwarted by an ill-equipped but ideologically unified militia.

The women and children influence the revolt's collapse, but what makes them act differently than Imoinda, who fights alongside her husband? Are they too weak or cowardly? Should they have been abandoned to the English, as Oroonoko suggests? Is Oroonoko nobler for being willing to risk (and later murder) his wife and child in the name of honor, or is Oroonoko's violence grotesque? He believes he sends her to a better afterlife, but is he liberating her in death or enslaving himself to aristocratic values? Are we even convinced that murder is the noblest choice, or do we endorse the common slaves' understanding of love and slavery? Perhaps it is not that love takes a back seat to honor, but that Oroonoko's uxoriousness combines with his excessive desire for honor in a destructive way.

## THE ROYAL SLAVE PARADIGM

Oroonoko, like cruel Othello, "loved not wisely but too well" (5.2.253).<sup>233</sup> His failure to rally the slaves as a nation answers in good measure to his failure to resist love's power over the other slaves and himself. This power is, as the period observed repeatedly, *enslaving*. Over the course of the novella, we find that Oroonoko's bondage, whether through law or through love, bears upon all three aspects of his royal slavery: as

---

<sup>233</sup> One wonders how Othello weighed in Behn's imagination. Ania Loomba writes "Slavery has everything to do with Oroonoko's tragedy, and it is also central to the exoticism that Behn attributes to him. He is a royal slave, as was Othello, and as was the first batch of African slaves brought to Portugal in 1440" (Loomba *Difference*). Also see Thomas Cartelli. "Enslaving the Moor: *Othello*, *Oroonoko*, and the recuperation of intractability." *Repositioning Shakespeare: National formations, postcolonial appropriations*. New York: Rutledge, 1999.

a king's slave, as an enslaved prince, and as an enthroned slave. If we trace these royal slave types, it will become clear that while they reveal the taint of tyranny in Oroonoko, the presence of love transforms Oroonoko into a sympathetic tyrant.<sup>234</sup>

### *Slaves to a King*

The intensity of Oroonoko's love can be measured in part by the suffering he will endure for its sake. His acceptance of physical slavery testifies to his excessive affection; it is a declaration that, by its own enormity, actually hinders his ability to love. But the legal details of this self-imposed servitude return us to the discourse of royal slavery. Oroonoko does not merely become a slave as his penance for abandoning Imoinda; he becomes a slave to a king. Indeed, it is this form of royal slavery that underwrites Trefry's legalistic attempt to dissuade Byam from harming Oroonoko. Trefry argues that the slave is royal property since Oroonoko belongs to the English king from the moment the English trader enslaves him (Iwanisziw 86). Behn consistently adverts to the extent of the king's colonial power. Oroonoko travels in the "king's vessel" (104), and arrives at "Surinam, a colony belonging to the King of England" (105). Thus, his enslavement extends to what Constance Jordan has called "political slavery," the violation of individual property rights by the government. Such practical concerns as the property

---

<sup>234</sup> Behn does not condemn her protagonist. She invites her reader to compare a royal tyranny to a tyranny of common subjects. She lets her reader decide which is the worse of the two evils. Does the degree to which Oroonoko loves redeem him from his mismanagement? Does his love outweigh the cruelty of his enemies?

rights of slaves turns out to be the greatest threat to Oroonoko's love. If Oroonoko and Imoinda are property of the king, how can the lovers possess one another?<sup>235</sup>

Slaves owned by anyone, whether king or subject, face a similar dilemma, but making Oroonoko a royal slave invokes a more specific political discourse than slavery in general. Thus, critics are correct to say that this is not a story primarily concerned about the slave trade. Behn's primary concern is royal slavery, synonymous with Jordan's political slavery and therefore signifying absolutism. Behn spends far less time recounting the horrors of human trafficking than she does in showing how Oroonoko's plight arises from political interference in private lives, a theme that Behn makes clear *before* Oroonoko's legal slavery.

Even in Africa, Oroonoko's political slavery relates directly to his grandfather's explicitly absolute rule. By taking Imoinda for himself, the grandfather king imposes political slavery by denying Oroonoko his property.<sup>236</sup> When Oroonoko and Imoinda vow their love, "'twas concluded on both sides that, in obedience to him, the grandfather was to be first made acquainted with the design; for they pay a most absolute resignation to the monarch, especially when he is a parent also" (83). Behn's "absolute" recalls Stuart claims for the king's paternity over his nation.<sup>237</sup> The Coramantien ruler, also apparently a divine-right monarch, possesses absolute power: "the obedience the people pay their

---

<sup>235</sup> In an effort to argue a latent erotic desire that the narrator feels for Oroonoko, one critic writes "Imoinda may lay legal claim to his name and child, as the narrator, confined by her racial status, cannot" (Andrade 206). This argument, of course, overlooks the fact that slaves have no legal rights to hold one another as spouses or even to claim their own offspring. Recall that Behn explicitly states that offspring belong to the parents' owners: "for all the breed is theirs to whom the parent belong" (113).

<sup>236</sup> The grandfather is not entirely certain whom Imoinda has promised herself to. He is as ignorant of Oroonoko's situation as the king of England is regarding Oroonoko's slavery in Surinam. Furthermore, erotic desire reduces Imoinda to chattel long before she is sold into Surinamese slavery.

<sup>237</sup> As Jordan observes, James I's tracts on absolute rule reflected his conception of his authority; certainly he held no monopoly on political philosophy, and many of his subjects expressed their reservations. See Jordan's analysis of James I's *The Trew Law* and *Basilicon Doron* (*Shakespearean Monarchies* 18).

king, was not at all inferior to what they paid their gods, and what love would not oblige Imoinda to do, duty would compel her to do” (84). These are, of course, the king’s own convictions. In Coramantien, at least, the king appears to possess a highly effective ideological and repressive state apparatus to ensure his authority: “’tis death to disobey... a most impious disobedience” (84). By conflating absolutism with divine right theory, Behn conjures a monarchical worst-case scenario.

According to Jordan, the constitutionalist solution to tyranny was to legislate boundaries to the king’s authority. But Behn recognizes that this may backfire, that a canny tyrant can preempt the law. When the king declares his intent to marry Imoinda, the maiden pleads “as by the laws he could not, and from his royal goodness would not take from any man his wedded wife, so she believed she should be the occasion of making him commit a great sin, if she did not reveal her state and condition, and tell him she was another’s, and could not be so happy to be his” (85). To what law does Imoinda appeal? Is it temporal, spiritual, moral? The king can rationalize taking Imoinda because she is a virgin; she is not *technically* Oroonoko’s wife because the marriage has not been consummated. Imoinda in turn can invoke some vague system of law, but any law can be bent to suit the monarch’s desires. Behn’s king finds a way legally to prove that Oroonoko has no claim to Imoinda, thereby avoiding accusations that he has seized another’s property. Imoinda’s appeal ironically provides the monarch with the legal framework with which to justify his action; thus, by entering into the discourse of legal rights, Imoinda renders herself *more vulnerable* to tyranny. The tyrant can manipulate

law to serve his personal interests; he does not have to violate it to violate his people.<sup>238</sup>

What recourse do subjects have?

Imoinda also appeals to royal grace. Jordan describes early seventeenth-century political theories of grace as a compromise, “Certainly there was consensus on a broad array of issues. The monarch’s grace—his ability in certain cases to forgive or forgo a prerogative right that otherwise was absolute—remained virtually unquestioned,” but Jordan notes that no monarch can be compelled to give grace (7). The Coramantien king further masks his tyranny and undermines appeals to grace through recourse to an honor code. Because Coramantiens consider marriage to the king an honor they ought not to refuse, even Imoinda feigns flattery when she politely declines the offer to be made “so happy.” Indeed, it is marriage to the king that is technically the act of grace here—his free gift. To refuse the king’s gift of himself is to slight the king’s (seeming) generosity. In Coramantien, at least, neither grace nor law protects subjects from tyranny.

That a royalist should scrutinize a tyrannical monarch does not indicate Behn’s lapsed allegiance.<sup>239</sup> Her narrative both cautions monarchs who mistreat their subjects and subjects who betray their monarchs. In *Oroonoko*, the English monarch abuses his Surinamese subjects not through action but through passivity. His disinterest in the colony leads to ignorance, which Jordan suggests should lead to repressive laws. But the Surinamese are not repressed by monarchical mandates; they are oppressed by anarchy. Indeed, the English subjects on the island seem to live quite free from royal influence. They are not royal slaves; rather, their troubles are of their own making, and, even though

---

<sup>238</sup> In *The Trew Law and Basilicon Doron*, James I writes that tyrants make laws for their own ends whereas absolute monarchs rule in people’s interests (Jordan *Monarchies* 17). James echoes Thomas Smith’s definition of tyranny.

<sup>239</sup> Despite her professed loyalty, Behn was briefly arrested for an unflattering dramatic reference to the king in 1682, and went unpaid for clandestine services she performed for the crown (Todd 15).



the British king owns Oroonoko, the king's *subjects* decide the slave's fate. If anything, these subjects' wills go unchecked. Thus, the events in Surinam discredit a king who has not taken an active enough role in his colonies. The island begins to look like Interregnum England, and the king's absence is evident throughout the text. Behn blames it for the loss of Surinam's fertility, commodities, and beauty: "had his late Majesty, of sacred memory, but seen and known...he would never have parted so easily with it" (115). If the king cannot see the good of Surinam with his own eyes, neither does he see its evils. He simply cannot know the "will of subjects." Hence, Behn's describes a tyranny by uncontrolled subjects no less than by a flawed monarch. In fact, tyranny by the people might even be worse.

### *Enslaved Princes*

But what could the monarch change even if he did arrive in the colony? If we credit the associations that critics have made between Oroonoko and the Stuarts, then perhaps Behn is also imagining what would have occurred if the English king had made a visit to Surinam.<sup>240</sup> When Oroonoko arrives "he was received more like a governor than a slave..." (108), and the slaves certainly hail him as king. There are other points of comparison, such as Oroonoko's role in the slave trade and his relationship with the slaves on the island.<sup>241</sup> Both Oroonoko and the English monarch have sent people from their homeland to Surinam.<sup>242</sup> But when he arrives on the island, Oroonoko's distance

---

<sup>240</sup> See Janet Todd's introduction for more on the Stuart-Oroonoko connection (18).

<sup>241</sup> Todd would add darkness and the name "Caesar" to this list (18).

<sup>242</sup> In this regard, Oroonoko also emulates James II's colonial entrepreneurship while he was a prince: "Between 1672, when the Royal African Company received its charter, and 1689, when he sold his shares,

from the slaves continues to parallel the English king's aloofness from his own subjects. Thus, Oroonoko is both the king's property and a figure of kingship itself, and those who attack Oroonoko are therefore disloyal to the English monarch. Byam's instruction to kill Oroonoko projects his disdain for English royalty onto the royal African body. The English who lord their power over Oroonoko are the same ones who rallied to capture the Stuarts.<sup>243</sup>

Oroonoko stands out among the other slaves because of his royal status, and it makes him a greater target for Byam and his minions. But does Oroonoko's royalty make him a greater target for slavery itself? Iwanisziw argues that English traders historically were well aware that nobles made poor slaves because they resisted servitude, and she notes that the English crown prohibited their sale to prevent international scandal (82). Perhaps the trader believes a royal slave will fetch a higher price despite historical practice, or perhaps he sees duping Oroonoko as a way to cut costs (otherwise he would be required to purchase common slaves). Either way, Oroonoko's vulnerability through his royal courtesy and the size of his retinue make him an attractive target for the deceptive trader looking to save money. Oroonoko is a slave *because* he is a prince.

Transatlantic trade and political oppression enslave Oroonoko's body, but love enslaves Oroonoko's mind, and this, as I have noted before, leads Oroonoko towards tyranny. Behn writes that Imoinda "gained a perfect conquest over his fierce heart, and made him feel the victor could be subdued" (82). Imoinda holds "eternal empire over him" (Behn 83). At their first meeting, Oroonoko is already bringing "her a hundred and

---

the Duke of York, later King James II, participated actively in the operation and protection of this joint-stock company" (Iwanisziw 88). Like Oroonoko, James II is complicit in the slave trade and has mixed commercial interests with his royal status.

<sup>243</sup> The Revolution is still fresh in Behn's mind when she recalls that Oroonoko had to steal the sword of George Marten "brother to Harry Martin, the great Oliverian" to defend the ladies from a tiger (117).

fifty slaves in fetters” as a tribute to her father, the general who raised him and died protecting him (Behn 82). Given the language of Imoinda’s conquest, these fettered captives symbolize Oroonoko’s own love slavery, but these are also real slaves.<sup>244</sup> How does their presence and their profound suffering affect the novella’s metaphorical love slavery? What does it mean that Oroonoko will sacrifice human lives as a gift to his lover?

One distinction between a tyrant and a good monarch is that a tyrant prefers his own good over that of his people.<sup>245</sup> The self-serving tyrant is a slave to his own desires and emotions, as when Oroonoko launches into “different passions; which sometimes raged within him, and sometimes softened into showers” after learning that his grandfather has taken Imoinda for a bride (86). Oroonoko cannot save himself from this histrionic fit. As Behn writes, his friends’ “force first prevailed, and then reason” (86). What kind of future will Coramantien have if its prince must be physically restrained before he will listen to reason? Oroonoko is in danger of becoming his grandfather.<sup>246</sup> In this regard, Behn’s novella functions like Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Hutchinson’s *Order & Disorder*, and Cartwright’s *The Royall Slave*. Each of these royal slave texts perplexes the audience by

---

<sup>244</sup> As Eric Miller argues: “The poignancy of Caesar’s circumstances emerges in part from the confluence of such language (the metaphoric *servitudo amoris*, subjection to Amor) with the grim fact of real slavery. A Roman poet’s innamorata often goes under the honorific of *domina*, that is to say, ‘female master’ or ‘mistress.’ In his adoration of Imoinda, Caesar is her figurative slave” (Miller 62). Of course, in Behn’s novella, benign love slavery also merges with “real slavery” in regards to the dangers of owning slaves. Imoinda’s life is as threatened by owning Oroonoko as any of the colonists, and she will die by her slave’s hand.

<sup>245</sup> Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum* seems relevant here, as well as the more recent criticism by Rebecca Bushnell and Constance Jordan.

<sup>246</sup> Oroonoko’s first significant speech in the text is to lament the binds of legalism (itself a commentary on royal bondage). He laments that even if his grandfather dies, incest laws prevent him from marrying Imoinda: “unless I would either ignobly set an ill precedent to my successors, or abandon my country, and fly with her to some unknown world, who never heard our story” (86). Behn points out that even if princes are not bound by written constitutions, there are still natural laws and codes of honor which limit their actions. Although Oroonoko feels limited, he is about to rationalize his disobedience in the same way that his grandfather rationalizes his own tyranny.

seeming to undermine the very political ideology it would advance. Each offers a concession to its political opposition, and then undercuts that concession in surprising ways. Likewise, Behn concedes that divine right monarchs with absolute power can tyrannize, but she questions the extent to which such a tyrant actually oppresses his subjects.

Coramantien as a whole appears to suffer very little despite its tyrannical leadership. Perhaps the greatest losses to the people occur when Oroonoko's Achillean grief over Imoinda's alleged death almost costs the nation a battle. Here, love slavery cripples the Coramantien army when Oroonoko sulks in his tent; men die when Oroonoko grieves. However, when Oroonoko feels shame for his love slavery, he does not want to "be tamely taken by an enemy and led a whining, love-sick slave, to adorn the triumphs of Jamoan" (99). He rises to defend his nation, but not for his nation's sake. Personal honor temporarily overcomes love, but private desires still come before national interest. Oroonoko's self-pity threatens to undo the nation—but Oroonoko's pride and blind rage in battle ultimately lead to a decisive Coramantien victory despite Oroonoko's seeming death-wish on the battlefield. In this instance, tyrannical vices inadvertently endanger and *benefit* national welfare. What will happen to Coramantien now that Oroonoko has been lost in slavery is another issue, but, even so, the nation is likely worse off for his absence rather than his presence.

Absolutism might lead to moments of tyranny, but neither prince nor king is so corrupt that he would lead the nation to oblivion in Behn's novella. If a tyrant will not act in his nation's best interest for his subjects' sake, he will often, at some point, make some concession to his people for his own sake. In *Oroonoko*, conscience assures that even a

tyrannical king does not rule on passion all the time: “the old king was not exempted from his share of affliction. He was troubled for having been forced by an irresistible passion to rob his son of a treasure he knew could not but be extremely dear to him...” (87). After selling Imoinda, the king admits that he was wrong to take her and attempts to make restitution. The king’s sensible consideration of tyranny’s effects also direct him to seek forgiveness from his offended subject: “depriving him wholly of her, he feared, might make him desperate, and do some cruel thing, either to himself, or his old grandfather, the offender” (96). The oppressor who makes amends lives to oppress another day; the old king is a practical-minded tyrant.<sup>247</sup> The king is a royal slave to passion, but a slave will do what he must to survive—even if that means temporarily serving another. Despite his authority, the king realizes that he depends on Oroonoko to secure his power. The king is subject to the prince, among other things.

The king’s religious beliefs also demand divine punishment for his abuse of power—echoing common Renaissance tropes that even the absolute king must submit to God’s law. The old king curbs his behavior in part because he subscribes to the same ideological tenets as his people. Natural and supernatural laws apply to absolute tyrants whether or not they appear in a written constitution, and tyrants are still God’s slaves even if they refuse to be God’s servants. By constantly keeping in mind powers higher than worldly authority, the narrative proposes that providence will prevail against tyranny, protecting the loyal subject from harm at the hands of a self-serving yet legal ruler. Imoinda assures

---

<sup>247</sup> Jordan remarks on the realization of some early modern theorists regarding the practical necessity of the king to ensure the goods of his subjects. Sir John Fortescue’s *De Laudibus Legum Anglie* 1468-70 translated by Richard Mulcaster as *A Learned Commendation of the politique laws of Englande* (1567) argues that the good monarch protects private property because if he makes his people poor, he is poor; interests of people and king are one and the same (Jordan *Monarchies* 25). Also, see Bushnell’s *Tragedies of Tyrants* on Aristotle’s argument that any tyrant who does not at least take his appearance as a benevolent king into consideration will not last very long.

Oroonoko that “What she did with his grandfather had robbed him of no part of her virgin honour, the gods in mercy and justice having reserved that for her plighted lord, to whom of right it belonged” (94). Imoinda follows the tyrant’s own logic: no consummation, no marriage. She also believes that providence protected her righteous virginity, and the king himself considers his behavior’s spiritual consequences, “He believed now, that his love had been unjust, and that he could not expect the gods, or Captain of the Clouds (as they call the unknown power) should suffer a better consequence from so ill a cause” (96).<sup>248</sup> The same religious bonds that the king uses to control his people turn against him when his frenzy has passed. The natural and supernatural finally converge when the king tries to temper Oroonoko’s anger by reminding him of “death, that common revenger of all injuries, would soon even the account between him and a feeble old man” (98). Thus, Behn reconstructs typical early modern philosophies arguing that all kings are always subject to certain universal laws. All kings are royal slaves to God and Death, and most kings, at some point, are also slaves to love.

Love slavery converges with royal slavery elsewhere in the novella in the character of Jamoan, whose story foreshadows Oroonoko’s self-enslavement and the failure of Oroonoko’s revolt. Jamoan is the prince against whom Oroonoko must rouse himself after the loss of Imoinda, and Jamoan himself becomes Oroonoko’s slave by right of war. Love, however, makes Jamoan a willing slave—a dire choice. Jamoan’s royal slavery describes loving self-enslavement, showing how love anesthetizes the victim to his political disenfranchisement:

---

<sup>248</sup> The “unknown power” easily can be read as a reference to Acts 17:23, when Paul links the pagan Greek altar to the “Unknown God” to the Christian deity.

[Oroonoko] never put [Jamoan] amongst the rank of captives, as they used to do, without distinction, for the common sale or market, but kept him in his own court, where he retained nothing of the prisoner but the name, and returned no more into his own country, so great an affection he took for Oroonoko; and by a thousand tales and adventures of love and gallantry, flattered his disease of melancholy and languishment, which I have often heard him say had certainly killed him, but for the conversation of this prince and Aboan, [and] the French governor he had from his childhood...(100) <sup>249</sup>

Jamoan might have been ransomed and returned home, but he *chooses* to remain, in title, a slave (although Behn writes “prisoner”). This becomes Oroonoko’s most tragic mistake. Jamoan spends his self-enslavement in gallant love discourse with Oroonoko. He ignores slavery’s shame and vulnerability so long as he can enjoy Oroonoko’s company, just as Oroonoko neglects his liberty so long as the mild Surinamese slavery allows him to pursue Imoinda’s love. Jamoan’s fate goes unmentioned in the text, but one assumes that such a staunch friend remains in Oroonoko’s retinue when he boards the English trader’s vessel. Does Jamoan’s benign captivity become a much more malignant slavery in the colonies? If it does, Oroonoko learns no lessons. When he becomes acquainted with Trefry, the Englishman “entertained Oroonoko so agreeably with his art and discourse, that he was no less pleased with Trefry, than he was with the prince; and he thought himself, at least, fortunate in this, that since he was a slave, so long as he

---

<sup>249</sup> Does Behn mean that the Coramantiens simply put men “without distinction” on the slave market, or does she refer to shaming nobles by chaining them with commoners? When discussing Coramantien slavery, she writes “for all they took in battle, were sold as slaves, at least, those common men who could not ransom themselves” (78). Behn does not write that Oroonoko’s people separate nobles from commoners as a matter of courtesy. The upper classes redeem themselves from humiliation only because they can be ransomed—and perhaps the threat of sale encouraged nobles to identify themselves. What preserves one from slavery is not one’s class but capital.

would suffer himself to remain so, he had a man of so excellent wit and parts for a master” (Behn 107). Oroonoko thinks he can control the terms of his slavery, admitting his own agency in his continued enslavement. Like Jamoan, he underestimates slavery and lulls himself into a prolonged and tragic bondage.

Oroonoko might accuse the surrendering rebels of complicity with their white masters, but he subjects himself to a similar denunciation when he “accused himself for having suffered slavery so long...he would not be long in bondage, and though he suffered only the name of a slave, and had nothing of the toil and labour of one, yet that was sufficient to render him uneasy, and he had been too long idle, who used to be always in action, and in arms” (Behn 114). He conceives “that they would delay him till the time of his wife’s delivery, and make a slave of that too, for all the breed is theirs to whom the parent belongs” (Behn 113).<sup>250</sup> The urgency of the situation becomes clear to Oroonoko during Imoinda’s pregnancy only because he fears that he will father another royal slave who will be burdened by the shame of servitude.

Slavery is shameful when one assumes that what keeps the slave in his servile fetters is fear of death.<sup>251</sup> However, love, rather than fear, leads slaves to complicity in Behn’s novella. If they do possess fear, it is the fear of losing a loved one rather than fear of losing their lives. Just as Jamoan endures his benign slavery so long as he can remain Oroonoko’s intimate friend and share in his romantic adventures, Oroonoko and Imoinda express their willingness to endure bondage so long as they can express love for each other: “they mutually protested, that even fetters and slavery were soft and easy, and

---

<sup>250</sup> In Ferriar’s *The Prince of Angola* (1788), the idea of royal slavery still spurs the Oroonoko figure to revolt; he fears his master may force him to breed princes for slaves (MacDonald “Women and Race” 104)

<sup>251</sup> On how the shame of slavery arises from a slave’s fear of death, see Daniel Beaumont. “King, Queen, Master, Slave: The Master/Slave Dialectic and the *Thousand and One Nights*.” *Neophilologus*. 82.3 (July 1998): 335-56.



would be supported with joy and pleasure, while they could be so happy to possess each other, and to be able to make good their vows” (112). Behn ironically rewrites their first meeting; those who once gave gifts of slaves as a token of respect now meet as slaves themselves. Both say they will endure slavery’s hardships, even mentioning tangible bondage, but there is something insincere about the conviction that love makes slavery soft and easy when these slaves have never done hard plantation labor. Oroonoko endures only the name “slave” and Imoinda has the entire male population at her feet; they are free enough to pretend to be happily married. The lovers metaphorize the reality of the slaves surrounding them. Oroonoko and Imoinda delude themselves into thinking they taste the joy of restoration. They have only been play-acting marriage until their pregnancy, when legal property rights suddenly become a pressing concern. When Imoinda conceives, Oroonoko suddenly realizes that his restoration is an illusion. To escape slavery, however, means risking the life of the loved one.

Throughout the novella, love binds slaves to each other and renders them vulnerable to slave masters. Lovers are willing to endure slavery for the sake of their beloveds. Physical suffering is a testament to love, and the English exploit the self-sacrifice of lovers. The manipulative English slave trader relies heavily on loving self-enslavement to maintain order upon his ship. After the captain convinces Oroonoko to quiet the other captive Africans with the promise of liberty, Behn writes that Oroonoko’s friends “were pleased with their captivity, since by it they hoped to redeem the prince” (105). The Coramantiens so love Oroonoko that they would become slaves on his behalf. Is theirs such a shameful slavery? Or does self-sacrifice ennoble their humiliation? The English exploit their slaves’ capacity to love, and these slaves are aware of the stakes. They are

not lulled into their slavery through uxurious dotage or courtly pleasures. For Behn, it is not shameful to be a slave because the psychology of enslavement has changed. The slave, even the common slave, sacrifices all for love. While fidelity and love ennoble the black slaves, their white slave masters appear shameful and satanic for using love and honor to victimize them.

*Slaves that become King*

Of the three types of royal slavery, a slave who becomes king is least evident in the novella. As Hughes painstakingly observes, the only real king to appear as a character is Oroonoko's grandfather; Oroonoko is never actually a king (16). The novella does depict an abortive effort on Oroonoko's part to lead others after he has been enslaved, and the Surinamese, slaves and settlers alike, receive Oroonoko as royalty despite his slavery. Indeed, his striking and princely physiognomy affects how the white English settlers interact with him: "The royal youth appeared in spite of the slave, and people could not help treating him after a different manner without designing it" (108). Whites recognize his nobility, lessen his physical suffering, and distinguish him: "But as it was more for form than any design put him to his task, he endured no more of the slave but the name, and remained some days in the house, receiving all visits that were made him, without stirring towards that part of the plantation where the Negroes were" (108).<sup>252</sup> He separates himself from fellow slaves, despite imploring them to regard him as their equal. He is neither their leader nor their advocate. Whatever slaves may call Oroonoko, whites

---

<sup>252</sup> One might even conjecture that the English set Oroonoko apart not so much out of respect for his royalty (of which they appear to have little at the tale's end), but out of desire to keep him from fomenting a revolt.

retain sovereignty over Surinam. Even Trefry, who recognizes and accepts Oroonoko's royal past, keeps Oroonoko enslaved.

It is, after all, Trefry who renames Oroonoko "Caesar," at once further oppressing Oroonoko and metaphorically crowning him with an imperial title.<sup>253</sup> By using this name for Oroonoko throughout the rest of the novella, Behn highlights similarities and difference between the African prince and Julius Caesar. Both are held as prisoners aboard a ship, and yet their captors treat them as princes. Both figures experience paralyzing love slavery, Oroonoko to Imoinda and Caesar to Cleopatra. Both, although conquerors, are technically never kings (although commoners do hail them as monarchs). When the black slaves on Surinam first recognize Oroonoko, they cry out "'Live, O King! Long live, O King!' And kissing his feet, paid him even divine homage" (Behn 109).<sup>254</sup> When the vulgar masses attempt to crown this black Caesar, he responds exactly as the Roman Caesar did to the attempt to crown him on Lupercalia: "Caesar, troubled with their over-joy, and over-ceremony, besought them to rise, and to receive him as their fellow-slave, assuring them, he was no better" (Behn 109). For the early modern period, Julius Caesar's humility on Lupercalia often indicated his machiavellian approach to tyranny. By denying he was a king, Julius Caesar could secure his monarchy even more forcefully over the dotting masses. But Oroonoko does not seem to be making this kind of complicated political maneuver. Whereas Julius Caesar was a man of the people, Oroonoko remains aloof. The African has little desire at first to play Caesar and lead a nation of slaves. He still embraces slavery as his punishment for Imoinda's alleged death

---

<sup>253</sup> Ortiz argues that the name "Caesar" conveys a sense of British imperialism. Linking Oroonoko's new identity to England's desire to recreate a Roman Empire, it also recalls Oroonoko's glorious past.

<sup>254</sup> Are the slaves' satirical or do they see Oroonoko as a liberator? Imposing the title "King" on Oroonoko could create a new national identity for the slaves.

and has no reason to desire anything more than slavery. Perhaps it is the very ambiguity of his character that makes him resemble the Caesar who was both a monarchical role model and a case study in tyranny in the early modern period.

Or is it another Caesar, namely Augustus, an apparent demigod to his followers that Oroonoko most resembles? When Oroonoko finally leaves his tent after sulking over Imoinda's reported death in Coramantien, "he appeared like some divine power descended to save his country from destruction" (100). Once again, however, Behn cautiously employs the incertitude of metaphor. Behn writes that Oroonoko appears to the Coramantiens "like some divine power" just as elsewhere she writes that his audiences would have believed him capable of ruling well upon hearing his speech. Time and again, Oroonoko looks or sounds as though he could be a deliverer, a messiah, an ideal ruler to lead willing followers to a utopian Promised Land. And yet each time, Behn underscores such perception with cues of Oroonoko's self-interest. Oroonoko and the people *see* tremendous potential in one another, but neither side seems to understand how to unlock that potential (or at least neither has the willingness to do so).

## CODA

Perhaps beginning this discussion with the hope Exodus and ending with despair of *Oroonoko* makes it a tragedy. Moses' success, however, begs for an analysis of Oroonoko's failed revolt in terms of the Mosaic model laid out in the introduction. I am not suggesting that Behn herself explicitly considers how Oroonoko compares to Moses, or that she consciously contrasts the two rebel leaders. Nevertheless, such an intertextual reading helps to bring Oroonoko's character into greater focus and reveals his tactical errors more clearly.

Oroonoko's failure to liberate the Africans, his failure as a deliverer, can be read as his failure to imitate Moses. Whereas Moses rejects court life, Oroonoko embraces courtly fashion (indeed, courtesy and fashion are what lead Oroonoko to befriend the treacherous English trader). Moses is naturally drawn to his people and protects them (even to the point of committing murder) when he could have escaped their plight and lived apart in Pharaoh's court. Oroonoko, however, avoids any involvement with other African slaves. They are not his people. Nor does he identify with those of his own nation. During the Middle Passage sequence, Oroonoko never identifies with or shares in the suffering of the Coramantiens: "they hoped to redeem the prince, who, all the rest of the voyage, was treated with all the respect due to his birth, though nothing could divert his melancholy; and he would often sigh for Imoinda" (105).

Whereas Moses draws his people out of slavery, Oroonoko draws them into it. Once captured, the Coramantiens starve themselves, preferring death to slavery, until Oroonoko bids them eat: "Oroonoko, who was too generous not to give credit to his [the

English trader's] words, showed himself to his people, who were transported with excess of joy at the sight of their darling prince; falling at his feet, and kissing and embracing them, believing, *as some divine oracle*, all he assured them" (Behn 105, emphasis added). Behn parodies the Israelites in the wilderness.<sup>255</sup> Whereas the Israelites complain of their lack of food and yearn for the servitude's safety, the stoic Coramantiens intentionally starve themselves to avoid forced service. Whereas Moses pleads with God for food on behalf of the Israelites, Oroonoko pleads with the Coramantiens to eat on behalf of the enslavers. Whereas the Israelites resist Mosaic authority despite Moses' direct communication with God, Coramantiens respect Oroonoko as though he has talked to God even when he has not. Whereas Moses shared the people's tribulations, exile brings Oroonoko no closer to his self-sacrificing countrymen. Moses could have only wished to liberate such a crew as Oroonoko distances himself from.<sup>256</sup>

Oroonoko continually opposes the Mosaic prototype. He despairs and kills his child, whereas Moses' mother leaves her infant among the reeds in hopes of a better future. Moses proclaims God's curse to kill the first born of the slave owners, but Oroonoko slays the woman bearing his first child. Oroonoko would rather kill innocents than allow his nation to be shamed, which is essentially Pharaoh's logic when he exposes the superabundant Israelite infants on the Nile. In a sense, Oroonoko would rather exterminate his children then allow them to reproduce as slaves. Oroonoko's worst fear is peopling the isle with Oroonokos. My point is not to moralize, but to suggest that Behn depicts Surinamese slavery as self-fulfilling. How can slaves achieve freedom if they cut

---

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Paul's shipwreck when frightened sailors refuse to eat (Acts 27: 21-24). Also, when Paul finally reaches Rome, he spends two years in relative freedom under house arrest. Like Oroonoko, Paul is a prisoner in name only.

<sup>256</sup> Of course, Moses' followers were a people whom the Egyptians had long oppressed. The purpose of the wandering in the desert was to restore the Israelites to their proper selves after traumatic slavery.

off their future? Or, more pressing for the English, what will happen when a rebel leader teaches slaves that a free maroon nation is within their reach? Although Behn's tale may end in tragedy, it is not necessarily pessimistic. By showing how the perpetuation of slavery depends on individual choices, rather than insurmountable cosmic forces, Behn suggests that the institution is not inevitable, even if liberation from it requires a will to freedom. The paradox, however, is that the will to freedom requires attachment to a commonwealth to succeed.

Moses finds ways to solidify a national identity through enforcing a common ideology. Doing so, he becomes a foundational myth for the Israelite nation.<sup>257</sup> Oroonoko fails to unite identities within his makeshift rebel army and is torn apart by socially inferior captors. Moses' self-denial binds a people together as a nation, a lasting, permanent commonwealth whose primary purpose is self-perpetuation, whereas Oroonoko's preoccupation with personal identity disrupts unity and disables authority. Oroonoko's love for one woman enslaves an entire nation; Moses' love for a nation liberates its individual members. Any attempt to gain lost sovereignty for oneself is inherently doomed unless one seeks freedom for all.

---

<sup>257</sup> Even in Christianity, love generates an unified national identity within a greater "kingdom of God."

### References

- Achinstein, Sharon. *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Ainsworth, Henry. *Annotations upon the Second Book of Moses Called Exodus*. London: 1617.
- Allen, Don Cameon. "Spenser's Radigund." *Modern Language Notes*. 67.2 (Feb 1952): 120-22.
- Amussen, S.D. "Gender, Family, and the Social Order, 1560-1725." *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*. Eds. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 196-217.
- Anderson, Judith K. "Nor Man It Is: The Knight of Justice in Book V of Spenser's *Fairie Queene*." *Essential Articles for the study of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972. 447-470.
- Andrade, Susan Z. "White skin, Black masks: colonialism and the sexual politics of *Oroonoko*." *Cultural Critique*. 27 (1994): 189-214.
- Anonymous. *The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey*. 1607. New York: AMS Press Inc., 1970.
- Anonymous. *Englands Faith's Defender Vindicated*. London: 1660.
- Anonymous. *A Letter out of Flanders*. London: 1660.
- Anonymous. *The Royal Pilgrimage, or the Progresse and Travels of King Charles the Second*. London: 1660.



Anonymous. *A Letter to a Member of the Honourable House of Commons*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *The Loyal Subjects Teares, For the Sufferings and Absence of their Sovereign*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *A Declaration and Vindication of the Loyal-Hearted Nobility, Gentry, and Others of the County of KENT*. Ivy-lane: 1660.

Anonymous. *A Letter from a Person of Honour in FRANCE*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *The Royal Pilgrimage of His Sacred Majesty King Charles the Second, or, the Second Part of the Royal Oak*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *The Mystery of Prophecies revealed*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *Anglia Rediviva: A Poem on his Majesties Most joyfull Reception into England*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *Englands Redemption or a Path Way to Peace*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *Englands Gratulation on the Landing of Charles the Second*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *To the King upon his Majesties Happy Return*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *A Congratulation for his Sacred Majesty*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *London and England Triumphant*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *Orthodox State-Queries*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *The Black Book Opened, or Traytors Arraigned and Condemned by their own Confession*. London: 1660.

Anonymous. *The Tragedie of Caesar and Pompei or Caesar's Revenge*. London: 1606.

Aptekar, Jane. *Icons of Justice: Iconographic Thematic Imagery in Book V of The Faerie Queene*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

- Aronson, Nicole. *Mademoiselle de Scudery*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978.
- B.T. *Policy, No Policy: or, the Devil Himself Confuted*. London: 1660.
- Barbour, Reid. *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture*.  
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.
- Barksdale, Clement. *The Kings Return A Sermon Preached at Winchcomb in  
Gloucestershire upon th Kings-day*. London: 1660.
- Barroll, Leeds. "A New History for Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 39 (1988):  
441-464.
- Barroll, Leeds. "Shakespeare, Noble Patrons, and the Pleasures of 'Common' Playing."  
*Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*. Eds. Paul  
Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall. New York: Cambridge University  
Press, 2002. 90-124.
- Bartels, Emily C. *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe*.  
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
- Bartels, Emily C. "Strange and Estranging Spectacles: Strategies of Stage and State."  
*New Casebooks: Marlowe*. Ed. Avraham Oz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan,  
2003. 8-37.
- Bartholomew, William. *The Strong Man Ejected by a Stronger then He*. London: 1660.
- Bates, Catherine. "A mild admonisher." *Huntington Library Quarterly*. 56.3 (1993): 243-  
58.
- Bates, Catherine. "Shakespeare's tragedies of love." *The Cambridge Companion to  
Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. New York: Cambridge  
University Press, 2002. 182-203.

- Batman, Stephen. *The Golden Booke of the Leaden London: 1577*. Facsimile. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976.
- Battenhouse, Roy W. *Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University press, 1941.
- Beaumont, Daniel. "King, Queen, Master, Slave: The Master/Slave Dialectic & the Thousand and One Nights." *Neophilologus*. 82.3 (1998 July): 335-56.
- Behn, Aphra. *Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works*. Ed. Janet Todd. New York: Penguin Books, 1992.
- Belsey, Catherine. "Tarquin dispossessed: expropriation and consent in *The Rape of Lucrece*." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 52.3 (2001): 315-35.
- Bentham, Joseph. *The Christian Conflict*. London: 1635.
- Berger, Harry. *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare*. Stanford: Stanford University, 1997.
- Berger, Harry. "Marriage and Mercifixion in The Merchant of Venice: The Casket Scene Revisited." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32 (1981): 155-62.
- Berman, Ronald. "A note on the motives of Marcus Brutus." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23 (1972): 197-200.
- Blackburn, Robin. *The making of New World slavery: from the Baroque to the modern, 1492-1800*. New York: Verso, 1997.
- Blevins, Jacob. "The Catullan Lyric and Anti-Petrachism in Sir Thomas Wyatt." *Classical and Modern Literature*. 19:3 (1999): 279-85.
- Botting, Roland B. "Fulke Greville's 'Caelica.'" *Modern Language Notes*. LIX (1944): 218-9.

Braithwaite, R. *To His Majesty upon his Happy Arrival in our Late Discomposed Albion*.  
London: 1660.

Brett, Arthur. *The Restauration. or, A Poem on the Return of the Most Mighty and ever  
Glorious Prince, Charles the II*. London: 1660.

Brome, Alex. *A Congratulatory Poem on the Miraculous, and Glorious Return of that  
unparallel'd King Charls the II*. London: 1660.

Brown, William J. "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's Actes and Monuments  
and Tamburlaine, Part I." *Renaissance Quarterly*. 24.1 (Spring 1971): 38-48.

Bryson, Michael. "'His Tyranny Who Reigns': The Biblical Roots of Divine Kingship  
and Milton's Rejection of 'Heav'n's King.'" *Milton Studies*. 43 (2004): 111-44.

Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. New York:  
Columbia University Press, 1964.

Burnett, Mark Thornton. "Tamburlaine and the Renaissance Concept of Honour." *Studia  
Neophilologica*. 59.2 (1987): 201-6.

Burnett, Mark Thornton. *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and  
Culture: Authority and Obedience*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Burroughs, Jeremiah. *Moses his Choice*. London 1659.

Burroughs, Jeremiah. *Moses his Self-Denial*. London: 1657.

Burrow, Colin. *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*. New York: Oxford University Press,  
2002.

Bush, Douglas. *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*.  
Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1932.

Bushnell, Rebecca. *Tragedies of Tyrants*. Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1990.

Butler, Martin. *Theatre and Crisis, 1637-1642*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Butler, Martin "Royal Slaves? The Stuart Court and the Theatres." *Renaissance Drama Newsletter Supplement Two*. (Spring 1984).

Callahan, Dymna. "What's at Stake in Representing Race?" *Shakespeare Studies*. 26 (1998): 21-26.

Calloway, Katherine. "Beyond Parody: Satan as Aeneas in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly*, 39.2 (2005): 82-92

Cantor, Paul A. *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976.

Carroll, Clare. "The Construction of Gender and the Cultural and Political Other in *The Faerie Queene* 5 and *A View of the Present State of Ireland*: the Critics, the Context, and the Case of Radigund." *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*. 32.2 (Spring 1990): 163-191.

Cartelli, Thomas. *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1991.

Cartelli, Thomas. *Repositioning Shakespeare: national formations, postcolonial appropriations*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Cartwright, William. *The Royall Slave*. London: 1639.

Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Cawdrey, Daniel. *Family reformation promoted in a sermon on Joshua*. London: 1656.

Chamberlayne, William. *Englands Iubile: Or, A Poem on the happy return of his Sacred Majety, Charls the II.* London: 1660.

Charlette, Lady. *The Royal Standard of King Charles the II.* London: 1660.

Colie, Rosalie L. *Paradoxia Epidemica.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Cunningham, Karen. "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.* (105:2) 209-22. (1990)

Curran, John. "Spenser and the Historical Revolution: Briton Monuments and the Problem of Roman Britain." *CLIO.* 25.3. (1996 Spring): 273-92.

Davies, Michael. "'Heaven's Fugitives': Exile and Nonconformity in the Restoration". *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture.* Ed. Sharon Ouditt. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2002. 33-53

Diaz, Maria Elena. *The Virgin, the King, and the Toyal Slaves of El Cobre.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

*Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition.

Dodd, William. "Impossible Worlds: What Happens in *King Lear*, Act 1, Scene 1?" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50.4 (Winter 1999): 477-507.

Donaldson, Ian. *The Rapes of Lucretia.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Donawerth, Jane and Julie Strongson, trans. *Madeleine de Scudery: Selected Letters, Orations, and Rhetorical Dialogues.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Donawerth, Jane. "'As Becomes a Rational Woman to Speak': Madeleine de Scudery's Rhetoric of Conversation." *Listening to their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of*

- Historical Women*. Ed. Molly Meijer Werthemer. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997. 305-319.
- Donne, John. *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne*. Ed. Charles M. Coffin. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.
- Dove, John Roland, and Peter Gamble. "'Lovers in peace': Brutus and Cassius; a re-examination." *English Studies*. 60 (1979): 543-54.
- Dowling, Paul M. "Paradise Lost & Politics Gained: Milton Rewrites Scripture." *Cithara: Essays in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*. 44.2 (May 2005): 16-31.
- Dryden, John. *Astraea Redux. A Poem on the Happy Restoration & Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second*. London: 1660.
- Du Bec, Jean. *The Historie of the Great Emperour Tamerlan*. Trans. H.M. London: 1597.
- Dubrow, Heather. *Captive Victors. Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- Dunseath, T.K. *Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five of The Faerie Queene*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979.
- Elmarsafy, Ziad. *Freedom, Slavery, and Absolutism: Corneille, Pascal, Racine*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003.
- Feltham, Owen. *Resolves, A Duple Century*. 3d Edition London 1628. facsimile. Norwood, N.J : Walter J. Johnson Inc. & Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975.
- Fenwicke, John. *Englands Deliverer*. London: 1651.
- Ferguson, Moira. "Oroonoko: birth of a paradigm." *New Literary History: a journal of theory and interpretation*. 23.2 (1992): 339-59.

- Ferguson, Margaret. "Transmuting Othello: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*." Ed. Marianne Novy. *Cross-cultural performances: differences in women's re-visions of Shakespeare*. Urbana: Illinois UP, 1993. 15-49.
- Ferguson, Margaret. "Juggling the categories of race, class and gender: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*." *Women's Studies: an interdisciplinary journal*. 19.2 (1991): 159-81.
- Ferguson, Margaret. "Juggling the categories of race, class and gender: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*." *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*. Eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker. London: Routledge, 1994. 209-24.
- Fernie, Ewan. *Shame in Shakespeare*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Filmer, Sir Robert. *Patriarcha and Other Writings*. Ed. Johann P. Sommerville. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: the reader in Paradise Lost*. Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1998.
- Fisher, Humphrey J. *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Flower, John. *England's late miseries, mercies, and miscarriages...* London: 1651.
- Forsyth, Neil. *The Satanic Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Fraunce, Abraham. *The Third Part of Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch*. London: 1592. facsimile. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976.
- G.S. *Britains Triumph*. London: 1660.
- Gajowski, Evelyn. *The Art of Loving: Female Subjectivity and Male Discursive Traditions in Shakespeare's Tragedies*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992.



Gauden, John. *Eikon Basilike*. London: 1649.

Gautier, Gary. "Slavery and the fashioning of race in *Oroonoko*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and Equiano's *Life*." *Eighteenth Century: theory and interpretation*. 42.2 (2001): 161-79.

Gell, Robert. *An Essay toward the Ammendment of the Last English Translation of the Bible*. London: 1659.

Gardiner, Samuel. *Moses and Aaron Brethren: or the Excellencie, Necessity, Consistencie, and Vsefulness of Magistracy and Ministry under the Gospel*. London: 1653.

Georgijevic, Bartolomej. *The spring of the house of Ottomanno, and officers pertaining to the greate Turkes court....* London: 1569

*Geneva Bible*. Geneva. 1560. facsimile. University of Wisconsin Press. Madison. 1969.

Godwyn, Thomas. *Moses & Aaron: Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites, Used by the ancient HEBREWS*. London: 1672.

Goldberg, Jonathan. "Rebel Letters: Postal Effects from Richard II to Henry IV" *Renaissance Drama* 19 (1988): 3-28.

Goldberg, Jonathan. "Hal's Desire, Shakespeare's Idaho." *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*. Ed. Nigel Woods. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1995. 35-64.

Goldberg, Jonathan "Fatherly Authority: The Politics of Stuart Family Images." *Rewriting the Renaissance*. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 3-32.

- Gordon, Scott Paul. "The Cultural Politics of William Cartwright's Royal Slave." *In the Company of Shakespeare*. Eds. Thomas Moisan and Douglas Bruster. Madison: Faireleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002. 251-269.
- Gouge, William. *Of Domestical Duties*. London: 1622.
- Gouge, William. *Mercies memoriall*. London: 1645.
- Gower, John, trans. *Ovids Festivalls or Romane Calendar*. London: 1640.
- Grady, Hugh. *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Graff, Gerald and James Phelan, eds. *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvellous Possessions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Invisible Bullets." *Shakespearean Negotiations*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1988. 21-65.
- Griffiths, Trevor. "'This Island's Mine': Caliban and Colonialism." *Yearbook of English Studies*, 13 (1983): 159-180.
- Gregerson, Linda. "The Limbs of Truth: Milton's Use of Simile in *Paradise Lost*." *John Milton: Twentieth-Century Perspectives*. vol. 4. Ed. J. Martin Evan. New York: Routledge, 2002. 87-103
- Guevara, Bishop Antonio. *The Diall of Princes*. Trans. Thomas North. 1582.
- Hadfield, Andrew. *Literature, travel, and colonial writing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Hadfield, Andrew. *Literature, politics and national identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Hall, Kim F. *Things of Darkness: Economics of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Hamilton, Donna B. *Virgil and The Tempest*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990.
- Harding, Davis P. *Milton and the Renaissance Ovid*. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1946.
- Hattaway, Michael. "Christopher Marlowe: Ideology and Subversion." *New Casebooks: Marlowe*. Ed. Avraham Oz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 38-65.
- Heinemann, Margot. "'Let Rome in Tiber melt': Order and Disorder in Antony and Cleopatra." *New Casebooks: Antony and Cleopatra*. Ed. John Drakakis. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. 166-181.
- Herman, Peter C. *Destabliing Milton: "Paradise Lost" and the Poetics of Incertitude*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Heywood, Thomas. *The Brazen Age* London: 1613.
- Hill, Christopher. *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution*. New York: The Penguin Press, 1993.
- Hill, Christopher. *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1980.
- Hirst and Strier. *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*. New York: Cambrdige University Press, 1999.

- Hodgdon, Barbara. "Antony and Cleopatra in the theatre." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 241-264
- Holmesland, Oddvar. "Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*: Cultural Dialectics and the Novel." *ELH*. 68.1 (Spring 2001): 57-79.
- Hooks, Roberta M. "Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*: Power and Submission" *American Imago*. 44.1 (1987): 37-49.
- Hudson, Nicholas. "'Britons Never Will Be Slaves': National Myth, Conservatism, and the Beginnings of British Antislavery." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 34.4 (Summer 2001): 559-76.
- Hughes, Derek. "Race, gender, and scholarly practice: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*." *Essays in Criticism: a quarterly journal founded by F. W. Bateson*. 52.1 (2002): 1-22.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters*. New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Hulme, Peter and William H. Sherman, eds. *The Tempest and Its Travels*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- Hunt, Maurice. "Slavery, English Servitude, and The Comedy of Errors." *English Literary Renaissance*. 27.1 (Winter 1997): 31-56.
- Hunt, Maurice. "Hellish Work in *The Faerie Queene*." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*. 41.1 (Winter 2001): 91-108.
- Hutchinson, Lucy. *Order and Disorder*. Ed. David Norbrook. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

- Iwanisziw, Susan B.: "Behn's novel investment in *Oroonoko*: kinship, slavery and tobacco in English colonialism." *South Atlantic Review: the journal of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association*. 63.2 (1998): 75-98.
- Jacombe, Samuel. *Moses His Death*. London: 1657.
- Jed, Stephanie H. *Chaste Thinking: the Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Jok, Madut Jok. *War and Slavery in Sudan*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Jordan, Winthrop. *White over Black*. New York: Norton, 1977.
- Jordan, Constance. *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Kahn, Coppelia. "Shakespeare's classical tragedies." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 204-224.
- Kermode, Frank. "The Faerie Queene, 1 and V." *Essential Articles for the study of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972. 267-288.
- Kezar, Dennis. "Shakespeare's Guilt Trip in *Henry V*." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 61.3 (Sept. 2000): 431-61.
- Klein, David.: "Has Cassius Been Misinterpreted?" *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*. 14 (Jan 1939): 27-36.
- Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

- Kupperman, Karen Ordahl. *Providence Island 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Lamb, Harold. *Tamerlane, the earth shaker*. New York: R.M. McBride, 1928.
- Leahy, William. "'All Would Be Royal': the Effacement of Disunity in Shakespeare's *Henry V*." *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*. 138 (2002), 89-98.
- Leasure, T. Ross. "The Belial Tradition Revisited: Situating the Lesser Demon in the Works of Palladius, Salandra, Vondel and Milton." *Cithara: Essays in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*. 44.2 (May 2005): 3-15.
- Levin, Richard. "Early Responses to Tamburlaine." *Notes and Queries*. 40.2 (1993): 174-7.
- Levin, Richard. "The Contemporary Perception of Marlowe's Tamburlaine." *Medieval Renaissance Drama in England*. 1 (1984): 51-70.
- Levine, Laura. *Men in women's clothing: anti-theatricality and effemination, 1579-1642*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Levy, Fred J. "Fulke Greville: courtier as philosophic poet." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 33 (1972): 433-8.
- Lewalksi, Barbara Keifer. "Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics." *John Milton: Twentieth-Century Perspectives*. vol. 4. Ed. J. Martin Evan. New York: Routledge, 2002. 213-241
- Ligon, Richard. *Historie of the Island of Barbadoes*. 1657.
- Litt, Gary. "Images of Life: A Study of Narrative and Structure in Fulke Greville's *Caelica*" *Studies in Philology*. 69 (1972): 217-30.

Livy. *The Early History of Rome*. Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt. New York: Penguin Books, 1971.

Loomba, Ania. "Sexuality and Racial Difference." *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello*. Ed. Anthony Gerard Barthelemy. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994. 162-186.

Loomba, Ania. "Seizing the Book." *New Casebooks The Tempest: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. R.S. White. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 135-154.

Loomba, Ania. *Shakespeare, race and colonialism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Lordi, Robert J. "Brutus and Hotspur." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 27 (1976): 177-85.

Lovejoy, Paul E. *Transformations in Slavery*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Lupton, Julia Reinhard. "Creature Caliban." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 51.1 (Spring 2000): 1-23.

Lynche, Richard. *The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction*. London 1599. facsimile. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976.

MacDonald, Joyce. *Women and race in early modern texts*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

MacLean. "Fulke Greville: Kingship and Sovereignty." *Huntington Library Quarterly*. 16 (May 1953): 237-71.

Manz, Beatrice Forbes. *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

- Marlowe, Christopher. *Tamburlaine I and II. Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Marshall, Cynthia. *The Shattering of the Self*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Massinger, Philip. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, vol. I. Ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1976.
- Matar, Nabil. *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Matthews, Lloyd J. "Patrick Henry's 'Liberty or death' speech and Cassius's speech in Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar'." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. 86 (1978): 299-305.
- Maus, Katharine Eisaman. "Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's Rape of Lucrece" *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 37.1 (Spring 1986): 66-82.
- May, Steven W. *The Elizabethan courtier poets : the poems and their contexts*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991.
- Mayer, John. *A Commentary upon the Whole Old Testament*. London: 1654.
- Mazzola, Elizabeth. "Working Postulates and Humanist Promises: Slavery and Mythology in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." *Soundings*. 82.3-4 (Fall-Winter 1999): 465-80.
- McCanles, Michael. "Love and Power in Sit Thomas Wyatt" *Modern Language Quarterly*. 29 (June 1969): 145-60.



- McEachern, Claire. "Henry V and the Paradox of Body Politic." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 45.1 (Spring 1994): 33-56.
- McLaren, A.N. *Political culture in the reign of Elizabeth I : queen and commonwealth, 1558-1585*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Meier, Rabbi Levi. *Moses: The Prince, the Prophet: His Life, Legend, & Message for Our Lives*. Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998.
- Meillassoux, Claude. *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*. Trans. Alide Dasnois. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Mellinkoff, Ruth. *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- Mermel, Jerry. "Sir Thomas Wyatt's Satires and the Humanist Debate over Court Service." *Studies in Literary Imagination*. 11:1 (1979): 69-79.
- Miller, Eric. "Aphra Behn's tigers." *Dalhousie Review*. 81.1 (2001): 47-65.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost. The Complete Poetry of John Milton*. Ed. John T. Shawcross. New York: Doubleday, 1971.
- Milton, John. *Eikonoclastes. The Prose Works of John Milton*, vol. 2. Ed. Charles Symmons. London: 1806. 383-472.
- Milton, John. *Eikonoklastes. Complete Prose Works*. vol. 3. Ed. Merrit Y. Hughes. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962. 335-601.
- Milton, John. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates. 1649. John Milton Selected Prose*. Ed. C.A. Patrides. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985.
- Miola, Robert S. *Shakespeare's Rome*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Montrose, Louis. "Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary." *ELH*. 69:4 (Winter 2002): 907-46.

Moore, Roger E. "The Spirit and the Letter: Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Elizabethan Religious Radicalism." *Studies in Philology*. 99.2 (Spring 2002): 123-51.

Moorman, Frederic W. *William Browne. His Britannia's Pastorals and the Pastoral Poetry of the Elizabethan Age*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1969.

Mulryan, John. "Satan's Headache: The Perils and Pains of Giving Birth to a Bad Idea." *Milton Quarterly*. 39.1 (2005): 16-22.

Nash, Gary B. *Race and Revolution*. Madison: Madison House Publishers, Inc., 1990.

Nohrnberg, James. *Like Unto Moses: The Constituting of an Interruption*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Norbrook, David. *Writing the English Republic: poetry, rhetoric, and politics, 1627-1660*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Norbrook, David. *Poetry, Politics of the English Renaissance*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Noyes, James. *Moses and Aaron: Or, the Rights of Church and State; containing two Disputations*. London: 1661.

Nuttall, A.D. "Christopher Marlowe: Iron and Gold." *Comparative Criticism*. 24 (2002): 37-51.

Orgel, Stephen. *Impersonations: the performance of gender in Shakespeare's England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Orgel, Stephen. "Prospero's Wife." *New Casebooks The Tempest: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. R.S. White. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 15-31.

- Ortiz, Joseph M. "Arms and the Woman: Narrative, Imperialism, and Virgilian Memoria in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*." *Studies in the Novel*. 34.2 (Summer 2002): 119-140. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition.
- Oxford History of the British Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Oz, Avraham. "Faces of Nation and Barbarism: Prophetic Mimicry and the Politics of *Tamburlaine the Great*." *New Casebooks: Marlowe*. Ed. Avraham Oz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 66-95.
- Pagden, Anthony. *Lords of All the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Palfrey, Simon. *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Parker, Patricia. "Barbers and Barbary: Early Modern Cultural Semantics." *Renaissance Drama*. 33 (2004): 201-44.
- Patterson, Annabel. "Framing *The Taming*." *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991. 304-313.
- Patterson, Annabel. *Reading Between the Lines*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- Pebworth, Ted-Larry. "Thus friends absent speake." *Modern Philology*. 81 (1984): 361-77.
- Peltonen, Markku. *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Phillips, Graham. *The Moses Legacy*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 2002.

- Phillips, James E. "Renaissance Concepts of Justice and the Structure of *The Faerie Queene*, Book V." *Essential Articles for the study of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972. 470-487.
- Platt, Michael. "'The Rape of Lucrece' and the republic for which it stands." *Centennial Review*. 19 (1975): 59-79.
- Pointel, Daniel. *Moses and Aaron. or the Ministers Right and the Magistrates Duty*. London: 1657.
- Prager, Carolyn. *Concept of Slavery in English Renaissance: with Illustrations from the Drama*. Ph.D. dissertation. Fordham University, 1974.
- Prager, Carolyn. "The Problem of Slavery in *The Custom of the Country*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 28 (1988): 301-317.
- Pricke, Robert. *The Doctrine of Superiorite and of Subjection contained in the fifth commandment of the holy law of almightie God*. London: 1609.
- Prynne, William. *The Popish royall favourite*. London: 1643.
- Purdon, Noel. *The Words of Mercury: Shakespeare and English Mythography of the Renaissance*. Austria: Universitat Salzburg, 1974.
- Rajan, Balachandra. "Paradise Lost: The Uncertain Epic." *John Milton: Twentieth-Century Perspectives*. vol. 4. Ed. J. Martin Evan. New York: Routledge, 2002. 41-55.
- Raleigh, Sir Walter. *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*. Ed. Neil L. Whitehead. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.

- Raleigh, Sir Walter. *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh: a historical edition*. Ed. Michael Rudick. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in conjunction with Renaissance English Text Society, 1999.
- Ramsey, James. *Moses Returned from Midian*. London: 1660.
- Raymond, Joad. "The King is a Thing." *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 69-94.
- Reid, David. "Milton's Royalism." *Milton Quarterly*. 37.1 (Mar 2003): 31-39.
- Roe, John. "'Character' in Plutarch and Shakespeare: Brutus, Julius Caesar, and Mark Antony." *Shakespeare and the Classics*. Eds. Charles Martindale and A.B. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 173-185.
- Ross, Diane M. "Sir Thomas Wyatt: proverbs and poetics of scorn." *Sixteenth-Century Journal*. 18.2 (Summer 1987): 201-12.
- Saregent, Ralph M. *At the court of Queene Elizabeth: the life and lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1935.
- Sacharoff, Mark. "Suicide and Brutus's philosophy in *Julius Caesar*." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 33 (1972): 115-22.
- Sandys, George. *Ovid's Metamorphoses Englished*. Oxford: 1632. facsimile. New York: Garland Publishing, 1976.
- Sawyer, Roger. *Slavery in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.
- Scanlan, Thomas. *Colonial Writing and the New World, 1583-1671*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

- Schoenbaum, S. "Richard II and the Realities of Power." *Shakespeare and Politics*. Ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 91-119.
- Schuler, Rober. "De-Coronation and Demonic Meta-Ritual in *Richard II*." *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. 17.1 (Spring 2005): 169-214.
- Scodel, Joshua. "The Medium Is the Message: Donne's 'Satire 3,' 'To Sir Henry Wotton' (Sir, more than kisses), and the Ideologies of the Mean." *Modern Philology*. 90.4 (1993): 479-511.
- Scudery, Madelleine de. *Severall witty discourses*. London: 1661.
- Seed, Patricia. "'This Island's Mine': Caliban and Native Sovereignty." *The Tempest and Its Travels*. Eds. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 202-11.
- Seiden, Melvin. "Utopianism in *The Tempest*." *Modern Language Quarterly*. 31 (1970): 3-21.
- Seignior, George. *Moses and Aaron: A Sermon Preached before the King at Saxham in the County of Suffolk, April 17, 1670*. London: 1670.
- Seneca. *Hercules Furens. His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English*. Trans. Jasper Heywood. London: 1581.
- Shakespeare, William. *Richard II. Henry V. The Rape of Lucrece. King Lear. Antony and Cleopatra. The Tempest. The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.

Shapiro, James. *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare, 1599*. New York: Harper Collins, 2006.

Sharpe, Kevin and Steven Zwicker. *The Politics of Discourse*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Schochet, Gordon. *Partriarchalism in political thought; the authoritarian and political speculation and attitudes especially in seventeenth-century England* New York: Basic Books, 1975.

Singh, Jyotsna. "Renaissance Anti-theatricality, Anti-feminism, and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra." *New Casebooks: Antony and Cleopatra*. Ed. John Drakakis. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. 308-329

Singh, Jyostna. "The Politics of Empathy in *Antony and Cleopatra*: A View from Below." *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works. vol I. The Tragedies*. Eds. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. 411-429.

Skinner, Quentin. "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery" *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*. Eds. Graham Parry and Joad Raymond. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002. 1-21.

Skinner, Qution. *Visions of Politics*. 3 vols. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Slights, Camille Wells. "The Conscience of the King: Henry V and the Reformed Conscience." *Philological Quarterly*. 80.1 (Winter 2001): 37-55.

- Slights, William W.E. "Ain't It a Shame: History and Psychology in *Richard II*." *Re-Visions of Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of Robert Ornstein*. Ed. Evelyn Gajowski. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004. 243-259.
- Slotkin, Joel. "Poetic Justice: Divine Punishment and Augustinian Chiaroscuro in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly*. 38.2 (May 2004): 100-128.
- Smith, Gordon Ross. "Brutus, Virtue, and Will." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. 10 (Summer 1959): 367-79.
- Southall, Raymond. "The Personality of Sir Thomas Wyatt." *Essays in Criticism: a quarterly journal*. 14 (Jan 1964): 43-64.
- Smith, Thomas. *De Republica Anglorum*. London. 1583.
- Smith, Nigel. *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1994.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Works of Edmund Spenser A Variorum Edition*. Vol. 5. Ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et al. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.
- Spenser, Edmund. *Fairie Queene*. 1590.
- Starks, Lisa. "Like the Lover's pinch, which hurts and is desired." *Literature and Psychology*, 45.4 (1999): 58-73.
- Summers, Claude. "Donne's correspondence with Wotton." *John Donne Journal*. 10.1/2 (1991): 1-36.
- Sydenham, Humphry. *Moses and Aaron or The Affinitie of Ciuill and Ecclesiasticke power*. London: 1626.
- Taylor, Thomas. *Moses and Aaron, or the Types and Shadows of our Saviour in the old Testament. Open and Explained*. London: 1653.



Taylor, Theophilus. *The Mappe of Moses: or, A Guide for Governours*. London: 1629.

Thurn, David H. "Sights of Power in *Tamburlaine*." *New Casebooks: Marlowe*. Ed.

Avraham Oz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 133-150.

Tierney, Brian. *The Idea of Natural Rights*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

Tokson, Elliot H. *The Popular Image of the Black Man in English Drama, 1550-1688*.

Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1982.

Toru, Miura and John Edward Philips. *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*. New

York: Kegan Paul International, 2000.

Tuck, Richard. *Natural Rights Theories*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Tuck, Richard. *Philosophy and Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press,

1993.

Tyndale, William. *The Five Books of Moses Called the Pentatuech*. Ed. Rev. J.I.

Mombert, D.D. Southern Illinois University Press. Carbondale. 1967

Vaughan, Alden T. and Virginia Mason. *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*.

Cambridge University Press, 1991

Vawter, Marvin L.: "'After their fashion': Cicero and Brutus in *Julius Caesar*."

*Shakespeare Studies*. 9 (1976): 205-20.

Vawter, Marvin L.: "'Division 'tween our souls': Shakespeare's stoic Brutus."

*Shakespeare Studies*. 7 (1974): 173-95.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Knopf, 1983.

Visconsi, Elliot. "A Degenerate Race: English Barbarism in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and

*The Widow Ranter*." *ELH*. 69.3 (Fall 2002): 673-701.

- Vitkus, Daniel, ed. *Three Turk plays from early modern England: Selimus, A Christian turned Turk, and The renegado*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- W.C. *Italian Convert, Newes from Italy of a Second Moses or the Life of Galeavivs Caracciolyvs the Noble Marquesse of Vico*. London: 1635.
- Walwyn, William. *The Compassionate Samaritan. Divine Right and Democracy*. Ed. David Wootton. New York: Penguin Books, 1986. 247-270.
- Ward, Adrian. "Proverbs and Political Anxiety in the Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey." *English Studies*. 81.5 (2000): 456-71.
- Washington, Edward T. "Vanishing villains: the role of Tarquin in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*." *Upstart Crow: a Shakespeare journal*. 14 (1994): 126-38.
- Webbe, Edward. *The rare and most vvonderfull things vvhich Edvv. VVebbe an Englishman borne, hath seene and passed...* London: 1590.
- Weinfeld, Henry. "Skepticism and Poetry in Milton's Infernal Conclave." *SEL*. 45.1 (Winter 2005): 191-212.
- Wells, Marion A. "'To find a face where all distress is stell'd': Enrgia, Ekphrasis, and mourning in *The Rape of of Lucrece* and the *Aeneid*." *Comparative Literature*. 54.2 (Spring 2002): 97-126.
- Whitney, Charles. "Charmian's Laughter: Women, Gypsies, and Festive Ambivalence in Antony and Cleopatra." *The Upstart Crow*. 14 (1994): 67-88.
- Wilkes, G.A.. "Fulke Greville Caelica LVII." *Notes and Queries*. 45.1 (1998): 35-6.
- Wildavsky, Aaron. *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader*. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press. 1984.
- Womock, Laurence. *Moses and Aaron; the King and the Priest*. London: 1675.

Woodhuysen, H.R. ed. *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse 1509-1659*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Yu, Anthony C.: "O hateful error: tragic 'hamartia' in Shakespeare's Brutus." *CLA Journal*. 16 (1973): 345-56.

Zagorin, Perez. "Sir Thomas Wyatt and the court of Henry VIII". *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. 23.1 (1993): 113-41.