

PRUDENCE: USING JOHN AUBREY'S *BRIEF LIVES*  
FOR INITIAL RESEARCH

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Bachelor of Arts

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Salem, Virginia

2009

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
December, 2011

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## CHAPTER I

### **PRUDENCE:**

### **USING JOHN AUBREY'S *BRIEF LIVES* FOR INITIAL RESEARCH**

John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* is definitely a biographical source that should be used with hesitation. Aubrey and his research have long been considered unpredictable and erratic, produced at a time when investigation methodologies and report findings were in flux. Despite these conditions, *Brief Lives* was created and it has become an essential primary source for those not only interested in biography but genealogy, antiquarianism, and historiography. Begun as a collection of research notes for fellow biographer Anthony Wood, it has developed into an invaluable resource that looks at an individual subject's biographical details, publishing history, and impact on society. Aubrey rarely covers all three satisfactorily, but his unevenness proves more often an asset than a fault. Through what might be called flashes of brilliance, Aubrey uncovers the inner workings of the seventeenth century's scholarly world like few before him.

This account will focus for the most part upon Aubrey's biographies of Thomas Hobbes and John Milton because they best highlight the investigative styles that Aubrey employed to compile a "life." His life of Hobbes demonstrates his perception of the changing role of antiquarianism in light of the emerging disciplines of archeology, botany, and the history of

medicine. However, the Hobbes life also serves as a cautionary tale for those biographers choosing to write about their friends. Aubrey's life of Milton is not marked by personal acquaintance. Nonetheless, it furnishes many details that present day biographers continue to explore, and it attempts to link Milton's personal chronology with the political events of his day. Most tellingly, both lives reveal Aubrey as an unrealised man of letters connected with notable Englishmen through his affiliation with the Royal Society. These various factors will inform this essay, one that will briefly look at a third life account (that of John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester) to help solidify a sense of Aubrey's methodology as well as credibility. It would be naïve to describe Aubrey as a great biographer, just as it would be inaccurate to dismiss him as simply idiosyncratic and erratic. If his accomplishment is best described as partial, it is an incompleteness of a special kind and one to which later scholars have long been indebted. Its exact nature may prove elusive in the end, but its approximate quality remains worthy of study and comment.

*Brief Lives*, a manuscript of diverse descriptions, owes its origin to the infamous Anthony Wood who compiled a series of brief biographies of the men who attended the University of Oxford, (the two volume set later known as *Athenae Oxonienses*). Characteristically, Wood exploited the eager Aubrey, who desired his friendship and generously carried out much of the research for Wood's entries. Aubrey's willingness to help out stemmed from a misunderstanding that Wood was the author of *Notitia Academia Oxoniensis*. On February 8, 1668, immediately after their first meeting at Trinity College, Aubrey wrote to Wood:

I must assure you I esteem myselfe very happy in yo<sup>r</sup> acquaintance. As often as I may serve you pray let me heare from you, for I am to my power as zealous for you as any one in this nation. (qtd in Britton 43-4)

Several weeks later, Wood asked Aubrey for some information concerning Dr. John Hoskyns. Wood knew that Aubrey was a friend of Hoskyns's grandson, but knew little of Aubrey's skills. Yet, through their frequent correspondences, Wood came to depend more and more on Aubrey as his primary source of information. Maurice Balme writes about Wood's changing perception of Aubrey as a scholar: "He [Wood] would send Aubrey lists of queries which became more and more peremptory, and Aubrey went to infinite trouble to give him accurate answers" (19). Wood soon assigned Aubrey the role of collecting information about the Oxford graduates who would appear in his volume. Aubrey obtained some of his information through interviews and other information by consulting manuscripts

Wood's relationship with Aubrey was primarily based on his connections with important scholars and society members that would help Wood with his forthcoming book. Yet, these connections sometimes resulting from odd circumstances, primarily Aubrey's financial misfortune. Aubrey had grown up in a wealthy Royalist family that allowed him to attend Oxford and later the Middle Temple; however, his father's bad investments as well as the English Civil Wars greatly diminished his family's wealth. Rather than learning from his father's mistakes, Aubrey repeated them and found himself in his later life living as a dependent in the houses of powerful and influential friends, who were fortunately for him drawn to his amiable disposition, his interests, and his intelligence. As William Poole informs:

Aubrey's private life is a sorry narrative of ill-advised lawsuits, spiraling debt, bankruptcy, and delitescence. But it perhaps fortunate for us that Aubrey was quite so unfortunate himself, as his financial collapse forced him to live with and off of friends in his last decades, and it was this that kept his own social and intellectual life on the boil. (11)

The undaunted spirit of Aubrey no doubt accounts in part for his ability to turn misfortune into an opportunity to find a place for himself within privileged academic circles and to gain membership in prestigious clubs, such as the Royal Society. Helping him along the way was his spirit of intellectual curiosity, a habit of mind that fit ever so well with the time. It would appear that inclination was his ticket into the world of learning. Indeed, throughout *Brief Lives*, Aubrey so frequently acknowledges the Royal Society that there appears an ulterior motive: Aubrey promotes his beloved club and those associated with it to elevate his own status. One such mention of the Royal Society occurs at the end of the Hobbes biography:

To conclude, he had a high esteem for the royal society, having said that 'Natural Philosophy was removed from the universities to Gresham College', meaning the Royal Society that meets there; and the Royal Society (generally) had the like for him: and he would long since have been an ascribed member there, but for the sake of one\* or two persons, whom he took to be his enemies. In their meeting room at Gresham College is his picture, drawn from the life, 1663, by a good hand, which they much esteem, and several copies have been taken. (162)

This passage makes clear that something else is at issue since Hobbes was refused admission into the Royal Society essentially because he wrote against the scholarship of its founding members. Certainly aware of this fact, Aubrey's decision to call attention to Hobbes gives credence to the idea that the biography not just promotes the accomplishments of Aubrey's subject but his own standing among his contemporaries.

Further evidence of this dual concern can be seen when Aubrey describes his first childhood encounter with Hobbes:

1634: this summer—I remember it was venison season (July or August)—Mr T.H. came into his native country to visit his friends, and amongst others he came then to see his old school master, Mr Robert Latimer, at Leigh Delamere, where I was then at school [sic] in the church, newly entered in my grammar by him: here was the first place who was then pleased to take notice of me, and the next day visited my relations. (151)

By choosing to relate his first impression of the great man when he was a child, especially at a time when Hobbes's career had not fully taken off, Aubrey reveals that his interest is less concerned with the development of Hobbes's literary career but instead with the relationship he develops with him over the course of a long period of time. According to Hermione Lee, it is characteristic of a biographer to reveal (often unintentionally) his own life while writing about his subject because of his own insecurities (72). Aubrey may claim that he is interested in uncovering the truth, but often the truth is muddled with his need to validate his social status and why he is capable to write these descriptions.



Consequently, throughout the *Brief Lives*, Aubrey reveals his own insecurities by glorifying his friendships, acquaintances, or anyone of importance that he can forge a relationship with in his biographical notes. The latter becomes evident in what appears little more than a passing description of John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester. The observation appears to be largely dependent upon the opinions and writings of others, yet Aubrey makes the most of it. In stating that he remembers seeing Rochester as “a prisoner in the Tower about 1662” (326), Aubrey creates the possibility of acquaintance without saying so directly. That he wants to be associated with the literary circle that included Rochester appears more plausible in light of a later comment in his Rochester description when he writes: “Mr Andrew Marvell, who was a good judge of wit, was wont to say that he was the best English satirist and had the right vein” (326). Aubrey’s linking of the two has the effect of including Aubrey, as if to say that since he is Marvell’s friend that if Aubrey were to meet Rochester, he would surely be his friend too. Aubrey makes sure to follow Marvell’s opinion with his own view of Rochester to reinforce his “inside” status.

Whatever his relationship with such individuals may have been, Aubrey learned much from his use of the personal interview, a research skill that has both elevated and undermined his reputation as a scholar. Typically, he did not interview with paper and pen in hand. Nor did he conduct interviews at family residencies. Instead he found coffee shops and bars more congenial for the interview itself, although these same locations proved counterproductive for creating a record of what transpired. The day following the interview, Aubrey was often found with a hangover and struggling to remember details. Indeed in some instances all that remained was a hazy memory. In his life of Hobbes, Aubrey candidly admits as much:

The Lord Chancellor Bacon loved to converse [sic] with him. He assisted his lordship in translating several of his essays into Latin, one, I well remember is that *Of the Greatness of Cities*. The rest I have forgotten. (151)

Despite the notes that would be forever lost from his carelessness, Aubrey truly believed these social meetings were essential sources for understanding a life. He assured Wood on several occasions that the advantages of frequenting such places outweighed the drawbacks because the interviews made the academic world small and accessible. He writes on June 15, 1680:

...the modern advantage of coffee-houses in this great citie, before which men knew not how to be acquainted, but with their own relations, or societies. I might add that I come of a longevous race, by which means I have impede some feathers from the wings of time for severall generations; which does reach high. When I first began, I did not think I could have drawn it out to so long a thread.  
(qtd in Balme 92)

Undoubtedly it would be easy to dismiss Aubrey's interviews if they did not include evidence in his assorted notes that he was not content to accept hearsay testimony as the final word on a subject. In spite of what his subjects tell him, Aubrey keeps an eye on future possibilities for corroboration. It is this aim that has made his "Minutes of the Life of John Milton," with its pointing fingers and omnipresent symbols and marks, so valuable to later chroniclers despite its disarming appearance.

Both in small (the subject of Milton changing tutors) and large matters (the composition of *Paradise Lost*), Aubrey records only what he is told; however, he does leave clues through

questions throughout his notes that there may be more to learn. In the first instance, he rightfully wonders about Christopher Milton's report that his brother switched tutors from William Chapell to Nathaniel Tovey since "it seemed contrary to the rules of the college." Later scholars have verified Christopher's reliability in this instance as it turns out that Christopher obviously did not tell Aubrey that Tovey was also his tutor, and that his brother's problems with his initial tutor Chapell had a fortuitous solution available with Christopher's matriculation at Christ's College in the term following his brother's rustication. With the admission of Christopher and his need for a tutor, either Milton's father or Milton himself saw the opportunity to solve two matters at the same time. Both young men became Tovey's charges. Similarly, when Aubrey interviews Milton's nephew Edward Phillips, he notes with exacting care what Phillips says, although not without conveying the sense that additional speculation is warranted. Phillips turns out to be notoriously bad on dates though remarkably accurate when it comes to approximation. He gets neither Milton's birth or death dates right, but his comments on his uncle's creation of *Paradise Lost* remain the best scholars have:

From Mr E. Phillips:—All the time for writing his *Paradise Lost*, his vein began at the autumnal equinoctial, and ceased at the vernal (or thereabouts: I believe about May): and this was four or five years of his doing it. He began about two years before the king came in, and three years after the king's restoration. (204)

The qualifiers notwithstanding ("four or five years," "about two years") Aubrey's time frame has proved essential for later work that has attempted to plot not just Milton's whereabouts, but the notion of when he most easily composed. In miniature, his few statements offer seeds for

understanding the composition dates of many other poems of Milton for which uncertainty remains. Through a curious combination of authority and speculation, Aubrey's Milton minutes stand alone as the early life with the most productive details. It eclipses Wood's account with ease, and it has proven a formidable rival to the "insider" accounts of Milton's nephew Edward Phillips and his former student Cyriack Skinner. Less polished and clearly lacking the structure of all three, it stands alone as an authoritative work in progress, a label that accurately captures the totality of *Brief Lives* except for that of Hobbes.

In what he considers his most complete work, Aubrey makes a determined effort to capture the life of Hobbes with unapologetic authority. He prides himself on being aware of details few others would have because the latter did not know Hobbes in a personal way. Thus he claims himself among the few who can verify where Hobbes was born:

To prevent mistakes, and that hereafter may rise no doubt what house was famous for this famous man's birth, I do testify that in April 1659, his brother Edmund went with me into this house, and into the chamber he was born. Now things begin to be antiquated, and I have heard some guess it might be at the house where his brother Edmund lived and died. But that is so, as I here deliver it. (149)

The degree to which he actually went there may be gauged through a comparison to another incident involving where his subject may or may not have lived. This time the subject is the house in which Milton was born, and Aubrey goes against the popular idea to alert future scholars of the existence of more than one property on Bread Street that the poet's father owned: "His son John

was born in Bread Street, in London, at the Spread Eagle, which was his (he had also in that street another house, the Rose; and other houses in other places)” (201). Careful to state what has become the standard, long-held view that Milton was born in the house marked by the family’s coat of arms (the Spread Eagle), Aubrey adds without the confident note of the earlier example that there was another residence that the senior Milton leased. This add-on has turned out not only to be true but a vital key to opening up other perspectives of the family business and Milton’s acquaintance with the world of money.

These invaluable gems occasionally found in Aubrey’s lives can be attributed in part to his experience as a chorographer. Some of Aubrey’s earliest investigative work involved collecting data about local towns and residencies in order to assist those assigned the tasks of writing social and geographical histories. Principally influenced by the antiquarian methodologies of William Camden and John Leland, Aubrey not so much by design but by accident came to recognize how life writing complemented genealogical work of various kinds. As Stan Mendyke observes:

The chorographers were in the forefront of laying the foundations of British historical scholarship from which modern historical consciousness was born, and also established the practical (if not theoretical) grounds of antiquarian study which aided John Aubrey, Robert Sibbald (in Scotland), Edward Lhuyd (in Wales), and other seventeenth-century virtuosi in their fieldwork. To a considerable extent, British regional study before the 1660s...was dominated by

the response to the chorographic activities and goals of Leland, Lambarde, and Camden. (480)

Aubrey's experience in this related field becomes apparent in his life of Hobbes when he furnishes details that reveal how his subject's actual environment impacts his daily activities:

*Exercises...*In the country, for want of tennis court, he would walk up a hill and down hill in the park, till he was in a great sweat, and then give the servant some money to rub him. (158)

A belief in the dynamic relationship between person and place comes clear in another part of the Hobbes account when Aubrey depicts his subject's humble childhood in both his hometown of Malsbury and his parish of Westport.

As Anthony Powell argues and William Poole reiterates, Aubrey forges a link between traditional research methodologies and new subjects of learning and in so doing eludes easy classification: "Aubrey represents and in a few cases is directly responsible for this meeting of the ways, the embodiment of two passions that had frequently been separated before his age, and that would be separate again — the antiquarian and the scientific" (15). Aubrey demonstrates his scientific pursuits most adamantly in his description of Hobbes. He describes him in much the same way a scientist catalogs an animal or insect. Using himself as primary source material, Aubrey systematically describes his physical and mental attributes. He writes:

*Stature.* He was six foot high, and something better, and went indifferently erect, or rather, considering his great age, very erect...*Shaking Palsy.* He had shaking palsy in his hands; which began in France before the year 1650, and has grown

upon him by degrees, ever since, so that he has not been able to write very legibly since 1665 or 1666, as I find by some of his letters to me. (157-8)

He uses these categorizing skills in his description of Milton as well when he writes about how Milton pronounces his “R’s.” Such concerns fulfill Hermione Lee’s description of the kind of biographical life Aubrey creates. It is and can often be viewed as an “autopsy,” in which the subject is systematically described in intricate detail to help the reader “see” how the subject matches character description (1).

The only drawback that has emerged in the use of Aubrey’s work is the charge that his lives amount to the work not of a seventeenth-century scholar but rather a seventeenth-century gossip. It is a charge ensuing from misunderstanding aptly captured by Poole:

Many have misunderstood the nature and intention of his biographical collections, diminishing his importance with the backhanded compliment that he was the greatest gossip of his age. A gossip, however, is someone who is too free with personal information, and yet Aubrey restricted his work to manuscript, and to material conveyed through private correspondence. (91)

As has been hinted earlier in the discussion of the function of Aubrey’s habit of punctuating his accounts with symbols and abbreviations to mark qualifications, the *Brief Lives* contain certainty and speculation, answers and questions, character strengths and character flaws. When opportunities become available for Aubrey to expand his discussion of Milton and the controversial subject of divorce to include the views of his contemporaries, he does not take the bait. Instead he reports only that Milton’s relationship with Mary Powell was troublesome:

The life was irksome to her, and so she went to her parents at Fost Hill. He sent for her, after some time; and I think his servant was roughly handled: but as for that matter of wronging his bed, I never heard the least suspicion; nor had he, of that, any jealousy. (202)

Gossip is put aside; speculation as to Milton's "almost divorce" or infidelity by either spouse give way to what Aubrey believes are facts. The conflicted view of Aubrey as gossip more than likely results from his misguided attempt to discredit the view of Hobbes as an atheist, a view solidified by Hobbes's opponents upon the publication of the *Leviathan*. Aubrey asserts that not only was his writing misinterpreted, but Hobbes was a sacramental-Christian:

*Atheism*. for his being branded with atheism, his writings and virtuous life testify against it. And that he was a Christian, it is clear for received the sacrament of Dr Pierson, and in his confession to Dr John Cosins, on his (as he thought) death-bed, declared that he liked the religion of the Church of England best of all other. (159)

Indeed, it was so strongly believed that Hobbes was an atheist that his grave stone was inscribed: "Here lies Tom Hobbes, the Bugbear of the Nation,/ Whose death has frighten Atheism out of fashion" (qtd in Nicolson 405). Aubrey's defense of Hobbes's religion is not the only time his writing reveals him to be more than a fact collector for Wood, but its failure to convince left its wake the opportunity to broad brush Aubrey an apologist for his friends. "Gossip" became a convenient and ready to hand label.



While it is without question that Aubrey records his own biases in places in his life of Hobbes, and that such views offered additional reasons for him to be labeled a gossip, the same charge allows us to see how he handles matters close and not so close to his heart. Alan Pritchard captures well how the Royalist Aubrey contended with the views and conduct of Milton, one clearly of a different political persuasion. The phrase “before the war” appears throughout the Milton life and Pritchard sees it as indicative of Aubrey’s inability to understand how England’s great poet could oppose the traditions of England. Accordingly, he manipulates Milton’s views on the monarchy but he does not attack his subject

Whatever he wrote against the monarchy was out of no animosity to the king’s person, or out of any faction of interest, but out of a pure zeal to the liberty of mankind, which he thought would be greater under a free state than under a monarchical government. (204)

In the case of Hobbes, Aubrey also writes about the state of England but he shifts his focus to the glorious return of the monarchy and associates Hobbes with royal favor, a move that also highlights himself as a Royalist. He writes:

It happened two or three days after his majesty’s return, that, as he was passing in his coach through the Strand, Mr Hobbes was standing at Little Salisbury House gate (where his lord then lived). The king espied him, put off his hat very kindly to him and asked him how he did... Here his majesty’s favours were renewed to him, and order was given that he should have free access to his majesty, who always much delighted in his wit and smart repartees. (154)

In this passage, Aubrey identifies his favorite subjects as Royalist, but the account sounds less like propaganda and more like a memorable incident. The king meets Hobbes and reacts favorably. Aubrey does not embellish but reports. Both examples from the lives of Hobbes and Milton underscore a singular feature of the *Brief Lives*—restraint in the face of opportunities to enliven. This feature has proved frustrating and puzzling, but it can be seen as one of the few marks of the work that may be categorized as consistent..

While this essay has rejected the view that Aubrey is merely Wood's errand boy, it has not called direct attention to the fact that Aubrey's relationship with Wood would eventually falter and sour, primarily because of Wood's disagreeable nature and a clash in philosophy. In an early letter Aubrey writes to Wood signs of what was to come emerge: "I do not repeat anything already published (to the best of my remembrance)" (6). This particular statement would prove too problematic for Wood who habitually took material from others without acknowledgement. But there was also his inability to capture a personality through anecdote, a feature most welcome in Aubrey's lives. Allen Pritchard provides the telling example of Wood's distortion of Aubrey's description of Sir Kenelam Digby. Aubrey's account that the Jesuits did not have time to make an honest assessment of the man becomes in Wood's version a Digby despised by the Jesuits (167). The final source of the rift between the two involves completion. Aubrey rarely delivers a final product (the notable exception being Hobbes's biography); Wood does, in the end, produce a coherent biographical register in the 1690s. The mounting tensions eventually come to a head when Aubrey learns that Wood left out over forty pages of his notes in *Athenae Oxonienses*. On September 2, 1694, he scornfully wrote to Wood:

You have cut out a matter of forty pages out of one of my volumes, as also the index. Was ever any body so unkind?—And I remember you told me coming from Hedington that there were some things in it that “would cutt my throat.” I thought you so deare a friend that I might have entrusted my life in your hands and now your unkindness doth break my heart. (qtd in Clark 13)

Betrayed on a personal and scholarly basis, Aubrey in the end donates his work to the Ashmolean Museum, then affiliated with the Royal Society rather than the university, and he does so without Wood’s knowledge. This decision suggests that Aubrey may have started out as simply a note collector, but over time developed a vested interest in and a methodology to his biographical research.

Fortunately, Aubrey’s decision also insured its preservation and benefited later scholars, especially those in the twentieth century. According to William Poole:

The manuscript, deposited in the Ashmolean Museum by 1693, but lent out again soon afterwards, was nonetheless consulted by prominent scholars and antiquaries in Aubrey’s own time; and elements of his work, explicitly attributed to Aubrey, were printed in the massive 1695 revision of William Cambden’s *Britannia*, published two years before Aubrey’s death, and edited by the young scholar Edmund Gibson. (64)

With access to Aubrey’s original materials, scholars have readily understood his value as a primary source. Readers of the *Athenae Oxonienses*, for instance, discover what notes were

Aubrey's, what research Wood actually did himself, and what was deemed acceptable material to publish in the seventeenth century.

Aubrey, undeniably, was not a perfect antiquarian. While he strived for new information about individuals he believed were doing important research, he also did not abandon his interest in his own social status that was elevated through association. Thus details in the *Brief Lives* should be understood in some instances as a reflection of that concern. In the larger picture, however, Aubrey's work must be seen as directed to far larger goals. His methodology and research notes constitute one of the earliest examples of primary, archival-related research. His interviews remain prototypes for investigative reporters and journalists to learn from; and his contributions to the emerging discipline of life writing and biography stand on firm ground. They have become hard to pass by despite their willy-nilly appearance and their incompleteness. In a paradoxical way, they have achieved in spite of themselves.

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## CHAPTER II

### SCHOLARLY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE PROGRAM

John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* integrated the writing of biography with the impact society and politics had on individuals living at a specific time in history. There is a faint link that can be made to the essays I have written during my time in the English department at OSU—political themes have been a recurring feature in work submitted for a variety of classes.

My initial graduate paper, "Robert Herrick's Loyalty to the Crown," appears obvious to me now as an attempt at literary analysis with only a partial understanding of the field of literary scholarship. The paper spends too much time focused upon secondary sources and not enough on developing my own ideas. However common this emphasis may be for new graduate students, at the time I did not realize how much it can overshadow my presence in my work. The paper informed about the English Civil War, but my readings of Herrick's poetry were overshadowed by the work of other commentators.

While my Introduction to Graduate Studies helped redirect my energies toward primary materials, the paper emerging from that course, "Shakespeare's Representation of James I in *King Lear*," still required more skill on my part to forge a proper relationship between history and literature. I would rate this essay better than my first insofar as it identified themes between James I and the character of King Lear, though the explication of those themes tends to get too involved with historical reporting. There is less on Lear and arguably too much on James I and his theories of kingship.

In my second year, I took a course on the early modern other—in Renaissance terms—this essentially equated to non-Christians. My essay, "Recycling the Story of Roland and Pope

Urban II's Speech at the Council of Clermont," explored how popular folklore transformed the story of Roland into propaganda during the era of the crusades. My source text, in addition to *The Song of Roland*, included an address Pope Urban II made to those attending the Council of Clermont. While I made progress in terms of literary analysis, my reporting of historical events still played too large of a role in the end.

I believe I did make progress in my next effort, a seminar paper for a course of the Pre-Raphaelites. Entitled "Defining the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: *The Fleshy School of Poetry* Feud," this essay explores the reaction of Swinburne and Rossetti to Buchanan's attack on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. With a focused look at three texts, I explored Victorian culture, especially the Buchanan and Swinburne essays, and my interpretation for the first time came to the forefront. Secondary scholarship was properly positioned, and up to this point in my MA program, this paper was clearly my most successful.

Unfortunately, my progress experienced a bit of a setback in my American Borderlands Class. My final essay, "Truth Found in Literature: How the "True Beliefs" of the Shaker Religion Were Illuminated with the Creation of their Religious Literature for the World's People," intended to examine the development of Shaker literature as the religion established itself in America. While I analyzed several texts furnished by scholars of Shaker literature, my need for primary texts became apparent too late. Instead of a literary foundation, I resorted once again to providing a generalized historical analysis. The result became a piecemeal interpretation of the subject rather than a concentrated look.

In my final class on literary biography, the figure of John Aubrey not only began the class but finished it for me. He remained my interest from the outset. As my defense paper, this effort challenged me to connect his conception of life writing to its formative influence upon and intersection with other emerging seventeenth-century disciplines of study. The range of materials I had to canvass was at first daunting, but in the end, I found that the multiple interests of Aubrey and his failure to become thoroughly and consistently committed to any of them a compelling and

fascinating subject, one that I did not tire of pursuing. I believe the paper has brought to the surface several of the skills I have labored to acquire over the last two years: close reading, focused writing, and a proper use of primary and secondary materials. Moreover, the paper has given me a hard won confidence to make defensible arguments about literary texts, and in the process of writing and rewriting it, I have been made aware of not just my tendencies as a thinker but also as a writer. The process, I now realize, is ongoing, and one that does not have a definitive ending point. Rather than believing that by completing a graduate degree that I have “arrived,” I sense that I am still on the way toward professionalization.

Thus while this paper marks a notable improvement in my ability to read literary texts closely, it also tries to sort out the elusive nature of Aubrey as a scholar: was he a legitimate practitioner or in the end a hack? For the first time that I can remember, I have opted to resist a simple answer and feel comfortable describing him as inconsistent and accomplished. He is as much one as the other, but he is at best unpredictable. While Aubrey may not be a role model for graduate students trying to acquire gainful employment in the profession of literature and language, he remains in my mind an important figure who captures both the summits one can aspire to and the depths one can plummet to during the course of a career and a life.



## CHAPTER III

### REVISED PAPERS

#### **Robert Herrick's Loyalty to the Crown**

*"Twixt Kings and subjects there's this mighty odds:*

*Subjects are taught by men; kings, by the god."*

*--Robert Herrick, 1648*

Robert Herrick, born in 1591 and lived till 1675, is often considered a Stuart royalist. Yet, not all of Herrick's poetry was in support for the actions of his king, such as *Bad Princes Pill their People*. So we are left wondering, how much of Herrick's loyalty to Charles was based on the actions of Charles and how much was dependent on his belief in the crown of Britain? This essay will analyze four of Herrick's poem to better understand where Herrick's loyalty came from: glory and defense of the crown, or praise and support for Charles. I will be analyzing: "The Difference Betwixt King and Subjects"; "To The Most Illustrious, and Most Hopeful Prince, Charles, Prince of Whales"; "Bad Princes Pill their People"; and "Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse." Herrick did not blindly follow Charles to the gallows, instead he was trying to contend with the idea of being loyal to a failing king in his poetry.

In Herrick's poem "To The Most Illustrious, and Most Hopeful Prince, Charles, Prince of Whales," which was published in 1648,<sup>1</sup> the loyalty displayed in the poem creates a conundrum

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<sup>1</sup> The actual date of these poems is disputed. Yet in this essay, I will take the publishing date of 1648 to address the issues Herrick might have found with the monarchy, Charles and England. I

for his reader. While the title would have the reader assume the poem would be praise for the future king, the poem actually serves more as an introduction to Herrick's book Hesperides. G. C. Moore Smith believes that the poem serves both as an explanation of the title as well as what to expect from the book.<sup>2</sup> This explanation is feasible since there is actually no direct reference to the king at all within the poem.

Also, the poem serves as a call to Herrick's muse, which was not an uncommon practice for playwrights of the time. In Lady Mary Worth's poem sequence "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus," she uses Venus and Cupid as her muses.<sup>3</sup> The use of a muse allowed a poet to explain his desire to write. Yet, Herrick is different in his call to the muses because he calls for his "work's creator" to inspire his poem. He writes: "Who are my work's creator, and alone." Throughout the poem there is ambiguity whether Herrick is referencing to King Charles or God. This vague entity leads back to the larger issue of Herrick's royalist loyalty—whether it is to the crown or Charles.

The "creator" could be Charles, because the poem is directly addressed to the king, and Hesperides is part of Herrick's larger collection of political poems. Also, Herrick lived the majority of his life as "the parson of Dean Prior, in Devonshire," and it was Charles who was responsible for Herrick's tenure in Devonshire (Rudrum 309). Herrick could also be addressing God, since "creator" and God tend to be synonymous terms. Thus all loyalties Herrick had were

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will be covering a period that stretches from the Bishops War to the middle of the Second Civil War; however, it should be noted that some scholars believe the poems found in the collection were written before 1640. According to Ann Coiro, Andrew Crooke applied to publish several poems of Herrick's in 1640, yet they were not published till "eight years later." Thus the publishers decided to arrange the poems to make them seem more current with the political atmosphere, as well as renaming "The Poems" to "Hesperides" (311). Also, it is important to note that before 1648 only 10 of Herrick's were known and circulated (Jones).

<sup>2</sup> *Hesperides* is Herrick's far more political collection of poems, compared to *Noble Numbers*

<sup>3</sup> All poems that are not Herrick's are used from *The Broadview Anthology of seventeenth Century Verse & Prose* collection.

beyond the current monarchy. A solution to the confusion could be that Herrick saw Charles as divine, because of the idea of Divine Right Monarchy, thus addressing God in the poem equated to addressing Charles. Indeed, many literary scholars have attributed Herrick's royalist beliefs as a belief in divine right monarchy, especially since he tends to write about a king's responsibilities as ordained by God. According to Claude T. Summers, Herrick would equate the civil war to people acting against God. He writes: "[Herrick] presents Charles as a Christ-like figure whose mysterious healing ritual might cure the national affliction of civil war if only the people will assume a posture of submission and faith" (175). Herrick truly believed that Charles could solve all of England's problems if he could restore the people's faith in the crown. In his poetry, he writes that Charles needs to fulfill his role as king and the people need to once again follow their leader. Summers views Herrick's poems as a collective entity; however, "To The Most Illustrious, and Most Hopeful Prince, Charles, Prince of Wales," does not seem to follow the model of the other more politicized poems. Herrick writes, presumably to Charles: "When such a light as you are leads the way." However this statement proves to be false-flattery, since he uses the statement only to further promote his book. Immediately after the statement, he writes about how his book will be received. It is important to look at how this poem reveals an underlying concern Herrick seems to have with his fate if the monarchy was to change.

It is important to consider Herrick's intended audience for the poem because it is the first one in Hesperides, even before "The Argument of His Book," and it is unnumbered.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, it can be assumed that he considered the poem either as a dedication or a defense of the collection, much like Chaucer's "General Prologue" or Puck's epilogue in Shakespeare's A

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<sup>4</sup> I am using two collections of Herrick's poems: *The Broadview Anthology of seventeenth Century Verse & Prose* and *Robert Herrick: The Hesperides & Noble Numbers: Edited by Alfred Pollard* (revised edition). I will be using *The Broadview Anthology* for the actual text of the poems. And, I will also be using the Alfred Pollard collection to discuss the actual structure of *Hesperides*, since for some of the poems it is important to discuss their location within the book as well as their content.

Midsummer Night's Dream. Who Herrick is addressing in the poem, as well as his audience, could prove that the poem may have selfish intention, as well as political intention. As aforementioned, Herrick's choice of muse is unusual since it is neither mythological nor directly named. If Charles is his muse, he would be giving praise to the person responsible for his livelihood. Charles would be the closest he would ever have to a patron because the income he received at Devon gave him freedom to write his poetry. It was not an uncommon practice for the poets of the time to write poems of praise for their patron(s). Herrick may have realized that some of the poems in his book were a critique to Charles's monarchy; therefore, he had to first praise his patron. Also, if Herrick started his collection with praise it would lead others into believing that the entire collection was only for the benefit of the failing monarchy, like Milton's book The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth that was written as the demise of the Commonwealth was imminent (Woolrych 770).

Herrick shows a selfish nature in his other poems. When Parliament took over he realized that his poems could be in danger, which he addresses in "His Return to London." Parliament had punished Herrick for his royalist sympathies by forcing him out of his post in Devon; yet, he asks that his book is still treated with dignity and asks for its publishing. He writes: "Give thou my sacred relics burial."

In the beginning of line eleven of the poem, he writes: "I am a free born *Roman*..." The use of the word "Roman" to describe his citizenship, clearly demonstrates that he is playing to parliament's sympathies and ego since parliament would have modeled their government after Rome. This poem proves that Herrick had loyalty to the crown, not Charles since his loyalty

disappeared when parliament came into power. Also, Herrick was more concerned that his poetry would be forgotten than with the political situation of the failed monarchy<sup>5</sup>.

Also, in the poem “The Difference Betwixt King and Subjects” it is apparent that Herrick is more concerned with the state of the monarchy than with Charles. The poem may only be two lines, however it clearly outlines politics of the time were and where Charles gets his power. The poem gives a direct proclamation on how Herrick believes people should respect their king, as well as the responsibilities of the king. A. Leigh describes the interesting nature of the poem since it is more commanding of its audience than Herrick’s other poems. The poem is almost trying to persuade the audience into believing the universal concept of the monarchy. Deneef believes that the poem is strictly royalist, he writes: “The epigram is royalist in the true Cavalier tradition: the king is the divinely appointed sovereign of the people and is accountable to the divinity alone. The people’s duty lies in recognizing and accepting the king’s sacred authority” (134). The poem may mention religion but Deneef makes a large leap in believing the poem is advocating Divine Right Monarchy. Instead, Herrick is positing that since a monarch must be trained to have a godly reverence, he does not have an inherent divinity.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier Herrick critics claimed that he was only a pastoral poet unaware of the civil strife going on around him; however, in two lines Herrick proves his critics wrong by stating the exact issue of the time. Also, it is interesting that Herrick does not specify the time of “mighty odds,” perhaps stating that there has always been a struggle between subjects and the monarch. Herrick could be stating that there have always been subjects who have issues with the monarchy.

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<sup>5</sup> “His Return to London” shows a flaw to Coiro’s theory since there is no way Herrick could write about Parliament coming in to power and him losing his position in 1640.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that Charles was not the original successor of James, but his brother Henry. Thus Herrick could be defending Charles, since he learned how to be one not because of his birth.

The last line of the poem, which reads: “Subjects are taught by men; kings, by the god,” is important to examine as part of the context of the Civil Wars. Indeed, it must be remembered that this poem was written in the midst of the English Civil Wars. At this point in the wars, it was not the intention of the people to dethrone the king (and especially not to kill him), but it was parliament’s intention to change his course of action. Yet, it seems that Herrick is defending Charles by saying the subjects need to remember that Charles has a greater responsibility to God; therefore, what may be seen as unfavorable decision is actually part of God’s larger proclamation. Religion was an important part of the civil war, especially since it was the catalyst of the Bishops War when the Scots rejected the Scottish Book of Common Prayer.

The rejection was wide spread amongst the Scots since they felt the book was nearly an extension of English Anglicanism. Also, the book not only rejected many of practices of the Kirk, it did not even acknowledge the Kirk. The book was introduced in 1636, when Charles made his first trip to Scotland for his coronation as king of Scotland—a trip considered overwhelmingly unsuccessful (Woolrych 92). This last line of the poem could be a direct critique of Charles decision to eventually withdraw the book upon the advisement of his councilors, especially Hamilton and Wentworth. The event would reveal how easily Charles could be led astray from his convictions, especially concerning his religion. Perhaps, Herrick was advising Charles not to be so easily swayed since it verified the belief that he was fit to wear the crown. His compliance not only degraded the power the crown, it also degraded any claim to divine right monarchy since Charles was unable to make religious decisions for his nation.

While Herrick never mentions Charles by name or even the direct problems of England, it is impossible to ignore the connection to of the issues of the time period for England. Herrick stating that there is “constant odds” with the people and their monarch illuminates the problems within the nation. Yet, it is frustrating that Herrick never directly states what those problems are or even why the king and his subjects are at constant odds.

In “The Difference Betwixt King and Subjects,” Herrick simply states that there is trouble in the nation and the simple solution to the problem is that the people need to realize that the king must answer to a higher authority. The poem serves as a reminder that there is indeed a difference between the king and his subjects therefore they will never see the world completely the same. It is not till “Bad Princes Pill their People” that Herrick’s starts to look at the particular problems of the nation and why he is compelled to write about it. “Bad Princes Pill their People” is also found in Hesperides. Herrick explains that one of the issues is the financial strain the monarchy imposes on its subjects. He describes the royalist as “infernal,” because they allow the subjects to starve while they “claim the Fat and Fleshie for their share.” It is interesting that Herrick decided to write that the English subjects were dying of starvation because no subject had died of starvation since 1623. True, the century prior to Charles’s accession had not been kind to the poorer subjects, who made up the majority of the people in England, but Charles’s rule had been relatively kind to the lower class (Woolrych 15). In fact, many of the changes Laud, who was considered part of Charles’s “evil council,” made to the church helped the lower class. For example, he made the church services more inclusive. Despite the gross exaggeration, the poem certainly allows a contemporary reader to understand the financial difficulties the subjects might have had before and during the civil wars.

Before the Civil Wars, Charles had burden the nation with the Ship Money tax. The tax was initially successful; however, many counties could not afford the tax and had to send complaints to the Privy Council (Woolrych 68). Considering the tax only went to help the navy, and not to help the counties many subjects became disheartened. Another issue was the amount of wars Charles engaged in, especially compared to his father who had taken great strides to avoid the Thirty Years War. In fact, Charles had to end his Personal Rule, after eleven years, because he needed funding for his wars from parliament. This funding of course came from taxing the subjects again.

While Herrick might be critiquing the monarchy's action, the poem demonstrates that he is not completely breaking allegiance with it. He still associates the monarchy as being divine. Just as Herrick does with "To The Most Illustrious, and Most Hopeful Prince, Charles, Prince of Whales," he is addressing both God and Charles as the same person; yet, this time they are considered burdens rather than muses. Herrick's blurring of both God and king comes to full in "Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse".

When the death of Charles became inevitable, Herrick juxtaposed the death of his king with the Passion of Christ. Herrick describes Jesus in a way that his readers would be forced to think about Charles too. Herrick describes Jesus with a "robe of purple" in the first line, since purple is the color of royalty. Herrick could have used other items to describe the way Jesus looked before he was put on the cross, such as the crown of thorns, which were used to mock him, but the conscious choice to use the robe has the reader think of a monarchy. Although the poem precedes the actual execution of the King, it reflects the "widespread fear in 1647 that Charles might in fact face execution or assignation" (Summers 175). Herrick paralleling the Passion to the impending death of Charles made him a martyr, a persona he was desperately trying to adopt in his last days.

"Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse" is found in Herrick's second volume, Noble Numbers,<sup>7</sup> which was influenced by his religious and ceremonial devotion. It is interesting that Herrick never mentions the name of Jesus within the poem, instead he is consistently referred to as king. Perhaps, it was Herrick's intention for his reader to not think of Jesus at all when reading the poem, but only to understand the impending suffering their "guiltless" king. Indeed, in Noble Numbers God is seen as accessible, as David W. Landrum writes: "Even though Herrick's volume of religious poems does on occasion declare divine

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<sup>7</sup> *Noble Numbers* is even harder to date than *Hesperides* for it is found at the end of *Hesperides*, yet its date published is printed as 1647.



transcendence, it does not usually hint at divine inaccessibility. More often, it seeks to establish an almost casual intimacy with God (246). “Good Friday: Rex Tragicus, or Christ going to His Crosse” has Jesus suffer and die as a man, and not God. Herrick writes: “How He defers, how loath He is to die!” The exclamation shows that Herrick is seeing the act of passion as finality.

The poem uses both religion and theatrics to examine the current political climate, but seems to ignore the issue of Charles. What is known about Charles last days is that he saw himself as a Christ-like martyr. In order to protect the monarchy, Charles refused to give into parliament thus he signed his life away for the crown. In Herrick’s poem, he shows Jesus as giving his life away to a greater cause despite being innocent. Herrick exclaims that by Jesus giving away his earthly life he is becoming a greater eternal king. During Charles last year as king, he became the king that Herrick always wanted him to be. He became a king who was more concerned with the sanctity of the crown than with himself. Also, Charles wanted his death to be so emotional that the people would want the monarchy reinstated, and especially his son to be the returning king.

Herrick could be seen as prophetic in the poem as well with his closure stating, “And we, Thy lovers, while we see Thee keep/ The laws of action, will both sigh and weep.” Indeed after the dethroning of Charles the internal problems of parliament started to come to surface, which eventually lead to the destruction of the Commonwealth. Herrick was obviously not a prophet; however, he was keenly aware of the politics of his time, far more than he is given credit for. Herrick being a supporter of the crown knew that the system worked and he also realized that there were far to many factions in the opposition. He knew that eventually the subjects would realize their mistake, just like with Jesus, and would want the monarchy to return. Indeed, when the protectorate crumbled euphoria that swept the nation with the return of the monarchy for the subjects knew that it also meant a return to normalcy.

This intimacy Herrick has with his understanding of God and King could be product of his ministry, or it could be his belief in Divine Right Monarchy. Yet, two things that can be universally agreed on when examining Herrick's royalist loyalty: First, he wanted the monarchy to stay in power regardless of the ruler. Secondly, Herrick realized that the monarchy, specifically Charles, needed to change to help the hardships of the subjects.

These two beliefs lie in the different personalities he uses when writing his poetry as John L. Kimmey. The first two personalities are more his internal struggle, but the last one is curious for Kimmey describes the personality as a "'free-born' Londoner banished to western England during a period of social and political upheaval" (222). It is hard to ignore that Herrick wrote some of his best poetry while living in London after being defrocked (Rudrum 309). Also, this experience after Devon allowed Herrick to have a more universal view of the monarchy. This universal view would be demonstrated throughout his poetry for Herrick not only looks at the relationship of Charles and Parliament, but Charles relationship with his entire nation.

Herrick's poetry is advocating for both a change in the actions of the people (parliament as well as subjects) as well the monarchy (Charles) in order to better serve the nation. Herrick's thoughts on the crown are not too different than parliament. There was a realization in the 1640s that the crown, and the way people viewed the crown, had drastically changed and it was time to fix that problem. Both Herrick and Parliament originally wanted those problems to be changed within the monarchy. Yet, parliament eventually gave up the belief seeing that Charles was not going to change his ways whereas Herrick would not give up his faith in the monarchy. This faith Herrick had resulted in him being simply labeled as a royalist pastoral poet, instead of being justly considered a political poet trying to understand the changing role of his time and monarchy.

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## CHAPTER III

### REVISED PAPERS (CONTINUED)

#### **Shakespeare's Representation of James I in *King Lear*: An Interpretation of the St. Stephen's Feast Performance**

On St. Stephen's Feast in 1606 the King's Men performed *King Lear* for James I and his court at White Hall. A year earlier King James and parliament had been attacked during the Gunpowder Plot, led by Guy Fawkes. The Plot was devastating to James's rule considering he had previously ruled England for only a short period of time<sup>8</sup>. The plot also called into question James policies, especially considering his treatment of Catholics and absolute monarchy. The St. Stephen's performance, which is the first public performance of *King Lear* recorded, occurred right before the trial of the eight remaining conspirators. According to James Sharp, author of *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* "As the political and religious conflicts of Stuart England unfolded, the message which the Fifth conveyed altered as the consensus of January 1606 came unraveled" (84). This unraveling would have been in the mind of every audience member the night of the performance. The audience would have equally been concern with James proposal of the Union Project, during the King's Men performance. The Union Project was James's idea to unite England, Scotland and Wales as one kingdom. The parliament was adamantly against the project. With political intrigue on the audience mind, they

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<sup>8</sup> According to John W. Draper, author of "The Occasion of 'King Lear,'" the entirety of England was consumed by the aftermath of the failed Gunpowder plot. Draper states: "James's address to Parliament in 1605 was so taken up with the Gunpowder plot that all other things lapsed into the background" (178).

must have been shocked to discover that Shakespeare's *King Lear* strayed away from the original version of King Leir, entitled *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordella*. Shakespeare, who was not averse to being political in his history and tragedy plays, e.g. *Richard II* and *Macbeth*, clearly had a political message with the changes in his re-visioning of the play. In the play there are direct parallels of James I, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Union Project. In my paper I will primarily focus on what the audience, especially James, would have seen and interpreted during the St. Stephen's performance. I will look at how Shakespeare may have interpreted James's reign, during the two most significant events of James's early reign: the Gunpowder Plot and the Union Project, and how that interpretation is evident throughout *King Lear*. I will also be addressing Shakespeare's most important audience member that night, James I, discussing the two men's relationship and how James saw himself as king.

To understand the political insight and importance *King Lear* may have had on the White Hall audience, it is imperative to first understand the genre of political writing that was becoming commonplace in Renaissance writing from James to Spenser to the stage. James I was by far the most educated monarch England ever had. James's two most popular works, *Basilicon Doron* and *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* clearly lay out his political interest and ideals, especially concerning his ideas of absolute monarchy. The books allowed both his court and yeomen to understand exactly where he wanted England, and the rest of his empire, to head. In *King Lear*, the portrayal Shakespeare gives of Lear is not completely full based on James actions but James's ideals of what is meant to be king. Lear is an absolute monarch, who believes even after he gives his land away that he still should be entitled to the same respect as king since his power is of divine authority. In *Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, James tells his reader that a king foremost should be considered divine. Jonathan Goldberg summarizes James argument, stating: "There [*Trew Law of Free Monarchies*], in order to prove that all kings—even the worst—are sent by

God, and therefore cannot be resisted, he takes his passage from Kings in which Samuel details the abuses of kingship to the Israelites who are clamoring for monarchical rule” (21). James understood that the Tudor’s had a very weak case proving their claim to the throne thus he tried to claim they were descendants of King Arthur; yet, James still tried to claim the feudal ideal of the absolute King. Thus Shakespeare in his portrayal of Lear sans a kingdom is first attesting to James idea of absolute monarchy and second that any king is only worth the land he rules. The trouble with James’s reign, many scholars believe, is that he only understood what it meant to be a king through scholarship but was unable to properly execute that idea<sup>9</sup>. Coupled with a new wave of literary works that felt comfortable questioning James’s actions and beliefs. In *King Lear*, Lear has complete control of the monarchy this was far from the reality of England in which parliament and James were often at odds with each other. Thus Shakespeare is not commenting on James’s actual monarchy but the dangers of James’s ideal monarchy if it became a reality. Shakespeare’s allusions to the date of the Gunpowder Plot within the play, perhaps shows that Shakespeare was already seeing the dangers of James’s absolute monarchy.

The Renaissance theater differed greatly from its medieval predecessor. The Renaissance transformed the theater from ceremonial acts to an arena where the nature of man and politics was explored. Jerald W. Spotswood writes about the transformation that allowed Shakespeare to feel comfortable commenting on the current state of politics. Spotswood writes on the transformation: “Renaissance theater experimented with this performative aspect of social identity, setting itself apart from the medieval predecessor” (267). Spotswood continues that medieval drama often reflected the ideals of feudalism; in Shakespeare’s play we see a reaction against the ideals of feudalism, thus he truly is a playwright of the Renaissance. Indeed, Shakespeare was not averse to

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<sup>9</sup> William McElwee’s essay *The Wisest Fool in Christendom: The Reign of King James I and VI* further explains the paradox in which James was one of the most educated rulers England had ever had yet one of the most ineffective rulers too.

demonstrating his politics through his literary works whether for or against the monarchy<sup>10</sup>.

*Macbeth* and *Hamlet* both have political weaved into the plot. In *Richard II*, Queen Elizabeth I saw such a similarity between herself and the character of Richard that she exclaimed “I am Richard II, Know ye not that?” (qtd. in Greenblatt 2251). When Shakespeare former patron was released from prison, he wrote *Sonnet 7* in jubilation.

Shakespeare was not the only writer of the Renaissance to write about the actions of the monarchy. In Edward Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*, James found too many negative allusions to himself and his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, in book five. James was so angered by Spenser’s portrayal that he insisted the poet be tried in court. In Robin H. Welles’s book *Shakespeare's Politics: A Contextual Introduction* she discusses how many Renaissance writers are similar to Machiavelli in which their politics are just as influential as their actual writings, and Shakespeare is no exception. Welles writes, “No play is written in a political vacuum,” meaning that Shakespeare’s plays were affected by the culture of the period, so even when Shakespeare was not trying to be political, his plays reflected the current politics (3). Thus, it is easy to comprehend that Shakespeare was not completely against James but could disagree with some of his king’s actions. The Renaissance allowed the writers to truly examine the political and social climate that they were living.

It would be unfair to think that all writers were against James, or even that Shakespeare was completely against his king. In Donne’s eulogy for James, he described him as God’s lieutenant” (qtd. in Goldberg 213). Donne utilizes through out the entirety of his eulogy the way in which James thought a king should be received. Shakespeare too must have believed that his monarch was divine because it is Gloucester, not Lear that contemplates suicide. Thus I will be

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<sup>10</sup> James also saw himself as part of the theater and in *Basilikon Doron* he refers to himself as the “player king.” Also it is important to remind ourselves that The King’s Men, Shakespeare’s theater company, received their patronage from James.

examining the play as Shakespeare's critique of James's rule so he can become a better leader. I do not think Shakespeare wanted James to be dethroned—even for personal reasons Shakespeare benefited from James continuing to be ruler. Instead, Shakespeare was only reflecting on the political climate of the time and giving his own opinion of the state of the country and where he saw it heading if James did not change. In this manner Shakespeare was James's Machiavelli, since Shakespeare was instructing the king on how to be a better ruler<sup>11</sup>.

It is also important to recognize that *King Lear* not only deviated from the original text but it also deviated from the genre of tragedy, particularly Shakespeare's own tragic elements. Shakespeare should not be considered solely a playwright, but also as a historian. Shakespeare borrowed from a large cannon of literature as well as historical events. For *King Lear*, Shakespeare's two main sources were Holinshed's *Chronicles*<sup>12</sup> and *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordella*,<sup>13</sup> both texts recount the kingship of Leir. The audience would have been familiar with both books, and *King Leir* was considered part of popular folklore; thus when Shakespeare deviated from the original story in his play it could only be seen as Shakespeare commentary on the current state of the country.

Literary scholar Irving Ribner notes:

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<sup>11</sup> I am not saying the Shakespeare had the same political ideals as Machiavelli. The men only share the same manner of political and instructive writing.

<sup>12</sup> According to Irving Ribner, Holinshed's *Chronicle* was considered an accurate account of English history during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, and even James accepted the account as an account of his ancestors (48).

<sup>13</sup> For further insight on the significance of Shakespeare deviating from the original ending of *King Lear* and the other deviations I do not mention in my essay, read F.T. Flahiff's article "Edgar: Once and Future King." In the article he explores how the seventeenth century audience member would have reacted to the dramatic change in Shakespeare's *King Lear* from the original Leir the audience would have been familiar with. Shakespeare gives Edgar a far more important role in his version, thus Flahiff looks at the importance the character of Edgar would have had on Shakespeare's audience.



Shakespeare changed the story of King Lear which he found in his sources. He made changes both to better the effect his tragic purposes and, in the orthodox tradition of Renaissance historiography, to better effect his political purposes.

(51)

Indeed, it has been agreed by many Shakespearian scholars that *King Lear* serves both as a historical account of Lear and a political testimony of Shakespeare. Some of the larger deviations from the original text include the ending which originally had Leir joining forces with France to win back his kingdom, however in Shakespeare's portrayal Edgar and Kent fight against the French to save Britain. Shakespeare does not have Lear return triumphantly to reunite the kingdoms as in the original text; instead, the play ends in uncertainty of who will be king and the kingdoms stay divided<sup>14</sup>.

Not only did Shakespeare significantly change the original text of King Leir, but the manner in which he wrote this tragedy. The essential part of the tragedy that is missing is a definitive climax. Fredson states that one of the reasons that it is difficult to interpret what is the climax of the play because Lear's own life in the first act has its own climax yet that does not necessarily determine the climax of the play. Another reason for the ambiguity for the climax of the play is that typically in a tragedy the climax is irreversible, and the protagonist is unable to reverse his action thus the true tragedy begins in the play. Bowers references Romeo's decision to kill Tibalt in *Romeo and Juliet* which ultimately leads to Romeo's own destruction since that

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<sup>14</sup> In Gary Taylor's essay "Monopolies, Show Trials, Disaster and Invasion: *King Lear* and Censorship" he states that the absences of France showed the progress of England's political relations since the quarto version was written. During the time the Quarto was published there actually was a threat of French invasions but after 1604 there was peace between the two countries. The Quarto audience would have understood the political significance of France but it would have outdated the play to put in the 1633 version. Also, in the eighteenth century Nahum Tate significantly changed the ending of Shakespeare's *King Leir* for the stage. In Tate's version, Edgar and Cordelia wed and then rule the country, thus the play ends happily and conclusively.

sudden decision plagues him and the rest of the play is determined by the climax. However, in *King Lear* there is no irreversible decision; Lear can always ask Cordelia for her forgiveness, as proven in the last act. Therefore, the play is not a destined tragedy but filled with tragic flaws of the different characters. The play's lack of climax could be seen as a terrible flaw in the play or a clever political ploy by Shakespeare. As previously mentioned, the Gunpowder plot was seen as devastating to James's reign, and a year later political tensions were only strengthening, especially between James and Parliament's dispute over the Union Project, Shakespeare's showing that Lear has the ability to change as his suggestion that James could change.

To understand the changes Shakespeare thought was necessary for James, I think it is important to understand first how Shakespeare draws the similarities between the character Lear and King James. Thus only after the audience understands that the play indeed represents James's reign of England. In act one, scene one, for not only does it establish the majority of the play, it immediately draws parallels between the character Lear and James. In act one, scene one Kent and Gloucester discuss who will inherit the kingdom now that the aging King Lear has decided to bequeath his crown. It is believed that the land will go to either Albany or Cornwall, Lear's two sons-in-laws. It is important to note that the men do not discuss that kingdom being inherited by the elder daughters; while this could be read as misogynic, it could also be read as Shakespeare's very first connection between James and Lear. James's two sons, Henry and Charles were the dukes of Cornwall and Albany, respectively. It would seem as if Shakespeare is trying to establish the relationship between the character and the king right away. Indeed act one, scene one truly establishes the connections between James and Lear, these connection lay the foreground of establishing Shakespeare's avocation of the James's Union Project, which if passes by parliament would unite England, Wales, and Scotland as one country.

James as Lear is identified through the use of another character with the portrayal of the fool. One direct parallel between Shakespeare's Lear and King James was the fool. James brought

the concept of the fool back into court with his own fool, Archie Armstrong. Many members of the nobility disagreed with the idea that the fool was given complete access to insult all of the court and nobility as Clare Asquith, author of “The Powder Keg, 1605-1606,” explains when she lists the reasons of discernment that led to the Powder Keg (Gunpowder) plot. Shakespeare has several allusions to James’s relationship with the nobility. In fact *King Lear* is Shakespeare’s only play in which commoners are not part of the play. Typically the commoners served in the similar fashion as the Greek chorus, in which they are used to provide insight and commentary of the current state of affairs amongst the nobles. The lack of the nobles forces the audience to experience the surprises of the plot along with the characters themselves as well as make their own judgment of the situations<sup>15</sup>. Another parallel that can be drawn in regards to James’s treatment of the nobility is through the characters of Regan, Goneril, and Edmund. James often extend his wealth and power to his favorites. Margot Heinemann asserts that the characters of “Goneril, Regan and Edmund were likely to be identified by the audience... as [those]... who rewarded for their obsequiousness with land, monopolies, offices, and gifts...” (158). This interpretation would suggest that Shakespeare was responding negatively to those subjects that were falsely flattering James to better their position. Furthermore, the three characters represent how allowing deceitful people to rule the kingdom will lead to the destruction of the king.

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<sup>15</sup> In act four, scene six the audience truly experiences a deceit along with one of the characters. In the “suicide scene,” as Philip C. McGuire describes it, the audience listens to Edgar describe to blind Gloucester that they are climbing a cliff. The audience instantly utilizes the theater notion of suspended belief. The audience would have believed Edgar’s description of the cliff instead of the flat stage they would have seen. However, the audience soon realizes that they too have been tricked like Gloucester in believing that the flat ground was a cliff. McGuire believes that after this experience of trickery the audience would be able to relate to Lear who may have seen things naïvely beforehand, McGuire states, “Like Lear, they came to learn that they [the audience] cannot always rely on what on the words they here, not even in theater.” The lack of commoners forces the audience to emphasize with the character of Lear. The lack of commoners and Shakespeare’s own deceit also forces the audience to be active participants and engage in the play. This is believed to be a ploy that Shakespeare utilizes to further the readers connection to the play and current politics.

In act one, scene one, not only is there an allusion to James's court but even James's character, such as the love test. The love test was a familiar device used in Renaissance drama; however, the love test typically marked a jovial occasion and was not essential to the rest of the play. Shakespeare's use of the love test establishes the entirety of the play, and separates Lear the ruler from Lear the crazed former king. In *King Lear* the love test determines the rest of the play since it Cordelia's simple response, "Nothing, my lord" (qtd. in Dodd 494), that leads Lear into his madness even in the dialogue you see Lear trying to reverse his daughters decision but her unwillingness to change her answer destroys Lear. The love test represents Lear's inability to separate his role as king from his role a father. James too had difficulty in separating his role as king and as father, which was part of the larger issue of James considering himself as an absolute monarch. In James's 1609 speech to Parliament describing the many duties of a king, he exclaimed: "Kings are also compared to the fathers of the families: for a King is truly *Parens patriae*, the politique [political] father of his people" (qtd. in Woodford 67).<sup>16</sup> James's belief that he was from the line of absolute monarchs, like King David, led him to act as ruler and father of England. *King Lear* shows the danger of a king confusing those roles together.

Allusions to the Gun Powder Plot are also prevalent in act one, scene one to further establish the connection between Lear and James. Again, I refer to the first encounter of Gloucester and Kent where they discuss the Lear dividing his kingdom. In the quarto version of the play, Gloucester refers to the inheritance as the "diuisions of the kingdoms" yet the folio version has Gloucester saying "diuision of the Kingdome" (qtd. in Marcus 148). Not only do we have our first allusion to the Union Project by the fourth line, the allusion becomes more apparent

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<sup>16</sup> While this speech was presented after Shakespeare's *King Lear* was written, I believe that it typifies the manner in which James ruled his kingdom. For further readings that will show James's belief that he was father of his country read *Basilikon Doron* written by James in 1599 and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: Or the Reciprocal and Mutual Duty Betwixt A Free King and his Natural Subjects* written in 1609.

be the capitalization and singular version of kingdom printed in the folio version.<sup>17</sup> While there are more significant differences between the two versions, this one shows the clear intent of Shakespeare wanting the play to be seen in political light. Kingdoms would first allude to James who was not only king of England, but James VI of Scotland. Second, the audience would understand that the division of the kingdoms was imperative to the rest of the play. Indeed the theme of the multiple kingdoms divided becomes the political under layer of the entirety of the play that will be imperative to the play's ending.

The manner in which the Lear is willing to divide his kingdom directly relates to the actual division of James's kingdoms. According to literary scholar John W. Draper the division was actually based on Britain's geography, the land that Goneril and Regan received would have been divided between Scotland and England thus setting the play in the current political debate of the division on James's kingdoms. Draper alludes to the geography of England as his defense, stating: "Since the island of Great Britain is long and rather narrow north and south, the lines of demarcation must have cut across the east and west... Thus in the final division, the two realms of Goneril and Regan, must have roughly corresponded to England and to Scotland" (181). This almost exact geographical division only highlights Gloucester's speech further when he discusses the division of the kingdoms.

After the establishment of the divisions of Lear's kingdom(s) and his interpretation of an absolute ruler it is easy to see how easily the Jacobean audience could have seen the connection

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<sup>17</sup> In Lead S. Marcus's essay "Retrospective: *King Lear* on St. Stephen's Night, 1606," he states that there is overwhelming evidence that the Pied Bull quarto version of the play, published in 1608. Marcus reasons: "The title page claims fidelity to that performance and sets forth its special institutional and liturgical context: *King Lear* was played at court Before King James I; it was played on the night of the Feast of St. Stephens" (Marcus 148). Since there is overwhelming evidence from Marcus's essay, as well as other scholars, that James would have seen the quarto version I will solely be referring to the quarto version throughout my article, unless otherwise indicated.

to James by the end of the first scene. The rest of *King Lear* shows how Lear's misinterpretation of his role as king destroys him and almost his kingdom. As for the division of the kingdoms, scholars tend to have two opposing positions, either the divisions represent how James's kingdoms need to be united as one since it is the division of the kingdoms that leads Lear to destruction thus the Union Project must pass through parliament<sup>18</sup>. Or, the division can be seen as once Britain is separated it can never be reunited thus Shakespeare was opposing the Union Project<sup>19</sup>. I will be taking the position that Shakespeare was advocating the Union Project despite his other issues he may have had with James's rule.

Before James became king of England, he was already King James VI of Scotland. James did not want the burden of ruling two countries separately so right away he started advocating for the union of the two countries, what he entitled the Union Project. Even James's first speech to parliament, March 19, 1603, he addresses the need to unionize the two countries. James argues:

And first, if we were to look not higher than to the natural and Physical reasons, we may easily be persuaded of the great benefits that by that Union do redound to the whole to the whole island: for if twenty thousand men be a strong army, is not the double hereof, forty thousand, a double the stronger army. (James qtd. in Woodford 69)

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Bates, among other scholars, agree that Shakespeare was promoting the Union Project in *King Lear*.

<sup>19</sup> Historians such as Marcus and John W. Draper, believe that the kingdoms staying divided is Shakespeare's political message that once a kingdom is divided, like Britain, it should not be reunited. It is also important to note that the audience on St. Stephen's Feast may not have seen such a clear divide between discernment or advocating for the Union Project, instead Shakespeare was merely encapsulating the important events of the time.

Four years later James continued to plead with parliament for the passing of the union project. In his first James even addresses how England was once seven kingdoms itself but then unionize to create a great country thus England and Scotland together would create an even greater country.

It would seem that Shakespeare is addressing the claims James made to parliament. In act two, scene four, Regan tells Lear that he must give away half of his knights if he wants to live with Goneril. Lear responds that he would rather live with Cordelia than lose fifty of his men. Regan responds to her father's protest: "How in one house/ Should many people under two commands/ Hold amity? 'Tis hard almost impossible" (II.ii.236-238). Regan, of course, is saying that it is impossible that both Goneril and Lear both have an army and rule in one house; yet, the line could also be interpreted that it is impossible to have two commands. Of course, the second interpretation would be advocating for the Union Project.

Perhaps the greatest divide between the two camps of whether Shakespeare was pro or anti Union Project is the ambiguity of the ending. As previously mentioned, Shakespeare greatly deviates from the original harmonious ending. Not only does the play end with both Lear and Cordelia dying but also uncertainty of who will rule the kingdoms. Albany as the next heir should rule but instead he says the power should go to Kent and Edgar. Kent declines the offer and Edgar avoids Albany's request. Instead Edgar says that now is not the time to attend to government affairs, but to express one's grief. This ending could be read that once the lands are divided they shall never reunite. Yet it can also be argues that the division of the kingdoms led to the complete destruction of Lear's family. Also, it would seem that despite Edgar not answering Albany, he probably will take the reign thus the kingdoms will once again be reunited. Draper, asserts that since Shakespeare needed James to keep the theaters open, he would have supported the king's plan for a more unified power. Draper concludes that this power would diminish the power of the Puritans, who wanted the theaters shut down based on morality.

Not only is the Union Project a fundamental part of the play thus cementing the idea that James is in fact the character of Lear, but the Gunpowder plot is continually referenced throughout the play. At the St. Stephen's performance no one in the audience would be able to forget the events of November fifth. However, Shakespeare wanted to emphasize how the Gunpowder plot was still influencing the state of England. One reference to the plot is during Gloucester and Edmund's interaction when Gloucester receives the forger letter. Gloucester, stupefied by his eldest sons betrayal, looks to nature for answers and exclaims: "These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us" (I.ii.96-97). The references to the eclipses not only dates the play but prove political significance. Nina Taunton and Valerie Hart, Shakespearian scholars, argue:

The linking of the forged letter and to the late eclipses was deliberate, and since there had been an unusual pairing of eclipses in 1605, of the moon of 17 September and on 2 October, this would have given the play an immediate and curious shift of focus from pagan Britain to contemporary London. But there is an even closer and more curious parallel between the events of the play and the singular events immediately preceding the discovery of the Gunpowder Treason.

(705)

Indeed Shakespeare wanted the audience to focus on the events in the fall of 1605. The scene is also important because the letter itself could represent the Montagale letter that was intercepted by Robert Cecil that described the plans of the Gunpowder plot. To have this interesting parallel early in the play is also significant because it would have made the audience focus on the play not only in a political light towards James, which is established in the first scene, but focus on James's most significant failure as a king thus far. The establishment of James, the Union Project and the Gunpowder plot would have heighten the audience's awareness of the current political awareness for the remainder of the play. It is also important to note that not only is the



Gunpowder plot reference early in the play but the impending trials are alluded to in the middle with Lear's mock trials in act three, scene six.

Shakespeare had a different loyalty to James than he had with Elizabeth. In Shakespeare's early years as a playwright, he was still establishing himself, therefore he needed to initially show reference to the power that decided if he would be allowed to perform<sup>20</sup>. Shakespeare under the Stuart reign not only expresses his own political opinion but the monarchy as well. Let us not forget that the sole patron of the King's Men was James I. Leeds Barroll asserts that Shakespeare's dramas should more be read as a dialogue between the playwright and James (25). The idea of dialogue would explain the criticism as well as advocacy that is rampant throughout *King Lear*. The St. Stephen's Feast performance should be seen as part of the ongoing conversation between the two men. James should be seen as the principle audience member and as for the rest of the audience they can be seen as those privy to a conversation that represented the changing state of England as well as how James and parliament can learn from the mistakes of Lear. This interpretation, of course, is not to oversimplify the play, instead this Jacobean interpretation of the St. Stephen's Feast performance is intended to add depth for a contemporary reader or audience member of *King Lear*.

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<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare later would not have as much trepidation to express in political opinion, as shown in *Richard II*.

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## CHAPTER III

### REVISED PAPERS (CONTINUED)

#### **Defining the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: “The Fleshly School of Poetry” Feud**

In October of 1871, Robert Buchanan’s article “The Fleshly School of Poetry” publicized one of the greatest literary feuds of the Victorian age. The article, which was originally published pseudonymously under the name Thomas Maitland in the *Contemporary Review*, described the issues of Rossetti and his Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’s work. Rossetti and the other members responded immediately to Buchanan’s accusations. Rossetti was the first to respond with his article “The Stealthy School of Criticism,” which focused on the literary merits of his poems, especially those works Buchanan had specifically attacked. Thus began the literary quarrel that some would blame for the destruction of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as well as Rossetti’s psychological issues at the end of his life. Buchanan’s second work, *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day*, was published a year after the *Contemporary Review* editorial and expanded on his complaints of Rossetti, Swinburne and the “Fleshly School.” Swinburne, who was no stranger to criticism of his works, approached Buchanan’s criticism quite differently than Rossetti. Swinburne’s work *Under the Microscope*, published eighteen years after Buchanan’s original article, addresses that issue of writers in Victorian England whose puritanical values prevented the advancement of literary works. In this paper, I will first look at Buchanan’s attack against the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, especially Rossetti and Swinburne. I will then look at the two vastly different reactions from Rossetti and Swinburne. Their reactions will demonstrate how they perceived their own works, the accomplishments of the Pre-Raphaelite

Brotherhood, as well as the development of Victorian literature. The different responses of Rossetti and Swinburne helped establish a definition of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and its development within the Victorian cannon.

In his biography of his brother, Dante, William Michael Rossetti writes that the feud between Buchanan and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood started before the “Fleshly School of Poetry” publication. William Michael actually blamed himself for the feud, since he believed he ignited the controversy when he responded to Buchanan’s criticism of Swinburne’s *Poems and Ballads* in 1866. Swinburne and William Michael did not value Buchanan as a literary critic even before Buchanan started criticizing the Pre-Raphaelites. Both men even had criticized Buchanan’s publication of Keats’s poetry. William Michael in a letter to Swinburne wrote: “I confess a particular abhorrence of Buchanan, and satisfaction that his Caledonian faeces are not to bedaub the corpse of Keats” (qtd in Storey 1229). Indeed the men of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood already had contempt for Buchanan’s view of literature even before “The Fleshly School of Poetry” controversy. According to George G. Storey: “Whatever personal difference there were between Buchanan and the Pre-Raphaelites before the summer of 1866, it is certain that there were irreconcilable differences in their artistic conventions” (1229).

In “The Fleshly School of Poetry,” Buchanan’s first complaint is that the “fleshy poets” pretend to be more important than they actually are. Buchanan compares the poets to actors playing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in “Hamlet,” who having such inflated egos that they believe their parts are just important as Hamlet. Buchanan writes: “In their own place, the gentlemen are interesting and useful;” however, he believes they should not pretend that they are part of the same literary caliber as Shakespeare or even Tennyson (334). In fact, Buchanan considers this group of poets just one of the many “sub-Tennyson schools;” and their success merits on their own self-promotion and reviews by lesser critics. Buchanan primarily focuses on three of the Pre-Raphaelite brothers: Swinburne, Morris and Rossetti. Buchanan continues his

analogy comparing Swinburne and Morris to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and calling Rossetti. Referring to Rossetti as the character Oseric, who is merely a courtier in the play, is perhaps Buchanan's harshest analogy. Indeed, Buchanan seems to detest Rossetti the most out of all the poets.

In his expanded critique *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day*, Buchanan looks at the argument that Swinburne is continually critiqued. He states that Swinburne's crude works are no more offensive than Rossetti's poems. Buchanan is not advocating for Swinburne's works; instead, he believes that Rossetti's deserve equally harsh criticism. He writes: "Strange to say, moreover, no one accused Mr. Rossetti of naughtiness. What had been heinous in Mr. Swinburne's was majestic exquisiteness in Mr. Rossetti" (Phenomena 337-9). Storey, commenting on the charges of indecency that Buchanan brings against Rossetti, writes: "Buchanan alleged that Rossetti had deliberately disguised his animalistic sensations as operations of soul, and that he was therefore guilty of the most offensive kind of insecurity" (1231). Buchanan's main concern with Rossetti, as well as most of the Pre-Raphaelites, is that he is not honest with the kind of literature he is producing.

Buchanan's issue with the two writers lies in the supposed maturity of Rossetti over Swinburne. He describes Swinburne as a little boy trying to get people's attention whereas he states Rossetti is an older and more established poet; therefore, he should not be depending on shock tactics to gain literary attention (338). Buchanan originally composed his article as a critique against Rossetti's work *Poems*—published a year prior and which had tremendous commercial success—that he believed received unnecessary praise. Buchanan, also does not like Rossetti since he views him as leader of the "fleshly" school. He writes:

I have chosen rather to confine my attention to the gentleman [Rossetti] who is formally recognized as the head of the school, who avows his poems to be perfectly "mature," and who has taken many years of reflection before appealing to public judgment. (Phenomena 31)

Unlike the other poets, especially Swinburne, Buchanan believed that Rossetti did not have the capability to change his style. He writes that Rossetti's work is not the naïve expression of a young poet trying to understand himself in the literary world, but a poet who had reached his full potential and still fell flat. Buchanan not only attacked Rossetti's offensiveness in his poems but also his talent.

Whereas Buchanan finds some literary merit with Swinburne and Morris, he sees no merit in Rossetti:

Mr. Morris is often pure, fresh, and wholesome as his own great model; Mr. Swinburne startles us more than once by some fine flash of insight; but the mind of Rossetti is like a glassy mere broke only by the dive of some water-bird or the hum of winged insects...Judged relatively to his poetic associates, Mr. Rossetti must be pronounced inferior either. (Phenomena 301)

Buchanan also wanted to add a different perspective to Rossetti. Buchanan later admitted that he believed Rossetti was receiving complete praise without anyone looking at the works critically (Phenomena 301).

Buchanan has two main issues with the reception of Rossetti's work. First, he believes that accompanying a poem with art (eg the double works), and second being reviewed and praised within one's own school together show the ineptitude of the writer. Buchanan puts forth that Rossetti depends on the artwork for the reader to actually understand the content of the poem. Thus Buchanan concludes that even Rossetti must be painfully aware of his lack of talent. Buchanan writes: "The truth is that literature and more particularly poetry, is in a very bad way when one art gets hold of another, and imposes upon its own conditions and limitations" (Phenomena 340).

Buchanan's argument against Swinburne's is based more on content than craft; therefore, Swinburne, despite being the more "fleshy poet," is not as harshly criticized. In "Fleshy School of Poetry," Buchanan labels Swinburne as a successor of Tennyson, and in *The Fleshy School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day* Buchanan describes Swinburne as emulating Baudelaire. Buchanan writes: "Encouraged in his turn, Mr. Swinburne has attempted to surpass Baudelaire, and to excel even that frightful artist in the representation of abnormal types of diseased lust and lustful disease" (Phenomena 20). While Buchanan's comparison of Swinburne to the two poets is meant as an insult, Swinburne probably found it as a compliment. Swinburne aspired to be like Tennyson, and even hoped the poet would become his mentor.

Also, Swinburne actually encouraged criticism since it increased his notoriety. Swinburne often identified himself as the antithesis of Victorian England, and would deliberately provoke Victorian society to gain greater influence. Buchanan had first taken notice of Swinburne's vulgarity when the two men were both starting out and frequenting Lord Houghton's house. John A. Cassidy writes that part of Buchanan's objection was probably based on the fact that Buchanan believed that the two men were equally talented, but Swinburne received more attention because of the content of his poetry.

Buchanan states that Swinburne is different than the other "fleshy" poets, writing: "...he is obviously capable of rising out of the fleshy stage altogether" (Phenomena 31). Buchanan insists he is able to go beyond the "fleshy school" and create better works. Buchanan writes: "In this discussion which follows I have scarcely included Mr. Swinburne, because he is obviously capable of rising out of the fleshy stage altogether" (*The Fleshy School of Poetry* 31). Buchanan does not specify why he thinks this, but one can assume that is based on Swinburne's lyrical talent that Buchanan had previously him on.



When the “Fleshly School of Poetry” was originally published in the *Contemporary Review* it was signed by Thomas Maitland. Since there was no critic named Thomas Maitland, Rossetti immediately embarked on a witch-hunt to discover who was behind the slander. Rossetti contacted his Pre-Raphaelites Brothers, most notably William Michael and Swinburne, as well as other critics to try to find the true identity of Maitland. According to Christopher D. Murray, it seems that “...for Rossetti, the most important feature of the article was its authorship” (176). Rossetti was interested in unveiling this critic so he could better understand where the criticism was coming from and who to address his response to. Most importantly, Rossetti wanted the same opportunity to personally attack Maitland/Buchanan. Rossetti was paranoid about verification of the author of “The Fleshly School of Poetry” and actively pursued the truth until the publication of his own work “The Stealth School of Criticism” in late December of 1871—a mere two months after Buchanan’s criticism.

It is important to first look at the debate of authorship regarding “The Fleshly School of Poetry,” before we can examine the rebuttal within Rossetti and Swinburne’s works. Rossetti writes in the beginning of “The Stealthy School of Criticism,” “...the irresponsible nature of anonymous criticism; and some literary journals were established in which the man who spoke for or against another was no more nameless at length than the man he spoke of” (3). Indeed, Rossetti spends the first half of his response explaining the irresponsible nature of not signing one’s name to his own criticism. Rossetti’s original draft of his pamphlet also described the irresponsibility of a journal for not publishing the critics’ names. He entitled this response: “The Contemporary Review and the Stealthy School of Criticism. A Letter to Robert Buchanan, Esq. (Alias Thomas Maitland, Esq.)” I will describe Rossetti’s original draft later in this essay, but I think it is important to note that it would seem that Rossetti’s original intention in the article was to examine the responsibility of literary journals and the criticism they publish. It is actually believed that the feud between the two men would have been vastly different if Buchanan had

only signed his name to his article. It seems as if Rossetti was so determined to understand who wrote such a criticism that he lost sight of the actual critique. Swinburne even tried to prevent the publication of Rossetti's response.

Swinburne thought that it would be more dignified if Rossetti did not publicly respond to the criticism. Swinburne also demonstrates this resistance to the feud in *Under the Microscope*. It is important to take note that Swinburne's response was not published until eighteen years after Rossetti's, despite Swinburne starting his rebuttal immediately after the *Contemporary Review* publication. This is not to say that Swinburne did not take issue with the pseudonymous signing of "The Fleshly School of Poetry." When Swinburne examines Buchanan as a critic, one of his major issues is that Buchanan did not originally submit the criticism with his actual name. Swinburne compares the obscurity of Buchanan using the name "Maitland" to a scientific researcher submitting his findings under a different name. He says that only a scientist who knew his findings were unfounded would use a fake name. Therefore, Buchanan must realize that he is giving false information. Swinburne takes a significant amount of time discrediting Buchanan on the basis that he did not submit his name with the publication. Swinburne even mocks Buchanan's response that the use of a pseudonym was his editors' choice because he was on a yacht at the time the article was published.

Buchanan joined in the discussion of the pseudonymous signing on two notable occasions. Buchanan even wrote a published letter to the *Athenaeum*—the same journal that would publish "The Stealth School of Criticism"—on December 11<sup>th</sup>, stating that he had not intention to have his criticism published without his name (Murray 181). He also points out in the article that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood should not be so concerned with authorship, since the author was readily identified after the October publication. Instead, they should focus on the literary concerns in the article.

Both Swinburne and Rossetti use Maitland and Buchanan interchangeably in their works to devalue Buchanan's creditability. Swinburne writes: "...not the good boy Robert, for instances, but the rude boy Thomas" trying to portray the use of two names as a comical Jekyll and Hyde (68). He also will purposely confuse the two names using the terms "Robert Maitland" and "Thomas Buchanan" (73). Swinburne finally takes a serious note when he attacks Buchanan's anonymity and criticism:

It mattered little that his disguise was impenetrable to every other eye; that those nearest him had no suspicion of his villainous design which must ever have been at work in his brain, even when itself unconscious of itself...masked and cloaked, under the thickest muffler of anonymous or pseudonymous counterfeit, the stealthy and cowering felon stood revealed to the naked eye of honesty—stood detected, convicted, exposed to the frank and fearless gaze of Mr. Buchanan. (74)

Rossetti also plays on the idea of Robert and Thomas being two different identities, where Thomas is openly rude and Robert is a coward.

Rossetti's original response was created as a pamphlet; however, upon the suggestion of William Michael and his editor, F.S. Ellis, that some of his accusations could be viewed as slander, he shortened it to an essay. That is not to say that he did not share his pamphlet with others, he just did not have it published. One famous account of Rossetti reading his pamphlet was on December 5<sup>th</sup> at Ford Maddox Brown's house (Stauffer 199). The abridged pamphlet became "The Stealthy School of Criticism," and was published in the *Athenaeum* in the December 1871 issue. It directly addresses the claims and fallacies in Buchanan's argument, especially his severe misquotation of Rossetti's poems (Stauffer 196). The title derives from the idea that Rossetti viewed the not so anonymous critic as "stealthy," he exclaims: "I shall abstain from all opportunities of calling you a Stealthy Person. I know, and you know, and the reader knows that such you are..." (3).

Rossetti first responded to the pseudonymous controversy with a limerick to express his distaste for Buchanan and his article. The limerick reads as follows:

As a critic, the Poet Buchanan  
Thinks Pseudo much safer than Anon  
    Into Maitland he's shrunk,  
    Yet the smell of the skunk  
Guides the shuddering nose to Buchanan. (qtd. in Cooper 69)

Rossetti also wrote a letter that his lawyer advised him was too risky to publish. Ellis commented on the original letter, stating: "It was a very angry letter and in opinion of Rossetti's best friends was not worthy of publication—a lawyer who was consulted gave it as his opinion was that actionable" (qtd in Stauffer 3). However, Rossetti went against the advice and directly address Buchanan throughout his article, stating: "As you read this, you feel the clutch; and I assure you I am going to 'run you in'" (2).

William Michael stated that the "Stealthy School of Criticism" was Rossetti's chance to respond to the libel of Buchanan. He writes:

To me *The Stealthy School of Criticism* appears a very sound and telling piece of self-vindication. It rectifies some positive mis-statements contained in Mr. Buchanan's article, and sets the whole question in a more correct light than the latter had succeeded in casting upon it, or perhaps had been minded to supply. (299)

Indeed, it appears that Rossetti's prerogative was to set the record straight, regarding Buchanan's charge; however, due to the hastily nature in which the response was written it reads more like an attempt to prove that Buchanan is a poor transcriber. Rossetti does a good job proving that even with those poems Buchanan transcribes correctly, he picks stanzas out of context to distort their meaning. Rossetti writes:

A sonnet entitled 'Nuptial Sleep,' is quoted and abused at page 338 of the Reviews, and is there dwelt upon as a 'whole poem' describing 'merely animal sensations.' It is no more a whole poem in reality than is any single stanza of any poem throughout the book. (12)

It is important to note that despite Rossetti's objections to Buchanan's criticism of "Nuptial Sleep," Rossetti did remove the poem from the "1881 edition of *The House of Life*" (RossettiArchive). In "The Stealthy School of Poetry," he continues to demonstrate how Buchanan is able to taint his works by not printing poems in their entirety or giving them proper context.

Rossetti claims in the beginning of his response, "To dwell on any changes against myself of poetic inferiority, is what, as I have said, I do not intend on doing" (6). Despite his claim, in the second half of his response he focuses on the Buchanan's accusations against him. Rossetti tells Buchanan that he knows he has spoken untruths against him and that it is his mission to unveil these untruths. One issue that Rossetti states deserves particular attention is Buchanan's labeling of his poetry as "fleshly." Rossetti again brings up the fact that Buchanan de-contextualizes his work to make it appear filthier. First, Rossetti states that those that actually know him, know how absurd this charge is thus establishing Buchanan as an outsider to the literary world. Rossetti continues:

It would be humiliating, need one come to serious detail, to have to refute such an accusation as that of 'binding oneself by solemn league and covenant to extol fleshliness as the distinct and supreme end of poetic art;' and one cannot but feel that here every one will think it allowable merely to pass with a smile by the foolish fellow who has brought a charge thus famed against a reasonable man. (16)

Of course, in this charge Rossetti views himself as the "reasonable man" being accused by the fool. Secondly, Rossetti continues looks at the themes in his poetry and concludes that he does not write about any more despicable themes than Shakespeare. It is interesting that Buchanan, Rossetti and Swinburne choose to use Shakespeare as an anchor in their articles in three vastly different ways—analogy, comparison, and an impossible aspiration, respectively.

In Buchanan's attack against Swinburne, he advocates for a change in the content of Swinburne's poetry. He states Swinburne's need to use vulgarity in his poetry is only a shock-tactic to gain the attention of the Victorian literary circle. Of course, Swinburne was no stranger to criticism. Therefore Swinburne did not respond to Buchanan's critique on a personal basis but as an examination of the state of Victorian literature.

Swinburne establishes his response as if it is a scientific examination. He explains that in this society people only seem to respond to scientific findings and that a man learned in humanities seems to have no significance. Swinburne begins his response: "I have determined to devote at least a spare hour to the science of comparative etymology; and propose here to set down in a few loose notes the modest outcome of my morning's researches" (3). Indeed, Swinburne writes *Under the Microscope* as if it is research findings; thus, he takes an analytical approach of the necessity vulgar literature and how it affects the larger organism of Victorian literature. One has to wonder if Swinburne's idea to present his response as scientific findings is a jest at Buchanan's statement: "The true European poetry is the history of European progress, from the narrow microscopic pedantry of medieval culture to the large telescopic sweep of modern thought and science" (8). Swinburne, who enjoyed parodying other works, could have originally intended *Under the Microscope* as a parody of Buchanan's *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day*.

Indeed, Swinburne seems to follow the same methodology of Buchanan's expanded complaint: both writers look at the progress of literature; whereas Rossetti was only able to respond to the article printed in the *Contemporary Review*. Nevertheless, in *Under the Microscope*, Swinburne seems to have three objectives: (1) to establish the need for vulgarity in literature, (2) to set the perimeters of responses to criticism, and (3) to discredit Buchanan as a critic.

In Buchanan's longer complaint, he looks at the way "sensualism" has corrupted literature. In response Swinburne establishes the need for vulgarity in literature; thus, he becomes a critic of Victorian literature. Swinburne's primary example of the need for vulgarity is demonstrated in his critique of Tennyson's retelling of the Arthurian legend. His issue with Tennyson's version of the Arthurian legend is that he tries to make the characters noble and honest. Swinburne believes that by taking out the vulgarity he has ruined the essence of the story and confused his reader. Swinburne states: "Wishing to make his central figure noble and perfect symbol of an ideal man, he has removed not merely the excuse but the explanation of the fatal and tragic loves of Launcelot and Guenevere [sic]" (35). Swinburne states that Arthur without vulgarity ruins the premise of the story and destroys any character development. He writes, "Adultery must be tragic and exceptional to afford stuff for art to work upon" (37)

Swinburne continues his response by giving sound advice on how one should handle criticism like Buchanan's. This advice probably stems from the fact that Swinburne was often at the center of criticism in Victorian literature, but he was able to use the criticism to his advantage. Swinburne advises other writers:

And once aware that his actual merit or demerit is no such mighty matter in the world's eye, and the success or failure of his own life's work in any line of thought or action is probably not of any incalculable importance to his own age or the next, the man who has learnt not to care overmuch about his real rank and relation to other workmen as greater or less than they, will hardly trouble himself overmuch about the opinions held or expressed as to that rank or relation. (19-20)

Swinburne continues to tell the writer that he cannot depend on the critic to label his works as good or bad.

Swinburne does, however, agree that a critic could ruin a poet's career, stating: "It is long since Mr. Carlyle expressed his opinion that if any poet or other literary creature could really be 'killed off by one critique' or many, the sooner he was so dispatched the better; a sentiment in which I for one humbly but heartily concur" (5). Yet, Swinburne asserts that the writer can

determine the strength of that critique and the influence it has on the writer's own works. Later in the essay, Swinburne refers to the issue that one can join in the criticism of his work through parody. According to Swinburne, not only will this help the writer better understand his own works, it will prevent writers from attacking each other. Swinburne writes:

It is really to be regretted that the new fashion of self-criticism should never have been set till now. How much petty trouble, how many paltry wrangles and provocation, what endless warfare of the cranes and pigmies might have been prevented—and by how simple a remedy. (64)

One has to wonder if the concept of using parody to retort to the critics was inspired by Rossetti's original pamphlet, which Rossetti had personally sent a copy to Swinburne. Rossetti wrote in a letter to Hake that he intended to be far more satirical in his response, he writes: "You will remember that the first form in which I had put my reply was one of pure banter and satire, having for its central part only a serious reference to the critics mis-statements" (qtd. in Stauffer 203). While we do not know if Swinburne was responding to Rossetti's satirical intention in the pamphlet; we do know that Swinburne greatly objected to the manner in which Rossetti responded to Buchanan, especially how Rossetti attacked Buchanan's works without real knowledge of the material.

In *Under the Microscope*, Swinburne states that Rossetti's quick response only shows Rossetti's insecurities with his own works. While Swinburne critiques Rossetti's response to Buchanan, he does defend Rossetti's poetry. Buchanan had described Rossetti's poetry as feminine, thus Swinburne mocks the critic by describing him as a "robust and masculine genius" to highlight Buchanan's insipid remarks (82).

Swinburne clearly is more concerned with the issues of Victorian literature than the criticism against him, since he does not mention Buchanan's specific criticism until the end of *Under the Microscope*. When he finally looks at the criticism of Buchanan, he primarily



addresses the accusations against the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as a whole. Swinburne even agrees with some of the issues that Buchanan brings up in his article. Swinburne understands Buchanan's idea that the brothers constantly praising and commenting on each others work only showed their insecurities. Swinburne writes:

Thomas Maitland in his character of the loyal detective, has also done the estate of letters some service by exposing the shameless reciprocity of systematic applause kept up on all hands by the 'mutual admiration society.' Especial attention should be given to the candid and clear-sighted remarks of the critic on the 'puffing' reviews of his accomplices by the senior member of the gang, and of the third party to this plot by both his colleagues in corruption and conspiracy. (76)

In the second part of this statement it seems that Swinburne is applauding Buchanan for not blindly admiring Rossetti. According to Murray, Swinburne and Buchanan shared similar thoughts about the works of Rossetti. Murray writes: "In it [Buchanan] refers several times to Swinburne's review, ironically echoing Swinburne's description of Rossetti's thought being 'too sound and pure to be otherwise dark than as a deep...'" (176). But Swinburne, despite his agreement with some of the criticism of Buchanan, is sure to put Buchanan in his place as both a mediocre poet and critic.

Swinburne shows that Buchanan himself is just as guilty of his accusations against the Pre-Raphaelites, especially self-glorification. Swinburne writes: "This pathetic tribute to the poet Buchanan was paid no less than the poetic the critic" (63). Later, Swinburne writes that while critics and scholars in the future might look at the vulgarity of the Pre-Raphaelites in disgust, at least they will be looking, which is far more than anyone will ever do for Buchanan.

The "Fleshly School" controversy allowed both Swinburne and Rossetti to take a critical look at their own works and how they fit into the Victorian society. This examination proved beneficial in identifying the type of works that the brothers created; however, it also destroyed both the brotherhood and Rossetti. According to Stauffer:

These two pieces of writing form the heart of one of the most notorious controversies in English literary history, one that ruined Buchanan's reputation, precipitated the end of Rossetti's friendship with Swinburne, and helped shatter Rossetti's mental and physical health for good. It also fixed the terms of debate over Pre-Raphaelite poetry—particularly Rossetti's—for generation to come. (196)

After the ordeal, Rossetti became a recluse for the remaining ten years of his life, cutting off most of his connections to the Pre-Raphaelites. Before the publication of the "Fleshly School of Poetry" Rossetti was already exhibiting unusual behavior; he had started questioning himself and the manner in which the literary world perceived him. He was convinced that people were conspiring to destroy him, and with "The Fleshly School of Poetry" publication his fears were realized. Timothy Hilton writes: "Robert Buchanan's attack on [Rossetti] in the famous pamphlet *the Fleshly School of Poetry* (1871) confirmed his paranoid delusions that the world was out to get him. In 1872 he attempted suicide...Thence—dependent on the deadners to which his doctors finally abandoned him" (183). William Michael echoes this sentiment that *The Fleshly School of Poetry* feud was the catalyst for the downfall of Rossetti. He earnestly believed that the literary world wanted to destroy his creditability, and the publishers, Strahan and Company, provoked Buchanan to write the article pseudonymously for the *Contemporary Review* (Stauffer 202).

Buchanan retracted most of his criticisms of Rossetti by the poet's death in 1872, even admitting in his work *God and the Man; Academy* published in July of 1882: "Mr. Rossetti, I freely admit now, never was a fleshly poet at all" (qtd. in W. Rossetti 300). Buchanan even wrote a poem to honor Rossetti upon hearing about the poet's death. William Michael remarked that Buchanan's apology was sincere and would have been better received by Rossetti had he not been ill—mentally and physically. William Michael writes: "...I willingly acknowledge that, when at last he did retract, he retracted straightforwardly, in a spirit to which my brother might perhaps have openly responded, had he then been less near his grave" (300). However, Buchanan never apologized to Swinburne. In the preface to *Under the Microscope*, the editor writes: "in after

years an attempt at reparation and conciliation with Rossetti was made by Buchanan, but it is not on record that an apology was ever tendered the author of *Under the Microscope*" (x). His lack of apology either stemmed from the fact that Rossetti was establishing a crusade against the critic; or, from the fact many critics and writers blamed him for causing Rossetti's untimely death. Even contemporary critics still blame Buchannan, for example: Cassidy writes: "Today almost everything [Buchanan] wrote has been forgotten and his sole claim to fame is the negative one of the man who attacked Dante Gabriel Rossetti and brought his premature death" (65). Nevertheless, Buchanan writes in his retraction: "Well, my protest was received in a way which turned irritation into wrath, wrath into violence" (qtd. in biography 301). Buchanan was forced to admit that it was foolish to try to criticize such influential members of Victorian society.

William Michael concludes his discussion of the "Fleshly School of Poetry" affair by looking at the larger issues the feud brought up. He, much like Swinburne, concludes that the issue is not whether or not the Pre-Raphaelites are "fleshly" poets but what is considered acceptable Victorian literature. He writes: "The real question is not whether Rossetti, as a man or as a poet, was 'fleshly,' but whether certain subjects, and certain modes of treatment and certain forms of expression, are to be admitted into poetry as a wide domain" (303). Buchanan would be forgotten in the literary world as a poet, and instead forever live in infamy as the man who tried to take on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Swinburne would prove himself as a Victorian critic. And, tragically, Rossetti would not be able to handle the criticism, and the incident only confirmed his own insecurities. Buchanan would not be the first not the last critic to insult the Pre-Raphaelites brothers; however, his essay clearly forced Rossetti, Swinburne, and especially William Michael to define the intentions of their works, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

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## CHAPTER III

### REVISED PAPERS (CONTINUED)

#### **Recycling the Story of Roland and Pope Urban II's Speech at The Council of Clermont for Crusade Propaganda**

The *Song of Roland* re-envisioned the biography of the Frankish national hero Roland. The historical Roland served in Charlemagne's army in 778 CE and was killed by the Basques during the Franks' march through the Pyrenees. Despite Roland's unheroic defeat, he became a national hero in popular folklore, and his accomplishments became greatly exaggerated by the time of the first crusade. The characterization of Roland emulated the type of soldier needed for the crusades. He represented both Christianity and Frankish nationalism. In the *Song of Roland*, Roland is not a perfect character. While he may be a good soldier and has been greatly victorious in the past for the Frankish army, he allows his pride to get in the way of notifying Charlemagne of the Saracens' attack. Yet, Roland's character changes drastically in the song, and Roland's use of the Oliphant represents this change. Roland's demeanor goes from boastful and hostile to humble and self-sacrificing. Alan Renoir identifies this change in Roland's character as a representation of the qualities a Christian soldier should emulate when fighting Saracens. Roland's transformation parallels Pope Urban II's call for the first crusade, and thus the circulation of *Song of Roland* in the twelfth century would have further excited Christian interest in the crusades. In this paper, I will look at how the *Song of Roland* reflected the ideas of the first crusade. I will first discuss the differences between the historical accounts of Charlemagne's army at the Pyrenees versus the depiction in the *Song of Roland*. This examination of the differences between the two accounts

will then illuminate the identity creations Franko-Christians made for themselves and the Muslim enemy during the first crusade. This identity creation can also be seen in Pope Urban II's call to arms for the first crusade thus by virtue of shared characteristic it is important to look at the similarities between Urban II's speech and the *Song of Roland*. The *Song of Roland* and Pope Urban II's *Call to the Crusade* emulates the Franko-Christian fervor for the first crusade as well as its justification.

The *Song of Roland* depicts a Muslim attack at the Pyrenees; however, historically Charlemagne's army was actually fighting alongside one Muslim faction against another in 778. The Franks had been fighting in Spain since 732 when Charlemagne's grandfather, Charles Martel, invaded the northwest corner of Spain in hopes of creating a larger Frankish nation. In 778 Suleiman, "Arab governor of Barcelona," and Charlemagne made an alliance allowing Charlemagne to invade Northern Spain. Charlemagne hoped to "establish a buffer against the Saracen threat from south of the Pyrenees, and to make converts to Christianity;" Suleiman needed help in defeating another Muslim faction in Spain (Analytical 1). The alliance between the two leaders did not last long. When Charlemagne was alerted of a Saxon uprising in the north then he moved his men to Saragossa, and simultaneously captured Suleiman as his hostage. As Charlemagne was headed back to the Pyrenees, the rear of his army was attacked by the Basques. One of the noble soldiers in the rear was "Roland, Lord of the Breton Marches" (Davis 541).

The *Song of Roland* was not the only retelling of the events at the Pyrenees. After the Franks' disastrous defeat many authors tried to retell the story for religious and political purposes; however, these stories failed since they try to cover up the grievous losses and defeat of the battle. Later after the death of Charlemagne, *The Royal Frankish Annals* attempted to retell the story but glossed over the losses of the battle. (Oxford xiii). Other versions tried to make the battle an event to show the relationship between Charlemagne and his son, Louis. These stories would also prove to be unsuccessful too, since Louis was only three when Charlemagne's army was in the

Pyrenees. This posits the question: *Why would Song of Roland prove to be successful when so many of the accounts failed?* Gerard J. Brault thinks the success of this account is due to the *Song of Roland* embracing the defeat. He writes: “The earliest account of Charlemagne’s Spanish campaign in 778—undertaken for religious as well as political reasons, the operation proved to be largely unsuccessful—passes over in silence the incident that inspired the *Song of Roland*” (Oxford xiii). Yet, it will never completely be known what happened to Charlemagne’s army because history has become so entwined with legend. R.W. Southern writes: “We shall never know what it was that turned the obscure disaster which befell the rearguard of Charlemagne’s army on 15 August 778, when Roland Count of Brittany was killed, into one of the most memorable incidents in Christian epic” (241). Charlemagne was both loved and feared during his reign; and thus after his death there were numerous stories about him in which often portrayed as the biblical David. Charlemagne’s favorite soldiers also became part of the popular folklore, two such soldiers were Oliver and Roland. Brault writes: “By the beginning of the eleventh century, two of these heroes, Roland and Oliver, the one historical, the other fictitious, were famed for their exploits, and possibly companionship, and nobleman took to naming male siblings after them” (Oxford xv). The best way to read this song is as a combination of the history of the Carolingian age and the values of the medieval period, to create a lesson and call to arms for soldiers.

The origins of the original *Song of Roland* are unknown; however, *chanson de geste* typically falls under two categories: (1) they were created by a group of soldiers in battle almost as a war cry, or (2) by an individual author to inspire others (Southern 243-5). What is known about the origins of the story is that Roland, while being a historical figure in Charlemagne’s army, was a stock character. Stories of a brave warrior who learns what it truly means to be a soldier at the end of his life were vastly popular; however, the details, like the Oliphant and the traitorous stepfather, are unique to this version. This version of the *chanson de geste* is believed to

have been originally transcribed by Tuoldus. All that is known for certain is that the song ends with: “Here ends the story Tuoldus completes” (stanza 241, Owen). Tuoldus was living in France in 1100, around the same time that the *Song of Roland* was transcribed (Analytical 25). The amount of Tuoldus’ own input into the story is debatable; however, we do know that the song was already part of oral tradition before his transcription. In fact, William the Conqueror’s men chanted a story of Roland before they entered into battle at the Battle of Hastings (Southern 242).

The *Song of Roland* has two main objectives: to establish the characteristics of a noble Franko-Christian soldier and to establish the Muslims as a threat to Christianity. The *Song of Roland* can be divided into four main events; the first two focus on the development of the Christian soldiers and the latter two create the Saracens as villains. Those four main divisions are “(1) the betrayal of Ganelon; (2) the death of Roland; (3) the punishment of the Saracens; (4) the punishment of Ganelon” (Oxford xxvii). I will first look at how the unique portrayal of the Muslims at the Pyrenees creates an enemy as well as a Franko-Christian identity.

In *The Royal Frankish Annals*, the enemies at the Pyrenees are called “Wascones.” Brault states that we do not know if we should interpret the term as Basques, or Gascones (Oxford xiv). The *Song of Roland* was not the first time that the enemies at the Pyrenees deviated from the historical account; however, it is believed that the *Song of Roland* is the first time that Muslims are described as the enemy.

In the *Song of Roland* it was of more importance to establish the Muslims as enemies than have a complete historical account. Therefore, it is important to look at why the Christians of the twelfth century felt the need to rewrite history and make the Muslims the enemies to be defeated. Brewster E. Fritz points out: “This apparently ‘naïve’ indifferenciation among Muslim, Jew and pagan may stem from a intentional erasure of difference between the exterior Muslim



enemy and the interior Jewish enemy” (813). The Christian did not care that the Muslims were not actually pagans because they had already created an “other” identity for the Muslims. This identity creation had them worshiping multiple gods and idols. I will discuss later in my paper the misconceptions of Muslims by the Franks. When the *Song of Roland* was transcribed both Jews and Muslims were living in France, therefore the Franks established themselves as a Christian nation by creating the Jews and Muslims as the enemy. I will briefly discuss the portrayal of the “Jewish threat” later in my paper. The Christians were fearful of the Muslims in a different way than the Jews. In the blood libel stories Christians portrayed the Jews as blood thirsty and tricky, but in the *Song of Roland* the Muslims are portrayed as fierce warriors. However, these warriors are polytheists and heathens that must be defeated. In the *Song of Roland* “pagan,” “heathen,” and “Saracen” are all used interchangeably. Of course, the message is clear despite the interchangeable language: “Pagans are wrong and Christians are right!” as Roland exclaims in stanza seventy-nine when Oliver informs him that they are being attacked by the Saracens. Later, Roland uses an even more disparaging term when describing the Saracens, he exclaims: “We’re in the right, and these swine in the wrong” (stanza 93, Davis).

In the text the Saracens are a more powerful army than the Christians thus giving the Christians far more praise for defeating such a fierce competitor. The Saracens are said to have had greater physical strength than the Christians. Oliver tells Roland: “These pagans have vast strength,/ And our Frenchman beside them seem so few” (stanza 133, Owen). Portraying the Saracens as militaristically stronger opponents allowed the Christians to say that God was on their side, and that he wanted the Christians to defeat the Muslims. Thus the Saracens served as the distorted mirror image of the Christians. As Brault points out, even some of the Saracen characters serve as mirror images to the Christian characters, such as Baligant serving as a mirror image to Charlemagne. The mirroring of the men is best depicted in their call to arms when the Saracens and Franks are about to engage in a second battle, and later in the battle when the two

men are forced to fight on foot. In their call to arms speeches, both men make promises to their soldiers if they succeed in battle. Baligant states: "I'll give to you noble and lovely wives,/ And I will give you fiefs, domains and lands;" Charlemagne gives similar sentiments to his men, stating: "For this I grant I owe you a reward/ Paid with my person, my lands and my wealth" (stanza 246, Owen). The leaders' men equally respond with feverish excitement to their speeches. According to Schibanoff: "The creation of such pressure through the falsification of Islam as a Christian heresy appears to have taken on new urgency in the period of the crusades" (70). Indeed, in the *Song of Roland* the Saracens are seen as a distorted image of Christianity. The Saracens have similar virtues and even pray to their gods in the same manner the Christians pray to their God; however, praying to the wrong God makes them Christian heretics.

While the Saracens were portrayed as being equal to—or better than—the Christians as far as physical strength and military strategy, they still have the appearance of monsters. In "The Wonders of the East," the unknown author describes different monstrous races he has encountered while traveling. One group of monster he describes are from Ethiopia; he writes: "There is another race of people there of black colour to look at, who are called Ethiopians" (Orchard 4). In the *Song of Roland*, Tuoldus describes the Ethiopians in the same manner, he writes: "Roland saw the abhorred race, Than blackest ink more black in face, Who have nothing white but the teeth alone" (stanza 164, O'Hagan). Later, when Tuoldus describes the different Saracen nations preparing for the last battle, it is reminiscent of the monsters Mandeville would later describe in "The Travels of Sir John Mandeville." When Tuoldus describes the Saracens from Misnes, he says their spines have "bristles, just like any pig" as well as having large heads (stanza 237, Owen). The Saracens from Val Fuit are simply describes as "ugly Canaanites" (stanza 106, Owen). The Saracens may have similar features to the monsters in "The Travels of Sir John Mandeville" and "The Wonders of the East;" however, the Saracens pose a bigger threat.

These supposed monsters are not on the outer edge of the earth, and their militia is stronger than the Christians.

The misconceptions of the Muslim faith in the *Song of Roland* are similar to the other texts of the period, especially the portrayal of Muslims as polytheist. According to the text, the Saracens worshiped a trinity that included Tervagant, Mohammad, and Apollo. In the first stanza, we are introduced to the Saracen King, Marsile, with the religious description: “[he] who does not love God,/ who serves Mahumet and prays to Apollin” (Davis). The Turolodus’s decision to portray the Muslims as damned heathens exemplifies the Christians need to vilify the Muslims to justify the crusades.

Both the Christians and the Muslims lose significant amount of men; however, only the Muslim loses signify an abandonment of their gods. In fact, Roland praises his Christian God as he lies dying:

Loyal Father, you have never failed us,  
who resurrected Saint Lazarus from the dead,  
and saved your servant Daniel from the lions:  
now save the soul of me from every peril/  
for the sins I committed while I still lived. (stanza 176, Davis)

The stanza ends with Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel and an angel leading Roland’s soul to paradise. Roland does not feel abandoned, because he will now be joining God in heaven. This stanza could be seen as propaganda for Christianity as well as the crusades. The Christian propaganda states that God will never abandon a crusader. Also, this crusade propaganda states that even if you die in battle you will become a martyr and go to heaven. The proceeding stanza confirms this testament: “Roland is dead, his soul with God in Heaven” (stanza 177, Owen). The Christians do not see death as abandonment by God but the opportunity to join him in heaven; however, the Saracens feel abandoned by their gods when they are being defeated. Throughout the text,

Saracens ask for the help of Muhammad and Apollo while fighting the Franks yet the Saracens prayers are never answered. According to Johnson, “The inability of Muhammad to save his people is finally demonstrated when his statue in Saragossa falls into a ditch and is demolished by dogs and swine, a tradition found first in Hildebert of Tours” (336). The loss of the Saracens’ faith is best exemplified in the character of Bramimonde.

In the text, Christian women are almost completely absent. Roland’s fiancée, Alda, is only mentioned twice. The first time in passing by her brother, Oliver; and, the second time when Charlemagne notifies her of Roland’s death to in which she responds by instantly dying. Instead the text focuses on the Saracen women, especially after the death of Roland. The Muslim woman of most importance to the story is Queen Bramimonde, Marcil’s wife. She is introduced while Marcil’s soldiers are weeping his impending death and deciding how to avenge the Christian soldiers. Bramimonde is so distraught that she pulls out her hair and cries: “Ah, Saragossa, reft and bare, Thou seest thy noble king o’erthrown! Such felony our gods have shown, Who failed in fight his aids to be...” (stanza 220, O’Hagan). While she may be cursing her own gods for not protecting her husband, she also swears to avenge his death. She continues: “Their Emperor of the hoary beard, In valor’s desperation reared, Will never fly for mortal foe. Till he be slain, how deep my woe” (stanza 220, O’Hagan). When Charlemagne arrives in Aix, he has Ganelon killed along with his men, and then converts the others, especially Bramimonde. The text reads: “So a hundred thousand to Christ are won; But Bramimonde the queen alone Shall unto France be captive brought, And in love her conversion wrought” (stanza 233, O’Hagan). In the last two stanzas, Charlemagne has her baptized, and she is renamed Julienne. It is said that she took her baptism “in faith and truth unto Christ she came” (stanza 246, O’Hagan). Despite her earlier convictions, Bramimonde never fights her marriage to Charlemagne and willingly participates in her conversion. According to Brault, “Bramimonde is a symbol of total subjugation of the enemy and the conversion of the surviving Saracens” (Analytical 314). Brault believes that the emotions

and pain that Bramimonde endures by witnessing the death of her husband and defeat of her nation are necessary modes for her conversion. Thus her conversion would show crusaders that the Muslims must witness their gods' abandonment before they will convert. Bramimonde would serve as a justification for the crusaders destroying armies and nations, because it would cause the survivors to convert.

When Charlemagne is discussing Bramimonde's impending conversion, he expresses that her conversion needs to be from the heart; yet, he has no problem converting the men of Saragossa with a sword. The text plays into the common belief that it is easier to convert women, especially through marriage, than men. The men in the *Song of Roland* convert for three different reasons: (1) deceit, (2) force, and (3) abandonment. In stanza twelve, Charlemagne tells his council that King Marsile plans on surrendering, presenting a generous peace offering, and converting to Christianity. Charlemagne states: "Then he will follow to my court at Aix,/ There to receive our own more potent faith./ Once Christian, he will hold his lands from me;/ But what his purpose is I cannot tell" (Stanza 13, Owen). While Charlemagne may be ignorant to Marsile's true intentions, we as readers already know that this conversion is not in earnest. Marsile, following Blancandrin's advice, is pretending to surrender to lead Charlemagne into a false sense of security. This will make it easier to attack the Frankish army when they are heading back to France. Marsile will also pretend to convert to Christianity another time in the text. After the first defeat of the Saracens, we learn that Marsile has summoned Baligant. Seven years earlier, when Charlemagne first arrived, Marsile had tried to summon the great leader, who "is the aged emir, full of years,/ who has outlived Virgil and Homer too" (stanza 188, Owen). Baligant originally refused to help Marsile; therefore, this time Marsile states that he feels so distraught over the loss he and his men endured he might convert. Marsile's trickery works and Baligant joins him in battle. In the *Song of Roland*, both the Franks and the Saragossas have a feudal government meaning that their kings are divine right monarchs. Charlemagne is loyal to his God thus he

receives protection; however, Marsile is not afraid to defy his gods to manipulate others thus his gods abandon him.

When Baligant fights with Charlemagne, both men are willing to withdraw from the fight if they join the others respective religion. Baligant wants Charlemagne to repent and become his vassal; Charlemagne wants Baligant to “receive the faith that God reveals to us,/ The Christian faith, and I’ll love you at once” (stanza 260, Owen). Since neither man is willing to concede, they engage in battle. Baligant strikes Charlemagne, splitting open his head. But God does not want Charlemagne to be “vanquished or slain,” so he sends Gabriel to once again protect Charlemagne. Charlemagne strikes Baligant with “the sword of France,” which splits opens Baligant’s head and instantly kills him (stanza 262, Owen). The Saracens, witnessing the defeat of Baligant, flee. The message to the crusaders is if a Muslim will not convert then he must either be killed or forced into conversion. Stanza two hundred and sixty-six, describes Charlemagne and his armies going through the towns searching for idols to destroy and Muslims to convert by force; those Muslims who refuse to convert he kills. The text reads: “And lead the pagans to the baptisteries./ If there is any still opposed to Charles,/ He has him hanged or burnt or put to death” (Owen). Riley-Smith points out that the first crusade intended to be a war of conversion, thus those who refused to convert were indeed killed (110).

As Bramimonde represents the Muslims, Ganelon can be viewed as a representation of the Jews. More specifically, Ganelon represents Judas betraying Jesus. Stanza sixty-eight reads: “Ganelon the criminal has betrayed him;/ for gifts for it from the pagan king,/ gold and silver, cloths of silk, gold brocade,/ mules and horses and camels and lions.” Ganelon betraying Roland for gifts, including silver, conjures up the image of Judas betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Brault also sees a parallel between Ganelon and Judas, he illuminates: “the *olive haute* under which Genelon begins his conversation with Blancandrin on their way to Saragossa may serve to link Ganelon to the Jewish nation, to the reason of Judas in the Garden of Olives, and to

the despair of Judas, who according to tradition, hanged himself in an olive grove” (qtd. in Fitz 812). This allusion of Ganelon as Judas conspiring with a Muslim convinced the Christian soldiers that the Jews and the Muslims were conspiring together against the Christian faith. During the crusades, the Christian soldiers often killed Jews on their way to Muslim battlegrounds. Riley-Smith notes that the Crusaders atrocities against the Jews should not be ignored. He writes: “In what has been called ‘the first holocaust’, most of these armies had begun their marches by persecuting Jews” (*Lay People* 50). While the focus of the crusades tends to be on the battles between the Christians and the Muslims, it is important to acknowledge that the European-Christians attacked anyone they considered either a heretic, or “other”.

In the third part of the text, “the punishment of the Saracens,” Charlemagne is significantly outnumbered by the Saracens; however, the angel Gabriel is sent by God to protect him in battle. Turolus writes: “At morning – tide when day – dawn broke, The Emperor from his slumber woke. His holy guardian, Gabriel, With hand uplifted sained him well” (stanza 208, O’Hagan). Not only does the text identify Saracens as the “wrong” religion, but also Christians as the only people that God will protect. The stanza parallels the historical event of the crusaders at the Battle of Ascalon, who realize God’s supposed favor when the weather seemed to change to help them win the battle. Riley-Smith in *The Ideas of the Crusaders* writes: “The astonishment of the crusaders translated itself into a realization of the power of God’s favor which helped to fuse the elements proposed by Pope Urban II and taken up by the knights who had responded to his call into the idea of the crusade” (99). Indeed, the Christian belief in God’s favor, which Urban proliferates in his call, manifested itself in *Song of Roland* as well.

In the text, there are several religious relics that demonstrate that God is protecting the Crusaders against the Muslim soldiers. The most important relic to examine is Roland’s sword, Durendal. The sword has so much importance to Roland that when Oliver tells him that he must notify Charlemagne of the Saracen attack, Roland responds that he has faith that Durendal will

protect him. More importantly, Durendal becomes religiously significant when Roland is dying. Roland addresses the sword, stating: “For a long while a good vassal held you:/ there’ll never be the like in Frances holy land” (stanza 171, Davis). Roland continues to describe how he first received the sword from Charlemagne. Charlemagne was ordered by one of God’s angels to give the great sword to “a captain count” (stanza 173, Davis). Since receiving the sword, Roland has won countless battles for Charlemagne. When Roland is about to die, he sees a Saracen trying to steal Durendal. Not wanting his sacred sword to be used by a Muslim, he musters enough strength to kill the Saracen. Roland then tries to destroy Durendal, believing it is better for no one to have the sword than a Saracen.

According to Eugene Vance, objects became holy when they were used to save others, he writes: “...relics are holy things and divinely instituted signs belonging to salvation history...” (77). Therefore for Durendal to fully be considered a sacred relic it must have had religious significance before being used in battle. Tuoldus provides a description of the religious significance of the creations of the sword. He has Roland describe the creation:

Ah, Durendal, holy and fair you are!  
Relics in plenty fill your gilded hilt:  
Saint Peter’s tooth, some of Saint Basil’s blood,  
Hairs from the head of my lord Saint Denis,  
Part of a garment blessed Mary wore. (stanza 178, Owen)

There are also relics, for instances the cross, that already have a religious connotation preceding the text. The Franks believe that it is the cross that Archbishop Turpin carries with him that makes him a courageous warrior. The Franks respond to his military success by stating: “Such deeds beseem the brave. Well the archbishop his cross can save” (stanza 141, Davis). While we do not know if this particular cross has any other religious significance, like Durendal, it does conjure up



the image of Adhemer of Le Puy bringing the “True Cross” into the Battle of Antioch (Riley-Smith 92). In the same manner, stanza two hundred and thirty-five states that the Saracens bring idols of Apollo into battle. Baligant also has his own version of Durendal, named Precieuse, and his men shout out “Precieuse” as they enter into battle (stanza 237, Owen). In order to further this discussion, we must look at the medieval difference of definition between sacred relic and idol. Vance continues his definition: “. . . icons are mere artifacts of the hand of man, and are not holy” (77). Michael Camille also addresses the issue in *The Gothic Idol*, Camille states the difference is who is carrying the object—Muslim or Christian (131-4).

It is also important to note that the only religious figure in the *Song of Roland* is also a soldier. Archbishop Turpin is both a member of the clergy and a soldier for Charlemagne’s army. According to Davis, Turpin was an actual historical figure, but had no part in the Pyrenees battle. Riley-Smith states that it was not uncommon for religious clerics to be “active recruiting officers,” and “religious houses” to serve as recruiting offices (31). Brault has similar sentiments to Smith, stating: “The role of Archbishop Turpin as vigorous, warlike prelate poses no particular problem, for examples of such militancy on the part of contemporary clergymen come readily to mind” (Analytical 104). When Turpin is fighting the Saracens, he exhibits the idea that one is a good Christian when he is a good soldier. Stanza one hundred and twenty-one reads:

Archbishop Turpin rides about the field:  
Never has such a cleric sung a mass  
Why did so many deeds of Gallantry  
To the pagan he said: ‘God woes on you!  
You’ve slain a man for whom grieves my heart.’  
Forward he launches his fine battle-steed  
And strikes him square on his Toledo shield  
To hurl him lifeless down on the green grass. (Owen)

Turpin does not exhibit Christian mercy, as a modern reader would expect him to; instead, he demonstrates the medieval ideas of the Church and the crusades.

When Pope Urban II delivered his call to arms in 1095 it seemed like he was addressing another era, that of Charlemagne. Urban conjured up images of chivalry and knighthood that were associated with the late king. Owen describes this imagery: “In 1095 Pope Urban II, invoking the name and example of Charlemagne, called for an expedition against the infidels in the east; and it was established as an article of faith that all who died in the struggle would have their sins absolved and be received in paradise” (21). In the Robert the Monk’s account, Urban II directly refers to Charlemagne’s battle against the pagans for the holy land, and how the crusaders must act like Charlemagne’s soldiers. Urban II states: “Let the deeds of your ancestors move you and incite your minds to manly achievements; the glory and greatness of king Charles the great, and his son Louis, and of your other kings, who have destroyed the kingdoms of the pagans” (Halsall 4). The *Song of Roland* parallels the ideals of Pope Urban II’s speech, especially the ideas of kinship and nationalism. It is not known if the transcription of the *Song of Roland* precedes or post dates Urban II’s speech,<sup>21</sup> however, what truly matters is that both texts reflect the sentiments of Christians in the twelfth century, who were eager to embark on a crusade. Brault states, “Crusading zeal is apparent throughout the work, but it is hard to decide whether to ascribe this to the reconquest of Spain, especially the campaign involving the French knights in the second half of the eleventh century, or to the world-shaking developments that followed Pope Urban II’s call to arms in 1095” (Oxford xxiii). I will now look at similarities between Pope

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that there is an account of a descendant, in which Charlemagne recounts the story of Roland and Oliver in 1100, thus creating the *Song of Roland* after Urban II’s speech (Riley-Smith 112). I will be continuing this transcription with the more accepted idea that Turolodus transcribed the *Song of Roland* sometime in the eleventh century.

Urban II's call to the crusades and the *Song of Roland*, especially how both describe the qualities a Christian soldier should have in battle.

In the Fulcher of Chartres's account, Urban II states: "All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested" (Hallsall 3). In the *Song of Roland*, Archbishop Turpin has a similar speech as the men are preparing for battle, he states: "...Fight for the succor of Christendom. The battle approaches - ye know it well, For ye see the rank of the infidel. Cry mea culpa, and lowly kneel; I will assoil you, your souls to heal. In death ye are holy martyrs crowned" (stanza 92, O'Hagan). Both speeches established the crusaders as pilgrims of the faith whose sins would be redeemed if they fought, and especially if they died in battle. Riley-Smith states that in the crusade there was a division of martyrs into three classes, the most important of which being martyrs "who were killed in battle" (115). He elaborates his definition of this last type of martyr:

To appreciate how startling it is to find these martyrs one should remember that martyrdom, involving the voluntary acceptance of death for the sake of the faith and reflecting the death of Christ...It is the martyr's gift to own life and is so great an act of merit that it justifies him at once in God's sight. (115)

We see this idea best exhibited in the manner in which Roland dies, which is discussed later in the paper.

Another parallel between Urban II's speech and the *Song of Roland* is their moral imperative that loyalty to kinship means loyalty to one's nation. In Balderic of Dol's account, Urban II states:

Your own blood brothers, your companions, your associates for you are sons of the same Christ (and the same Church) are either subjected in their inherited

homes to other masters, or are driven from them, or they come as beggars among us; or, which is far worse, they are flogged and exiled as slaves for sale in their own land. (Hallsall 6)

Urban II is demonstrating the importance of kinship through nationalism in this statement. Urban II says that a crusader's comrades should become his brothers, and if he loses the fidelity of brotherhood, he will lose his nation. In the *Song of Roland*, Roland and Oliver act as brothers, and Roland treats Charlemagne as his father. Furthermore, it is interesting to look at the loyalty—not relationship—Roland has to Ganelon, who is both his kinsman and stepfather. When Oliver speaks against Ganelon, whom he believes has committed treason, Roland silences his friend, stating: “He is my stepfather—my step father./ I won't have you speak one word against him” (stanza 80, Davis). Roland clearly does not like his stepfather, and he even volunteers Ganelon to arrange the peace treaty with the Saracens; however, Roland demonstrates that in battle you must have complete loyalty to all of your comrades. Furthermore, during Ganelon's trial, all the Franks appeal to Charlemagne stating that Ganelon's crime was only against Roland; however, Geoffrey points out that the betrayal of one's kinsman was equal to the betrayal of one's king. Geoffrey states: “By right of lineage I put this case:/ Though Roland may have cheated Ganelon,/ In your service he should have been secure;/ Betraying that is Ganelon's true crime,/ His perjury and treason against you” (stanza 277, Owen). Ganelon only wanted to betray Roland, but his betrayal resulted in the endangerment of all of Charlemagne's army. Southern writes that the qualities of kinship—part of the chivalrous code ascribed to the *Song of Roland*—would have been a familiar concept to the medieval audience as it was often preached from the pulpit. Ganelon's betraying Roland would be more villainous than the Saracens betraying Charlemagne, because Ganelon was part of the code and the Saracens were not.

The idea of loyalty to kinship to create nationalism is continued in Balderic of Dol's account. Urban II states: “It is the only warfare that is righteous for it is charity to risk your life for your brothers” (Hallsall 8). Urban II is saying that to be a true Christian soldier, one must be

willing to risk his life to protect his comrades and country. In the *Song of Roland*, Roland must learn what it means to be a soldier even if it means he must die to learn this lesson. In the text, Roland's pride is his fatal flaw. Roland does not notify Charlemagne immediately about the Saracens' ambush on the Franks. Roland exclaims to Oliver: "I will not sound on mine ivory horn: It shall never be spoken of me in scorn,/ That for heathen felons one blast I blew; I may dishonor my Lineage true" (stanza 88, O'Hagan). Roland finally sounds his Oliphant after Oliver continually chastises him for allowing his pride to get in the way of protecting his men, most of whom are dead now. Roland must blow the Oliphant as loud as possible, so Charlemagne can hear it. Tuoldus writes:

Roland has put the Oliphant in his mouth,  
he sets it well, sounds it with all his strength.  
The hills are high, and the voice ranges far,  
they heard it echo thirty great leagues away.  
King Charles heard it and all his faithful men [...]  
And now the mighty effort of Roland the Count:  
he sounds his Oliphant; his pain is great  
and from his mouth the bright blood comes leaping out,  
and the temples burst in his forehead. (stanzas 133-4, Davis)

It is at this moment that Roland truly becomes a Christian soldier by both Pope Urban II and Tuoldus' standards. Roland becomes a better fighter once he starts fighting for his men, and he continues to fight despite his injuries until Charlemagne arrives to save the Franks. In this scene, Roland is putting his own pride aside for the loyalty he has to his men.

Pope Urban II advocates the idea of nationalism through kinship, and he even directly addresses the Franks in his call. In the Robert the Monk's account, Urban II exclaims: "Oh, race of Franks, race from across the mountains, race chosen, and beloved by God as shines forth in

very many of your works sat apart from all nations by the situation of your country, as well as your Catholic faith and the honor of the holy church!” (Hallsall 3). Thus Urban II’s *Call to the Crusade*, like the *Song of Roland*, is advocating for Frankish nationalism more than advocating Christian ideals. Indeed the term “Frank” is used far more than “Christian” throughout both texts.

The portrayal of Charlemagne in the *Song of Roland* was very important in order to establish nationalism and feudalism for the Franks during the crusade. Brault states: “*The Song of Roland* was composed at a time when the connection between lineage and superior qualities was emerging and the concept of nobility was taking on a new significance” (Oxford xx). It was important to not only demonstrate Charlemagne as a fair and loyal ruler, but also as a divine monarch. God appearing in Charlemagne’s dreams and helping him in battle proved to the Christians that Kings were truly chosen by God.

In the *Song of Roland*, the Franks defeating the Saracens with the help of God created a national identity for the Franks. Before Baligant is about to enter his battle with Charlemagne, the text states: “Baligant sees his gonfalon brought down...At this the emir starts to realize/ That he is wrong and Charlemagne is right” (stanza 257, Owen). Not only does this stanza exemplify the Muslims feeling abandoned by their gods, but it establishes the Franks as synonymous with Christianity. Thus Baligant’s admission exemplifies a Franko-Christian identity.

Tuoldus’ misrepresentation of Roland’s defeat by the Muslims, instead of Basques, did not matter to the twelfth-century audience. According to Goff:

What matters is that his death, which took place in the eighth century during an ambush at the Pass of Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees, almost immediately gave rise to the epic tradition that was taken over in the eleventh century as a paradigm of martyrdom for the faith. Roland’s death, narrated in moving verse in the *Chanson*, was that of a saintly vassal of a warrior God. (80)

The Christian Church and the crusaders were looking for a hero to aspire to and a cause to fight for. Pope Urban II told the crusaders the characteristics a Franko-Christian soldier must have, and the benefits of being in God's favor. Likewise, the *Song of Roland* inspired the crusaders because each crusader believed that he could become a soldier, kinsman and pilgrim just like Roland.

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## CHAPTER III

### REVISED PAPERS (CONTINUED)

#### **Truth Found in Literature:**

#### **How the “True Beliefs” of the Shaker Religion were Illuminated with the Creation of their Religious Literature for the World’s People**

In Frederick Turner’s culturally important thesis “Significance of the Frontier in American History,” he states that as America’s dependence and rule by Europe broke, the new American peoples’ values and ideas changed. As these values evolved, new Americans further separated themselves from their European counterparts.<sup>22</sup> The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, more familiarly known as the Shakers, represent Turner’s thesis because both the American land and people affected the Shakers ideals and social structure. The Shakers, who emigrated from England to America on August 6, 1774 represented a physical, religious, and gender borderland, and all three were affected by American terrain and social values.

The Shakers, being both a religious and a gender borderland, gained prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The Shakers, who were first led by a woman, Ann Lee, represented ideas in gender equality through a bold interpretation of their Christian faith. The Shakers had originally hoped to be a secluded group in America. While they would welcome new members and visitors to their communes, they did not want their way of life to be altered. Yet, the Shakers were no different than any other American borderland that wanted separation from the world, such as the Puritans. However, it is important to note that external influences greatly

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<sup>22</sup> Frederick J. Turner, “Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *Writings on American History* ed. American Historical Association (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1894).

altered the practices of their religion and ideas in gender equality—the elements that constitute this borderland.

The American Revolution greatly shaped the Shakers as they were forced to defend and define their religion to those who believed they had royalist sentiments. Also, as the founding members were dying, the second generation of Shakers felt they had to further record and define their religion to justify their practices. The second woman leader, Lucy Wright, represented a social change that started to align the Shakers with American Christian norms.<sup>23</sup> Wright emphasized a more evangelical as well as organized Christian denomination. The male Shakers did not respect Wright as a leader like they had with Lee. Part of this differences in reception was Wright did not have the divine attributes that had been ascribed to Lee. The change in acceptance of a woman as leader demonstrated the amount of influence “the world’s people” had on the Shakers in less than a century since their arrival in America. Each time the Shakers defined their religion for the outside society they were in turn influenced by that society.<sup>24</sup> Also, within their written treatises of their religion it became apparent that the Shakers had far more similarities to the mainstream Christian denomination than anyone realized. It was the literature that justified and established the Shaker’s practices and beliefs but also caused their demise. It became apparent in this literature that their actions did not correspond with their beliefs. Also the literature greatly changed the role of Lee in the community, even after her death.

The Shaker recording the religious doctrine, practices and stories of the founders in the nineteenth century demonstrate a decisive break from the original beliefs of the founders. Literature was an interesting aspect to Shaker religion because they only believed in a

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<sup>23</sup> Wright was the fourth American leader, overall.

<sup>24</sup> World Person as is defined as anyone that is not a Shaker

metaphorical interpretation of the Bible. Also, they did not believe in recording their faith since it would make it stagnant. Thus the absence of literature defines the religion, as much as the introduction of it in the nineteenth century. It is important to focus on the texts commissioned by the Shakers, especially Anna White and Leila S. Taylor's *Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message*, to have a better understanding of how the Shakers viewed their own role as an American borderland.<sup>25</sup> The Shakers published *Shakerism* in 1904 when interest in the religion was waning and they faced internal strife. White and Taylor claim that their book is "an historical account, statement of belief, and spiritual experience of the church..."<sup>26</sup> The book is supposed to be a chronological account of the growth of the religion in America, as well as a look at its prominent leaders and practices. Yet, the book is very clearly a justification of the religion and their following of Lee. Also, the book becomes a declaration of faith, and shows that many Shakers were more followers of Lee than traditional Christian beliefs—especially since the Shakers expanded the Holy Trinity. Indeed, the second-generation Shakers are a manifestation of Turner's thesis, especially when he writes about the influence of the new members superseding the established ideas of the set institution. He writes:

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of

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<sup>25</sup> Anna White and Leila S. Taylor were two Shaker sisters from the Mount Lebanon, who recorded testimonies from the elders as well as leaders of the church to comprise a concise text of the religion.

<sup>26</sup> Anna White and Leila S. Taylor, *Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message* (Columbus, OH: Press of Fred J. Heer, 1904), 1.

American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people.<sup>27</sup>

The Shakers writing literature about their religion exemplifies Turner's idea that a borderland alters itself for the new members, instead of expecting the new members to change. For the Shakers, with each new wave of converts they altered their practices and beliefs to make the new members more comfortable in the commune.

It is interesting that a world's person, who was welcomed into the community, but still not a believer, wrote the text that more closely aligns with the original beliefs of the founders. Jean M. Humez, a preeminent feminist scholar, fascinated by the religion decided to embark on collecting old testimonies and letters from Shaker women in her text, *Mother's First Born Daughter's: Early Shaker Writings on Women and Religion*, to better understand how women truly fit into the Society. In Humez's book, she gives an explanation of the Shaker religion and communes by supplementing it with the testimonies and stories she heard while living amongst the Shakers. It is important to look at Humez's text, despite her being an outsider, because she more closely ascribes to the wishes of Lee and the founders by putting value on testimony to understand the Shakers, instead of trying to categorize the Shaker beliefs as White and Taylor do. Lee described her followers as "my epistles, read and known of all men." This address demonstrates her desire to have the Shakers advance their religion through testimony, as well as focus on memories as the guiding force of religious conversion and bonding.<sup>28</sup> With both texts, it is important to remember that the written testimonies of the Shakers, and especially stories about Lee, did not begin until 1809—25 years after Lee's death. These testimonies do not necessarily

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<sup>27</sup> Turner, *Significance*, 199.

<sup>28</sup> Jean M. Humez, *Mother's First-Born Daughters* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), qtd, in 1

reflect actual events, or even beliefs, of the time; instead, they are a retrospective look of the religion after it had been significantly changed by American values and land. Humez, also realizes this predicament, therefore she includes the limited correspondences Shakers had amongst each other in her book as well. Of course, this task of finding correspondences was difficult and limited since Lee was illiterate, and Father Meachum was barely literate; thus, the correspondences are primary between Wright and her elders.<sup>29</sup> The correspondences in the text, especially the ones between Lucy Wright and other elders, provide a more accurate look at the Shaker's beliefs; since, they reflect the current internal strife the Shakers were having and where they wanted the religion to be headed.

When the Shakers immigrated to America, the colonies were on the brink of war with England. As a result of the numerous conversions, the Shakers were suspected of being royalist sympathizers, and official action was taken against the Shakers to investigate their involvement with the British.<sup>30 31</sup> Also, the Shakers pacifism was not well received and further supplemented the idea that the Shakers might be royalists. According to Stephen J. Stein: "The arrival of Ann Lee and the small group of Shakers could hardly have been more untimely. Their pacifism was bound to be offensive to a populace increasingly disposed to conflict with the mother country."<sup>32</sup> The Shakers had been very outspoken about their religious beliefs in England, often holding

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<sup>29</sup> Father Joseph Meachum was the third leader of the Shaker church, and recommended Wright should become leader after his death.

<sup>30</sup> Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> The Shakers also were also accused of being traitors during the Civil War and the War of 1812. During the war of 1812 it was even considered stripping the Shakers of their citizen rights. White and Taylor also look at the political troubles during the different wars in their book.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 10.

demonstrations; yet, in America they had attempted to cloister themselves away from American influence. The religious persecution in America caused the Shakers to once again proselytize and defend their religion.

White and Taylor describe how the outside world forced the Shakers out of seclusion, which in turn strengthened the Shakers's religious testament. They write:

When a work of God begins in any part of the world, the adherents of the old established religion always lead to persecution. While the Shakers had quietly practiced their faith in the wilderness, they had been unheeded. Now they had become the center of attraction, were unhesitating in their rebukes of sin and their faith was gaining ground, the spirit of evil awoke...But prison walls could not hush their voices nor quench the light of truth.

Within the prison and through its bar they proclaimed the Gospel.<sup>33 34</sup>

The world's people imprisoning the Shakers both helped and hindered their progress. It helped the Shakers gain attention as well as strengthen their religious conviction. However, the interaction with the world's people would significantly the Shakers religious convictions. Of course, this apparent change would not happen until after the death of Lee.

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<sup>33</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 44-5.

<sup>34</sup> Throughout White and Taylor's text as well as Humez's testimonies there is a conviction by the Shakers that the religion will be around forever. While any religious group believes that their religion will always prosper, it is more interesting considering the Shakers belief in celibacy. The Shakers believed that celibacy was one of the primary reasons that would attract converts to Shakerism. Yet, we see retrospectively through the Shakers evolving in America it was not the idea of absence from sex that attracted the converts but the belief in the divinity of Lee and the façade of equality, as a supposed result of no sex, through the worshiping of Lee that truly shaped the prosperity of the Shakers.

Lee towards the end of her life was seen as divine, especially considering the amount of prophecies she had for the Shaker faith. According to Foster:

Ann's followers loved her so deeply that they came to believe that in her the spirit of god had been incarnated in female form, just as they believed that in Jesus the spirit of God had been incarnated in male form.<sup>35</sup>

Humez furthers Foster's idea by stating that the Shakers's view of Lee as divine only further positioned the governmental structure of the Shakers. She writes:

One of the most interesting and problematic results of their efforts was a theory of a full dual-gender godhead. Ann Lee's nature as a female counterpart to the savior was mirrored at a higher level...<sup>36</sup>

Lee did worry about how the Shakers would develop after she died, since it seemed that some followers believed more in her than Shakerism. Lee had every right to be worried since their belief that Lee was divine grew as they manifested into a full American borderland.

Also, the Shakers altered their beliefs and practices to match the absence in gender equality that was distinct after Lee's death. Yet, instead of the Shakers making sure women still had a dominate role in the society, Lee became an even larger part of the Shaker religion. The Shakers made Lee into a divine figurehead; therefore, no woman leader would be able to compare to this Christ in female form that Lee became after death. In Humez's collection of "Mother Ann Lee's Doings and Saying," one Shaker, presumably Eunice Goodrich, states:

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<sup>35</sup> Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, xxi.

The manifestations of God in and through Mother were exceedingly great and marvelous. That she was an eminent witness of God, no one could doubt that ever heard and felt the authority of her testimony or experienced the heart-searching power of her spirit...<sup>37</sup>

The characterization of Lee as divine would serve several purposes for the Shakers beyond justification of faith. One of the primary purposes was to show an ideal Shaker that the others should strive to become.

Indeed, the Shakers even started to justify the fact that she was previously married by saying that it was forced upon her, and even from a young age she knew the sexual intimacy was wrong because it robbed her from her relationship with God. White and Taylor justify her sexual past by stating:

Intense desires for purity and holy living filled the heart of the child. As she grew older she was deeply impressed by the depravity of human nature and showed a strong repugnance to marriage. Pitiful were her pleas to her mother's love to protect her from impurity.<sup>38</sup>

Humez also believes that Lee had to demonstrate a specific persona to become a respected, woman leader. Humez writes:

As the charismatic leader of a millennialist movement, Lee probably relied primarily upon the emotional impact of her presence, the dramatic appeal of her message about

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<sup>37</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, 18. Humez does not provide a date of Goodrich providing this testimony; however, the event she describes took place in 1781.

<sup>38</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 14.



celibacy, and an ecstatic mode of worship to convince her followers experientially of her authority and the rightness of her leadership.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps Lee realized that the ideas of the Shaker men were changing, and to keep her prominence in the community she needed to ascribe to these new values. She became more of a divine leader. Shaker men might be able to falter on their acceptances of women as equals, but they would always see Lee as superior.<sup>40</sup>

After Lee's death, James Whittaker became leader, and then was followed by Joseph Meachum—the last first generation Shaker leader.<sup>41</sup> Meachum earnestly tried to make it possible, after the death of Lee, for women to still be potential leaders in the community. Despite him stating that he wanted women to have an equal role in the community, it is apparent—through his correspondences—that he really wanted these new women leaders to be divine like Lee. He believed this divinity would make up for the fact that they were the “weaker sex.”<sup>42</sup>

Meachum's second act was to put Lucy Wright in a leadership role to serve as the new “mother.” Meachum, as well as other Shakers, had hoped that Wright would fulfill the void that was lost with the passing of Lee. However, the perception of Lee as divine would hinder Wright's chances of being considered equal in leadership. To understand what Wright was up against in trying to fulfill the loss of Lee, one only needs to look at the manner in which White and Taylor describe Lee and her role in the Shaker faith. They write:

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<sup>39</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, 1.

<sup>40</sup> There are several historical examples of women self-promoting themselves as divine, so they could rule among men. The most notable example is Queen Elizabeth I.

<sup>41</sup> Meachum was the first American convert and Lee had prophesized his conversion.

<sup>42</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, 100.

Always has it been true that a great religious movement has started with one person. About this humble, unlettered women centered some of the most remarkable spiritual phenomena the world has seen—electric steams from Deity using her as transmitter of spiritual force.<sup>43</sup>

However, White and Taylor describe Wright's role as leader as working "side by side in ability, authority and responsibility with Man, Son of God."<sup>44</sup> The differences in these descriptions clearly demonstrate that despite the two women holding the same leadership position they were not considered equals. While Wright was often praised for her work improving the Shakers' communes, she would always be unfairly compared to the divine Lee. Humez explains the differences of Wright's leadership and persona compared to Lee. She writes:

She inevitably appropriated some of the Ann Lee legacy in her own life and teachings as the Mother of the Church. But her interpretation of spiritual motherhood was influenced by her experience within the Shaker communalisms, rather than by ecstatic religious experience or the rigors of proselytizing in the wilderness. The "sayings" literature collected by Lucy Wright's followers pictures a Wright ministry and a Shaker religion which are far less outwardly dramatic than in the days of Ann Lee.<sup>45</sup>

This passage illuminates the apparent changes in the early radicalism of the Shakers, which separated them not only from the Quakers but all mainstream Protestant sects, which had become far more conventional. This diluting of the Shakers was not a product of Wright's leadership;

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<sup>43</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 16.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

however, she would further conventionalize the Shakers by creating set sermon practices and reintroducing the gospel into the communes.

White and Taylor describing Wright as “side by side in ability, authority and responsibility with Man, Son of God,” may have created the appearance of equality within the roles of men and women; however, it actually shows a shift in the perception of women being divine.<sup>46</sup> Before, Lee was perceived as a deity, but Wright’s time, White and Taylor only man was “the son of God.”<sup>47</sup> This proves that the Shakers did not believe that women were divine, or even equals to men—just Lee. Thus, the Shakers communities no longer had a balance among the sexes. Of course, Wright was not the only women leader who experienced this imbalance; they were other Shaker women who would serve as “mothers,” and they too experienced this quiet submission to inequality.

The Shakers wanted a women leader as long as she was exactly like Lee. According to Humez, “With no access to trance or vision herself, and no direct appointment from Lee, Wright’s authority as a woman leader was more open to question than Lee’s had been...”<sup>48</sup> Beyond the validity of Lee being divine versus the need to create her as a divine being, it is important to look at the characteristics the Shakers required of their women leaders to be seen as equal to men. Humez continues in her description of Wright’s difficulties in establishing herself in the same way as Lee: “She was presented a significantly more ‘feminine’ (and genteel) model

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 109

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>48</sup> Humez, *Mothers*, xxviii.

of a woman in authority than Lee herself.”<sup>49</sup> The Shakers were willing to accept women as leaders as long as they either had male attributes, or denied their sexuality all together.<sup>50</sup>

Meachum wanted Wright to serve as Mother, only if she was able to adopt male and divine characteristics. In a letter Meachum wrote to Wright in 1796, he details his expectations for the future of the Shakers and how Wright will serve as leader. He writes:

Inasmuch therefore as both the man & the woman have Equal Rights in order & Lots & in the Lord & Governance of the Church according to their sex in this Latter Day & as thee tho’ of the weaker sex in man will Be the Elder or first born after my departure I believe the greatest measure of the Wisdom & Knowledge of God for the Protection of souls will be Given unto Corporal shall fail as mine hath done.<sup>51</sup>

Meachum’s letter to White is revealing to the “true beliefs” of the Shakers, especially after the death of Lee. First, it shows that the Shakers did not have true gender equality since they still believed that women were the “weaker sex.” Also for a woman in a leadership role to be respected as a man they believed God must ordain it. Meachum might have seen Wright as his successor but he did not see her as his equal. Wright did try to abandon her feminine attributes, and in a letter she wrote to the Miami, Ohio commune dated October 9, 1806, she writes to the members how she is channeling the sensibilities of Meachum.<sup>52</sup> She writes:

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., xxviii

<sup>50</sup> This is a common practice in many protestant religions and their expectations for their women leaders.

<sup>51</sup> Humez, *Mother’s*, 100.

<sup>52</sup> Meachum had been dead for ten years when she wrote this letter.

I have felt and experienced considerable with Father Joseph in relation to writing and making more fully known to the world the foundation of our faith. We always felt the time was not come. But now I feel satisfied the time is come, and the gift is in you and with you to accomplish this work.<sup>53</sup>

Clearly, Wright realized that she could not be divine like Lee. Wright tried to become the female equivalent of Meachum, and mask her femininity as well as individuality—two pillars the denomination was originally founded upon. Also, Wright in her letter is justifying her decisions and practices as a leader by saying that she is caring out the hopes of her male predecessor.

In the second part of Meachum's letter, he writes about his concern for the future of the Shakers. Meachum believes that these new Shakers will need more help in keeping their faith. He writes:

It hath ben & is still my hope & Expectation that the greater Number of the young will Keep their Faith & if Weak in the present travel Compared with the older They may be more useful in the next & we be Compensated For our Labours & troubles with them.<sup>54</sup>

Wright, along with the other Shaker leaders, took Meachum's advice and started to curtail the practices and direction of the Shakers to accommodate to the new converts. While originally new Shakers could only learn about their faith through word of mouth, these later converts needed access to the written Shaker gospel as well as other Shaker literature.

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<sup>53</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, 107.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

Meachum was not the only person who told Wright that the practices and beliefs of the Shakers needed to alter to meet the demands of the new converts, as well as the world. In a letter dated 1806, Elder David Darrow wrote to Wright:

Kind Parent, we have for some time past from prevailing circumstances been greatly pressed in our mind to publish our faith to the world by letter. All the particular cases of our feelings would be at this time be very tedious as well as difficult to relate, but we can say at once that in relation to other souls we could neither be satisfied without some labor concerning it...<sup>55</sup>

Wright would follow the guidance of these two men, as well other male Shaker leaders who had similar sentiments. She quickly began commissioning the development of a Shaker literature that would satisfy the needs of the new Shaker converts and the world's people.

Wright led the expedition to have publications about the Shakers, especially a collection of Lee's sayings that would be referred to as *Holy Mother Wisdom's*, to help both Shakers and the world understand the importance of Lee and the Shaker religion. Sister Paulina Bates of the Watervliet commune was assigned the task of transcribing Lee's sayings and wisdom from collected memory, as well as the spiritual guidance that was received from Lee in the afterlife.<sup>56</sup> Bates was chosen primarily because she was a woman, according to Humez:

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>56</sup> Many Shakers claimed that Lee visited/ inspired them after her death.

The logic of gender dualism compelled the Society to recruit a woman to act as spirit-inspired author of the volume designed to reveal Holy Mother's wisdom's existence and views to the outside world.<sup>57</sup>

The Shakers were trying to market their religion with Lee at the forefront, no doubt to justify why they chose to follow a woman led religion and how they had changed since her death. When Bates writing the collected book, it was a particularly turbulent period for the Shakers. The Shaker men were ascribing either male or divine characteristics to the female leaders, as well as having a far more dominate role in the decisions made for the communes. Also, at this time the initial radical practices of the Shakers, such as shaking during services, were subsided. Therefore, the literature demonstrated the odd juxtaposition because it claimed that Lee was the second coming of Christ, and yet the Shakers had similar attributes to the other Christian denominations. In fact, this duality of radicalized ideas and traditional practices would hurt the Shakers when they decided to write down their actual beliefs.

Another issue with the book, *Holy Mother Wisdom's*, is that despite Bates being commissioned to write the book, two men, Seth Young Wells and Calvin Green, significantly edited it.<sup>58</sup> Green justified the editing and rewriting of Bates's texts by claiming that Lee might have believed in the spiritualism of women to create the text but that she likewise agreed that men needed to prepare the text. He writes:

But Holy Wisdom by Inspiration said that "she should not create new faculties in those Instruments which were chosen, but all that any spirit could do was to Inspire faculties

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>58</sup> Humez, *Mothers*, 220. By "commission," I mean she was relieved of all her chores, so she could devote her time to comprising the book

that created in them—Hence tho they might be the most suitable to bring forth an original inspired message; yet the language & arrangement might be deficient; & and often may be improved to be better understood—This department is more adapted to the male sex.”<sup>59</sup>

Even Bates subscribed to Green’s gender restrictions when she says in the introduction of the book that she has never come across literature of the Shakers nor is she familiar with any of their theological writings. Thus Green and Bates demonstrate the change in gender roles after Lee’s death. Modern scholars should question the validity of some of the “prophecies” and “sayings” of Lee that Green and other male Shakers used; since they seem to help the male leaders in situations that seem to compromise the original tenets of the religion. Of course, it is important to remember that all of this happened under the leadership of Wright; further proving that she served more as a figurehead than an actual leader.

Literature about Lee also transformed. Originally the book Wright had commissioned was supposed to focus on Lee’s divine sayings and wisdom to show that she was in direct communication with God; however, she was portrayed as a Christ figure in these texts instead. The role of Lee transformed from leader to divinely-inspired leader to divine. It is easy to see this transformation retrospectively through the literature. Jon R. Stone and Foster trace the change in the perception of Lee as Christ-figure by looking at how Lee explained her connection to the Holy Spirit and what later-literature stated. Foster writes:

In her vision in Manchester in 1770, Ann Lee not only became convinced that lustful carnal intercourse was the root of all evil; but she also felt herself infused by the spirit of Christ and became convinced that she had a special calling to spread her message to the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Humez is clearly using these outside testimonies to show the change in gender roles.



world. Later Shaker theological writers argued that at this time Ann Lee had been infused by God's spirit. Ann Lee was, therefore, Christ's Second Appearing...<sup>60</sup>

The literature that Wright commissioned versus the literature that was produced in the early twentieth century is vastly different in the characterization of Lee. The latter works view Lee as the second-coming of Christ; thus, the literature parallels Christ's parables in the New Testament of the Bible.

Stories about Lee also shifted so that her actions transformed into having religious significance. One story of Lee, given by the testimonies of Nancy White and Sarah Simmons, in their joint diary dated "Sabbath, March 31<sup>st</sup>, A.M.," in 1839, matches the "fruits of spirit" lesson found in Galatians chapter 5.<sup>61</sup> Humez retells the story was part of later-Shaker popular folklore:

Mother Ann said that she planted a beautiful tree in this place while she was here in body and that the tree bore twelve kinds of fruit, viz., charity, meekness, patience, forbearance, and long suffering, etc. And on the top of the tree was a fruit called love, which was beautiful and overspread all the other branches of the tree, giving grace to every other virtue.<sup>62</sup>

The story continues, telling the Shakers that they must be like the tree Lee planted, and thus must carry all their virtues through love. The story gives Lee the power of her Divinity, in which she is the one now teaching lessons, instead of portraying the lessons of the *Bible*. Indeed, the Shakers

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<sup>60</sup> Lawrence Foster, "Had Prophecy Failed: Contrasting Perspectives of the Millerites and Shakers." Jon R. Stone ed., *Expecting Armageddon: Essential Readings in Failed Prophecy* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 162-3.

<sup>61</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, 231.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

truly believed that Lee was the embodiment of faith, especially in America. White and Taylor write:

Ann Lee was compassing the body of America, in which she was to implant a pure life-germ. Through her was to come the life divine to men and women in America, Europe, the World. For the coming of the Christ Spirit in women meant opportunity for the completed work of reunion between God and man.<sup>63</sup>

By privileging America in these sentiments, the passage demonstrates their idea of Shakerism being a truly American religion. The Shakers are breaking all ties with their beginnings in England, just like Turner says all American borderlands must do.<sup>64</sup>

Also, the Shakers started to rewrite the founding of the religion when they began portraying Lee as a Christ figure. While maintaining some historical accuracy of the religion, they now compared Lee and the other founders as Biblical characters. White and Taylor write:

Believers in the Gospel as revealed in the person of Ann Lee have loved to compare the work in England under the guidance of James and Jane Wardley to the preaching by reception of the divine power and commission at their hands to the personal touch of John at Jordan, in the human side of baptism of Jesus with the Christ spirit.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, it was the Wardleys who broke away from the Quakers when they started privileging shaking as an expression of their faith; however, the Shakers created such a significant persona for Lee that she needed to serve as the figure that established their religion. The Shakers in

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<sup>63</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> Turner, *Significance*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

creating Lee as deity would significantly alter the religion; no longer was it a traditional Christian denomination, but a new religion. The Shakers altered the Holy Trinity by presenting Lee as the second coming. The Shakers more aligned with nontrinitarianism Christianity that became prevalent in the nineteenth and twentieth century, since they saw the trinity as an expanding concept.<sup>66</sup> Also, the literature of the Shakers became holy texts because the books described the life of the Shaker's Christ.

The Shakers defense of Lee began innocently enough as the Shakers had to define Lee, who the outside world saw as crazy and not chaste. Yet, the more the Shakers defended her the greater a character Lee became. In White and Taylor's account, a contemporary reader can see the development of this manifestation when they describe the immediate need to defend Lee after her death. They write:

Years later [After Lee's Death], these converts [Those who converted because of Lee], when many were in advanced life and some were aged, related their remembrances, sometimes to refute the slanderous tales that were current in her lifetime and were retold long years after her death, in defamation of Mother Ann's purity, chastity, temperance and honesty.<sup>67</sup>

Of course, a defamation of Lee's character also reflects the world's perception of the Shaker faith. As the world was questioning the validity of all members being celibate, the Shakers had to portray Lee as person of utmost chastity.

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<sup>66</sup> Similar sects include Latter-Day Saints and Unitarian Universalism.

<sup>67</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 40.

As Wright was promoting the ideas of creating Shaker literature, the idea of re-incorporating the Bible as the major focal point of the Shakers developed. Wright had originally been hesitant to reintroduce the Bible to the Shakers. Yet in 1806, only ten years after she became leader, she wrote to Darrow justifying the need to reincorporate the gospel in order to help the Shakers in their faith. She writes:

It was not my understanding to have thee labor for a gift to speak to the world when thee left the Church, but to labor to protect those that have that gift and them that might believe. It does not belong to the first elder to labor for a gift to the world but on occasion. It appears to me there is a sufficient number gone out of the Church to lay foundation for the present opening of the gospel (in the present state of things). If there should be need of more help will it not do to send them that has not had so great a privilege? I think it shall be easier for me, and it will it not also be easier for thee?<sup>68</sup>

Lee had promoted spiritualism and prayer as a means of faith practice, but Wright promoted reading the Bible as a top priority. Wright realized that Shakers were leaving because there was no text that established a set system of beliefs. White and Taylor write that Wright and her Elders believed that “the gospel was their calling and ought to be their only interest.”<sup>69</sup> This is a decisive break from the original beliefs of the founders who wanted spiritualism to come first.

Wright’s legacy in the Shaker religion was based almost entirely on her literary contribution. After her death, Green composed a brief biography that highlighted Wright’s work with the Shaker Literature. He wrote:

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<sup>68</sup> Humez, *Mother’s*, 106.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

Her industry was equal to her prudence. Her literary ability was remarkable and she was an excellent literary critic. Through her efforts, the simple style of the Gospel language became established.<sup>70</sup>

The biography focuses on the contributions that Wright provided and how she demonstrated the qualities that Shaker women must possess, but does not mention that she was a prominent leader. Unlike the biographies after Lee's death, this biography does not focus on the chastity of Wright. While it can be assumed that after Wright joined the Shakers she observed the practice, it is interesting that Green does not think chastity is the utmost important quality of the leader representing the religion.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, when highlighting Wright's contribution to literature, Green takes the opportunity to tell the Shakers how they should read the gospel. The focus on literature once again shows the difference in value amongst the early and latter Shakers, and how the religion was changing.

Even White, later in her life, noted that the Shakers were indeed changing from their original beliefs. According to Humez:

After a dramatic healing experience through the help of a Christian Science practitioner, in 1906 White came to see Christian Science as inheriting some truths of early Shaker religion that had been allowed to lapse during the years of declining membership.<sup>72</sup>

White here is unknowingly observing a trend in many denominations. The early unique beliefs of any sect are often lost on later generations thus the denomination starts to conform, all the while another new denomination proceeds in the early radicalism of the earlier sect. The Shakers were

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<sup>70</sup> White and Taylor, *Shakerism*, 151.

<sup>71</sup> Wright had converted to the Shaker religion with her husband.

<sup>72</sup> Humez, *Mother's*, xxvi

the radical Quakers, then the Christian Scientist became the radical Shakers. The Shakers not only followed the trends of a borderland that Turner maps out in his thesis, but the prevalent trend in many American protestant denominations. Indeed, the later Shakers acted like any other protestant denomination with a set form of worship, a gospel, and a male-dominated governmental structure.

The Shakers began as a utopian idea in which all individuals were allowed to have their own religious experience, and all were treated as equals following an intra-pluralism ideal. America would allow this religion to truly create its identity and expand; however, when outsiders wanted this identity to define itself, it forced the Shakers to compromise their values and practices. The literature also started to show that often the actions of the Shakers did not match their “true beliefs.” For example, though women were put in leadership positions, the Shaker men believed that they were the “weaker sex.” Thus, the women leaders simply became figureheads with the men controlling their actions. Eventually, with the loss of a distinct identity, the Shakers lost their religious fervor and became a communal experience of the past.

VITA

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Master of Arts

Thesis: PRUDENCE: USING JOHN AUBREY'S *BRIEF LIVES* FOR INITIAL  
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Name: Alexandria Brackett

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Pages in Study: 107

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Arts

Major Field: Literature

Method of Study: Through the methodologies of new historicism and close reading this essay focused for the most part on Aubrey's biographies of Thomas Hobbes and John Milton to explore the different investigative styles that Aubrey employed to compile a "life" in *Brief Lives*. Various factors in the two descriptions help inform this essay, as well as a brief look at a third life account (that of John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester) to help solidify a sense of Aubrey's ethos and methodology.

Findings and Conclusions: It would be naïve to describe Aubrey as a great biographer, just as it would be inaccurate to dismiss him as simply idiosyncratic and erratic. If his accomplishment is best described as partial, it is an incompleteness of a special kind and one to which later scholars have long been indebted. Indeed, Aubrey's methodology and research notes constitute one of the earliest examples of primary, archival-related research. His interviews remain prototypes for investigative reporters and journalists to learn from; and his contributions to the emerging discipline of life writing and biography stand on firm ground.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Edward Jones

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