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"She had a Bok to Print, and it was her own Case": Elizabeth Cellier's Malice Defeated as a Critical Contribution to 17th-Century Political Discourse and Postwar Pamphlet Culture

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“She had a Bok to Print, and it was her own Case”: Elizabeth Cellier’s *Malice Defeated*
as a Critical Contribution to 17th-Century Political Discourse and Postwar Pamphlet
Culture

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Honors English Literature Thesis
First Reader: Professor Megan Cook
Second Reader: Professor Aaron Hanlon
Colby College, May 5, 2022

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The World is Ruled and Governed by Opinion: Elizabeth Cellier's Contribution to Seventeenth-Century Political Discourse



Figure 1. *The World is Ruled and Governed by Opinion* (1642). 28.3 cm x 21.5 cm. Held by the British Museum.

One of the tenets of bibliographic theory is that form and meaning have a symbiotic relationship; they work in concert to mold the audience *perception* and cultural *reception* of any given text. Poet William Carlos Williams adapted this concept to Imagistic theory when he claimed that there are “no ideas but in things”—a subtle reminder that without concrete objects to root them in reality, literary arguments, narratives, and/or artistic

expressions are little more than formless abstractions.¹ From a bibliographic perspective, the aforementioned “concrete object” that Williams deems so pivotal is the physical *form* of a work— an element designed to guide audience interpretation via a set of culturally and temporally-dependent cues. One of the clearest visual representations of this concept housed in early modern archives is a 1641 broadside satirically entitled *The World is Ruled and Governed by Opinion*. Featuring an intaglio etching spanning nearly half the sheet’s length, *The World* personifies polemic as blindfolded Lady Opinion, perched on a tree blossoming with a diverse array of ephemera. Upon close analysis, each “Stitch’d Book” on the tree is typographically and paratextually distinct; while one pamphlet fluttering to the left of the “Ladie” contains a preliminary leaf solely devoted to its massive title, numerous other works in the image contain pages of small type crammed between the margins.² Though a few texts appear to be no longer than one folio folded down the middle, others are comprised of multiple sheets likely bound in quarto. The implicit objectives of this satirical image are twofold— the first being to showcase the

¹ William Carlos Williams, *Paterson: Book I*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (New York City, NY: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1992), 6.

² Source 1: Myles Davies, *Eikon Mikro-Biblike Sive Icon Libellorum, or, a Critical History of Pamphlets. Tracing out the Rise, Growth and Different Views of All Sorts of Small Tracts or Writings, Both Collectively and Singly, in a General and Gradual Representation of the Respective Authors, Collections and Their Several Editions, &c* (London, UK: n.p., 1715), 4.

Source 2: Henry Peacham, *The World Is Ruled and Governed by Opinion* (London, UK: n.p., 1642).

pamphlet as the heterogeneous product of cross-fertilization between several literary genres, and the second being to emphasize the codependency between Lady Opinion and her ephemeral “Fruite”.³ Without the latter element, the former loses its interpretive structure— and along with it the human agent behind the text’s production and dissemination over time. Evidently, form is indispensable to the hermeneutical process.

One seventeenth-century author undoubtedly “Ruled and Governed by Opinion” was Elizabeth Cellier— a woman whose legal defense pamphlet, *Malice Defeated*, was a product of deep ideological factionalism in post-Civil War England.⁴ Though there is no record of her birth or death, we can assume that Cellier was born in London at some point during the 1640s— the peak of a bloody national conflict over whether or not Parliament had the right to check the king’s “God-given” authority. This was a moment of severe turmoil; not only did the country’s disparate political factions disagree over the future of the monarchy, but they squabbled over the superiority of opposing religious ideologies. As it was rumored that King Charles II was a secret Catholic-apologist, the Protestant majority sought to oppress the social and legal authority of the “Papist” population. This posed an issue for Elizabeth Cellier, a professed Catholic midwife living at the center of London. By the time she was in her forties with a husband and two children, the Exclusion Crisis— Parliament’s desperate attempt to sever the line of succession between King Charles II and the Catholic Duke of York— had come to a head. Animosity in the Chamber bred hostility in the streets; exploiting the political upheaval, several fraudsters (beginning with the infamous liar, Titus Oates) fabricated a set of faux “Papal” designs to murder the King in an attempt to install his brother to the royal seat instead. According to one seventeenth-century pamphleteer, “this persecution did not only involve those that were accused of the plot, it took in also the Catholics in general; the prisons throughout the kingdom were quickly filled with them.”⁵ Cellier, unwilling to switch allegiances or betray her faith, would soon be one of these inmates.

According to a set of false documents planted in her kitchen pantry, the midwife planned to “double-cross” her adversaries by concocting a *Presbyterian* plot to murder the King.⁶ Thrust into Newgate Prison on the executable charge of high treason, the “Romantick Handicraft Woman” was forced to spend almost two thirds of a year in solitary confinement whilst she was interrogated by a panel of misogynistic chancellors.⁷ Though the

³ Peacham, *The World is Ruled and Governed by Opinion*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Carol L. Winkelmann, “The Discourse of Conflict and Resistance: Elizabeth Cellier and the Seventeenth-Century Pamphlet Wars” (dissertation, University of Michigan, 1992), pp. 1-252, 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Thomas Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer to a Certain Scandalous Lying Pamphlet Entituled, Malice Defeated, or, The Deliverance of Elizabeth Cellier Together with Some Particular Remarks Made from Her Own Words, an Acknowledgment of Matter of Fact, and a Short Compendium of the Principal Transactions of Her Life and Conversation* (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 3.

majority of Catholic women in her position would not have possessed the statutory knowledge (or sheer guile) it took to properly defend themselves, Cellier boasted a legal insight strong enough to outmaneuver her seasoned opponents. In fact, historians often deem the midwife a transgressor of almost all normative expectations; rather than depending upon her spouse for financial and social security, *she* was the figure responsible for advising her husband's legal decisions, managing his estate, and keeping pace with constantly-shifting political debate. When Cellier was brought to the King's Bench for cross-examination, she shocked the court with her unique ability to reject impermissible lines of questioning, discredit the objectionable testimony of opposing witnesses, and defend her inalienable rights. Before the state could establish a causal link between eye-witness testimony and the crime itself, Cellier had already dismantled the credibility of her adversaries. To the great surprise (and distress) of the Protestant faction, she won her case.

Despite evading formal punishment, the midwife was far from satisfied; though she had narrowly escaped execution, several members of her Catholic network had been hanged or tortured with cruel indifference by the Protestant goalers. Cellier's unexpected courtroom victory may have undermined the individual reputations of those that framed her, but it posed an essentially-negligible threat to the invidious institutions that put her there in the first place. As an impressionable daughter of England's ephemeral print-market— an industry that paradoxically flourished during the throes of the Civil War— the midwife understood that to enkindle true political change, she would need to publicize her trial and arraignment from the sympathetic perspective of the subordinate subject. *Malice Defeated*, a multiform exposé on the corruption of England's judicial and penal systems, was the textual byproduct of this revelatory process. Though Cellier would be charged with libel almost immediately following its production— an indictment ending with three humiliating sessions on the pillory and an extortionate fine of one-thousand pounds— the midwife would long be remembered for being “one of the most spirited and outspoken women of the Restoration.”⁸

Though there are a multitude of literary analysts (chief among them Mihoko Suzuki and Lisa McClain) who have written extensively about *Malice Defeated*, current scholarship tends to view the pamphlet through the constrictive lens of Cellier's sexual and religious inferiority. Rather than analyzing the work as a critical contribution to (1) the greater political discourse or (2) seventeenth-century print culture, texts like Suzuki's *Subordinate Subjects* separate the pamphlet from its peers on the market (with the minor exception of John Lilburne's *Malice Detected*) and dissect its contents within the figurative vacuum of subversive feminist literature.

⁸ Winkelmann, “The Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 1.

McClain's text is similar, placing Cellier's work within a cohort of Catholic ephemera without examining how it compared (either linguistically or bibliographically) to the Presbyterian polemic being released alongside it. There are other analytic works, such as Francis E. Dolan's *The Whores of Babylon* and Carol L. Winkelmann's *The Discourse of Conflict and Resistance*, that frame Cellier as a crucial participant of the wider literary conversation, but fail to thoroughly examine how her chosen vessel– the animadversive pamphlet– governed the way in which her words were interpreted. This analysis shall fill the gap by achieving two interrelated objectives: (1) portraying Cellier as an author whose contributions to the greater discourse were just as (if not more) rhetorically-rich, politically-informed, and persuasive than her male peers', and (2) proving that as a pamphleteer, Cellier was actively drawing from the paratextual elements of the texts being produced around her– using them to develop the medium of the pamphlet altogether. While Chapter 1 of this thesis shall provide a thorough overview of the historical context surrounding the midwife's imprisonment (and subsequent pamphlet-publication), Chapters 2 and 3 will view *Malice Defeated* first as a persuasive piece of polemic literature and next as a material object. By the end of this analysis, readers should be able to walk away with the ability to think and speak about the midwife as more than a persecuted Catholic or oppressed female subject. Though her political opponents often sexualized her as a "Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked," "Whore of Babylon,"¹⁰ and "Lady Errant,"¹¹ Elizabeth Cellier was a prolific polemicist, legal intellect, and early modern pamphleteer with as much rhetorical and bibliographic weight as her male counterparts. It is time she be recognized as such.

CHAPTER ONE

Elizabeth Cellier Contextualized

Often monikered the "Popish Midwife"¹² by her adversaries, Cellier was a woman who, despite "being born and bred up under Protestant Parents," openly professed herself of another Religion: Catholicism.¹³ While this religious choice may not strike the contemporary reader as particularly revolutionary or defiant, one must recall that Cellier was living in London, England during the 1680s– the direct aftermath of the English Civil War (1642-1651). Though this introductory chapter shall not tarry long on the war itself (for the topic could comprise

⁹ *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked, Being the Mistery of the Meal-Tub the Second Time Unravell'd, or, A Brief Answer to the Popish-Midwives Scandalous Narrative, Intituled Mallice Defeated, &c* (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 1.

¹⁰ Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 43.

¹¹ *Modesty Triumphant over Impudence, or, Some Notes upon a Late Romance Published by Elizabeth Cellier, Midwife and Lady Errant Together with the Depositions of Richard Adams of Lincolns-Inne, Esq., against Her, before His Majesty and the Right Honourable the Lords of His Majesties Privy Council*. (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 1.

¹² *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 1.

¹³ Elizabeth Cellier, *Malice Defeated, or, A Brief Relation of the Accusation and Deliverance of Elizabeth Cellier Wherein Her Proceedings Both before and during Her Confinement Are Particularly Related and the Mystery of the Meal-Tub Fully Discovered: Together with an Abstract of Her Arraignment and Tryal, Written by Her Self, for the Satisfaction of All Lovers of Undisguised Truth*. (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 1.

an entire volume on its own), it must be noted that the very origin of the Civil War was steeped in a layer of religious tension. While King Charles I believed that he ruled with the Divine Right of Kings—chosen by the will of God to perform his royal duties—Parliament held the more secular notion that it would be reckless to assign him uncheckable authority. The Legislature’s struggle for power was further compounded by a host of religious conflicts, namely those between the oppugnant Protestant and Catholic Churches. King Charles I’s marriage to the Roman Catholic Henrietta Maria of France was viewed unfavorably—a sentiment potentized by the fact that Queen Mary I (a Catholic) had only recently led a full campaign of strategic persecution against the Protestants. Following “Bloody Mary’s” despotic reign, Protestant subjects of the English Crown witnessed a slew of violent assaults against their religious sect: (1) the Spanish Armada, Philip II’s attempt to invade England, (2) the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, a Catholic attempt to detonate James I in the Houses of Parliament, and (3) the Thirty-Years War, “ultimately a religious conflict which saw Roman Catholic nations trying to [erase] Protestantism in Europe.”¹⁴ By the time Elizabeth Cellier entered the historical record in 1680, Catholics were not only viewed with mistrust and suspicion; they were actively persecuted by the now-Protestant majority, frequently made to pledge Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance to the monarch (ie: the Supreme Governor of the Church of England). Upon refusing the Oaths, thousands of Catholics were caged and tortured at Newgate Prison—coined an engine of “Horror and Dread.”¹⁵

One key cause of this retribution was the mass belief that King Charles II held secret sympathies for the Catholics, supposedly evidenced by the fact that his brother, the Duke of York, had converted. As one frustrated pamphleteer stated in 1697, “*You and your Party had so much Countenance from your Brother, who was engaged with you in the whole Popish Conspiracy.*”¹⁶ This kind of vexation clearly extended to Parliamentary officials. Maintaining that they held the authority to check the Crown, English legislators acted swiftly to pass a series of Exclusion Bills that would prevent the Duke (the heir presumptive) from assuming the English, Scottish, and Irish thrones. Though none of these bills were codified into law, their conception fractured the British political sphere in two. While those favoring a system of hereditary power (the Tories) adamantly opposed the exclusion, those advocating for a system of popular power (the Whigs) supported it with equal gusto. Merely eight years after Cellier would make her first contribution to seventeenth-century political discourse, tensions would reach

¹⁴ Elizabeth Hill-Scott, “Causes of the English Civil Wars,” Britpolitics (Britology, September 30, 2021), <https://www.britpolitics.co.uk/causes-of-the-civil-war/>.

¹⁵ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 3.

¹⁶ *Eikōn Brotoloyoy, or, The Picture of Titus Oates, D.D. Drawn to the Life, in a Letter to Himself*. (London, UK: n.p., 1697), 9.

a breaking point; November of 1688 was the commencement of the Glorious Revolution— an internal coup that forced the abdication of King James II and the immediate installment of his daughter, Mary II. Roger L'Estrange, both a “Tory propagandist and the Licenser of the Press” at the time, “captured the dynamics of the situation succinctly... ‘The managing of a Religion, [was], in this Case, a Political Point.’”¹⁷ In other words, being a “Papist”, regardless of one’s stance in the Exclusion Controversy, was a one-way ticket to political persecution. Few were spared; the fallout of this colossal governmental overturn even had massive implications on England’s *working class* Catholic population (of which Cellier was a member). Spawning from the nation’s deep diplomatic fractures and theological cleavages was a series of persecution campaigns, often taking the form of faux “Plots” concocted by vengeful Protestants in an effort to incriminate innocent Catholics for supposed treason. Elizabeth Cellier was tangled up in two of these: the Popish Plot and its subsidiary, the Meal-Tub Plot— the latter of which landed her in solitary confinement at Newgate and necessitated the production of her legal defense pamphlet, *Malice Defeated*.

Within her elucidatory work, “The Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” author Carol L. Winkelmann synthesizes the start of the Popish Plot with a fitting statement: “any attempt to understand Elizabeth Cellier— *Pope Joan, Joan of Arque, Amazon, Lady Errant, Snarling Midwife, She-God, Female Champion of the Cause*, as her adversaries called her... begins with Titus Oates [1649-1705].”¹⁸ Likened to a “Plague” by Adam Elliot (his peer at the University of Cambridge), and monikered a “national tragedy” by modern historian Jane Lane, Oates is often attributed with “writing...the darkest chapter in the history of English justice.”¹⁹ Possessing a chameleonic ability to “lie, wantonly [and] recklessly,” to defy his moral compulsions, and to switch allegiances when profitable, Oates frequently swung back and forth across the theological and political spectrums in search of the party and/or Church that would procure him the most power.²⁰ After being expelled from the University of Cambridge for his “Canting Fanatic[ism],” losing a position at Bobbing Court in Kent for being a “perpetual Make-bate,” and forfeiting his next position at All Saints’ Rectory for spreading “Lies and False Suggestions,” Oates finally made his debut as an “accuser in the court of law”— a role that would make him a household name.²¹ Between 1675 and 1681, the virtuoso liar fabricated reams of evidence to frame those who he deemed ideologically-misguided, politically-threatening, or merely irksome. Lane, whilst writing a biographical account on Titus Oates, discovered that the infamous fantasist had even accused an innocent reverend of committing

¹⁷ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ Jane Lane, *Titus Oates* (London, UK: Camelot Press, 1949), 9, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 23, 25, 26, 28.

sodomy with a “tender man-childe” in a failed attempt to usurp his mastership at All Saints’ Rectory in 1675.²² Though Oates’ slanderous attacks were chiefly targeted towards local officials for the first few years of his “reign”, the magnitude and severity of his charges swiftly skyrocketed. By 1678, Oates and his companion, Dr. Israel Tonge, would enter the chambers of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey (an acclaimed Justice of the Peace) with alarming news: according to their affidavits, the Pope was in collaboration with the Catholics to erase the presence of Protestantism in Europe. The Grand Design was supposedly threefold: not only would King Charles II would be assassinated and replaced with the Catholic Duke of York, but key Protestant members of Parliament would be murdered and replaced with Jesuit alternatives. Lastly, the Scots and Irish would be coerced into joining the “Papist” rebellion. According to Oates’ own accusatory pamphlet, “the Jesuitical Party being infatuated, and raging with madness, [attempted] to hide their Villanies, as all notorious Sinners commonly do, by committing another Sin; so did they by [planning] that barbarous and inhuman Murther of Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey*...”²³ This colossal conspiracy— one that would lead to the formal execution and incarceration of *hundreds* of innocent Catholics— would eventually be labeled “The Popish Plot.” Silently implying that they hierarchized the Holy Father above His Majesty, the term “Popish” was used to frame them as ultramontanists²⁴ unwilling to acknowledge the supreme authority of the sovereign. Elizabeth Cellier’s sobriquet, the “Popish Midwife,” was therefore more derogatory than descriptive.

It certainly did not help matters when merely a few weeks after Oates’ ominous warning, Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey was found on Primrose Hill with a sword run through his chest. Within a matter of days, Sir Robert Peyton’s Green Ribbon Club— a group of lawyers, political officials, and Parliamentary representatives united under a common disapproval of King Charles II’s “Jesuit” allegiance— were handed the hard evidence they needed to prosecute the Catholics they loathed. Allegiance-shifts abounded; several Popish Plot apologists (including members of the GRC) who were originally *opposed* to the conspiracy changed their loyalties when it made political and fiscal sense for them to “[ride] out the wave of Catholic hatred.”²⁵ Those who were still on the ideological fence were swayed by the Earl of Shaftesbury’s incessant propaganda campaigns designed to market the Exclusion. It was not long before England’s Protestant population began pressing leaders to identify the scapegoats on which Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey’s death would be blamed; within less than a month, officials

²² Lane, *Titus Oates*, 27.

²³ B. W., *An Additional Discovery of Mr. Roger L'Estrange His Further Discovery of the Popish Plot Wherein Dr. Titus Oates and the Rest of the King's Evidences Are Vindicated from the Aspersions Cast upon Them in That Pamphlet: Together with Some New Observations upon the Said Discovery Not Heretofore Publisht / in a Letter to Dr. Titus Oates by B.W.* (London, UK: n.p., 1678), 19.

²⁴ Ultramontanism— a lexical derivative of the medieval Latin term *ultramontanus*— is a belief system in which the individual values the Pope over both the general diocesan authority and the secular state.

²⁵ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 11.

announced that a five-hundred pound reward would be given to anyone who could point to the murderer. This, of course, drew the active participation of the country's most notorious tricksters (ex: Thomas Dangerfield, William Bedloe, Stephen Dugdale, and Israel Tonge)—who, similar to their Parliamentary leaders—moved quickly to snatch their share of power and profit. By early November of 1678, it was Bedloe who came forth with the “evidence” that Miles Prance, a Catholic servant-in-ordinary to the Queen's consort, took part in the gruesome affair. Thrown in Newgate Prison and terrified for his life, Prance wasted no time pointing his finger towards other suspects. He notified authorities that three Catholic priests—“Thomas Godden,” “Kelly” and “Fitzgerald”—paid a group of stranglers to commit Godfrey's murder in the courtyard of Somerset House.²⁶ As shall be elucidated within the next few paragraphs, this allegation is notable for its striking resemblance to Cellier's; a scan of accusatory pamphlets and courtroom testimony from the 1680s reveals that Protestant accusers were acutely aware of Oates' “template” and amended it to fit their individual circumstances.

Though there was a clear lack of motive and forensic evidence to accurately prove that the three killers (Robert Green, Henry Berry, and Lawrence Hill) had actually ended Godfrey's life, the resulting ninety-one page trial transcript of the incident brimmed over with the fictitious testimony of those hoping to be recognized for the “protection” of their King. It must be noted that during the seventeenth century, witness oaths were perfunctory at best; as argued by Dolan, “credibility was determined not so much by what [people] said, or even who they were, since many of the key witnesses in these trials were ‘infamous persons,’ but by how well their testimony served dominant political interests, confirmed long-standing prejudices, and conformed to familiar conventions.”²⁷ In other words, it was acceptable to lie—to morph a solemn “judicial even[t]” into an “ac[t] of political theatre”—for the greater benefit of the party.²⁸ Among those who perjured themselves was Titus Oates, who in a deposition almost completely composed of hearsay, claimed: A “week before Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey* was missing, he came to me, and told me that several Popish Lords, some of whom are now in the *Tower*, had threatned him... My Lord, this is all I can say, He was in great fright and told me he went in fear of his life by the Popish party, and that he had been dog'd several days.”²⁹ The evidence presented by the state, draped with unwarranted suspense and intrigue, concluded with a dramatic final sentence: “*Mr. J Wyld: I now pronounce the Judgment which the Law hath appointed to pass upon such Malefactors; and that is this; That you go from*

²⁶ “The Popish Plot,” A Monument of Fame (Lampal Library, July 31, 2020), <https://monumentoffame.org/2020/07/31/the-popish-plot/>.

²⁷ Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 158.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁹ *The Tryals of Robert Green, Henry Berry, & Lawrence Hill for the Murder of Sr. Edmond-Bury Godfrey Kt., One of His Majesties Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex at the Kings-Bench Bar at Westminster, before the Right Honourable Sir William Scroggs ... on Monday the 10th of February 1678* (London, UK: n.p., 1679), 12.

hence to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of Execution, where you shall be severally hanged by the Neck, till you are severally dead; and the Lord have mercy upon your Souls.”³⁰ Without a fair trial or the presence of real evidence, the lives of three innocent Catholics were abruptly ended by the false accusations of Oates and his co-conspirators. As deplorable as this was, the “Reign of Terror” — as Winkelmann so aptly calls it— did *not* stop there; by the end of 1678, as many as nineteen more “Papists” were executed on false pretenses.³¹ “Reeling from the terror of the bloodbath, uncertain of the innocence of the accused, leaderless in a time of persecution, and divided amongst themselves as to a solution to their problems,” the tiny Catholic population was faced with numerous penalties— ranging from the confiscation of their weapons to the malicious burning of their homes to the destruction of their religious paraphernalia.³² With all of this in mind, it may not be shocking to the average reader that the Meal Tub Plot— a derivative of the Popish conspiracy— had room to spawn and entrap Elizabeth Cellier.

I. They “suck’d the Canvas Teats of her *Charity*”³³: Cellier as the Maternal Champion of London’s Catholic Prison Network

To truly understand how Cellier became deeply involved in the conspiracy, one must first become familiar with the “Popish Midwife’s” personal life. According to John Kenyon’s text, *The Popish Plot*, Cellier had been described by Catholic historian Father John Warner as “a woman of clear, sharp and lively intelligence but rather poor judgment, a verdict borne out by her conduct during the [Meal-Tub Controversy].”³⁴ Though he does not clarify exactly which part of Cellier’s conduct was misguided, Warner is likely referring to her insistence on providing alms to Catholic “criminals” at Newgate during the peak of the conspiracy. As a midwife to a variety of Catholic leaders— including Lady Powis and the Duchess of York— Cellier had long been integrated into an expansive religious and social network that she utilized to protect those who had been wrongly accused. Frequently drawing out of her own purse to fund her charitable ventures, Cellier spent her free time delivering victuals to men under extreme duress, paying the bail of prisoners who wrote to her, and dutifully carrying notes to and from inmates to their families³⁵. After hearing that a woman named Mary White “had been much abus’d,

³⁰ *The Tryals of Robert Green, Henry Berry, & Lawrence Hill*, 92.

³¹ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 13.

³³ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 15.

³⁴ John Phillipps Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (New York City, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1972), 16.

³⁵ As a midwife to numerous members of the Catholic aristocracy (including the Honorable Lady Powis and the Duchess of York), Cellier was economically stable, despite being a technical member of London’s working class. She would have been in possession of even more disposable income, had her husband, Peter Cellier, not been cheated out of a thousand pounds from merchants across the water. Within *Malice Defeated*, the midwife makes an effort to highlight how burdensome it was for her to shell out weekly funds for imprisoned Catholics like “Willoughby,” Prance, Corral, and White. She

and though big with Child, several ways tortur'd in the Prison, and lay only for want of her Fees," Cellier "paid them, hoping to find out the Truth by that means."³⁶ Upon being notified that another inmate, Francis Corral, was being "kept from *Thursday* till *Sunday* without Victuals or Drink, having his hands every Night chain'd behind him, and being all this time lock'd to a Staple in which was driven into the Floor," Cellier immediately ran to question the Turn-Key why he was being tortured.³⁷ Later, when a man going by the name Willoughby begged for her assistance—"bemoan[ing]" that he had no "Parents nor Friends" to help set him free— the midwife was swift to hand him a total of nineteen pounds, fourteen shillings and six pence to pay bail, "fetch his Coat out of Pawn," and purchase food.³⁸ As shall be discussed at length in Chapter 2, these quotations are excerpted directly from *Malice Defeated* (a first-person account of the events leading up to her trial) meaning that Cellier was given free license to foreground her own piety, altruism and non-heteronormativity. Generously-adorned with both preceptory images of Catholic torture and solacious portraits of almsgiving, the narrative codes the midwife as a mortal Madonna, a self-denying nurturer— characterizations perhaps borne of her obstetric occupation. Even her adversaries go so far as to call her "Mother Midnight" and "Our Lady"— phrases that, while derogatory, place heavy emphasis on her maternalism.³⁹

As far as Cellier knew, these acts of benevolence could not be used against her in court as long as she remained discreet. What she could not have realized was that the man who called himself "Willoughby" was *actually* renowned trickster and Oates-sympathizer, Thomas Dangerfield. To the ignorant bystander, "Willoughby" may have seemed a reformed man after being released from prison; Cellier recalls him "protesting that he never would attempt an ill thing again, but would get a Service and take any pains for an honest Livelihood."⁴⁰ Fooled by his "Roguary," Cellier took painstaking efforts to secure her new ward a permanent shelter and stable post.⁴¹ Newly dressed in "an old Frize-Coat lin'd with Blew, Blew Stockings and Breeches, and a Grey Hat tuckt up," Dangerfield was sent to work for Elizabeth's husband— a French merchant named Peter Cellier— who needed help tracking down and retrieving "some Thousands of Pounds due to him" by debtors overseas.⁴² As her deposition in *Malice Defeated* makes utterly clear, the midwife truly "consider[ed]

states: "there was a weakly Charity collected, of which I had the disposing, but was so far from the diverting any part thereof, that I still went out of Purse." Evidently, it was not choice, but rather a religious obligation that compelled Cellier to provide for members of her congregation. (Source: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 2.)

³⁶ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 4.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 4, 7.

³⁹ Source 1: Dangerfield, *Tho, Dangerfield's Answer*, 7.

Source 2: *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 3.

⁴⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 12.

⁴¹ Ibid., 8.

⁴² Ibid., 13.

[Dangerfield] could not wrong [her],” since recouping Mr. Cellier’s financial losses was the only way for him to earn a meager share of the profit.⁴³ To supplement this work, Cellier encouraged her new protege to scan the public venues he frequented and collect information on the Protestant opposition– a role that Dangerfield assumed with ease. In her pamphlet, the midwife recounts that Willoughby divulged “News of the great Designs of the Factious,” who were supposedly often “talk[ing] Treason publicly in the Coffee-houses.”⁴⁴ Curious readers may be wondering why Thomas Dangerfield– an eventual Oates supporter and Presbyterian rhetorician– would spy for the “evil” Catholic faction. The answer is rather simple: just like his predecessor, “Willoughby’s” party allegiance was always available for purchase. Each time the opposition offered more money or prestige to defect, Dangerfield would oblige. Fortunately for Cellier, the trickster spent the latter end of the 1670s firmly planted within Catholic circles, both casually reporting and officially documenting the plans he overheard. In one alarming account, he notified Cellier that the Protestant elite “had drawn Forces into the City whilst His Majesty was sick at *Windsor*, with the intention to subvert the Government; and that if His Majesty had died... they would have knock’d the Lord Mayor of th’head, with such Aldermen as would not Conform.”⁴⁵ In another message, Dangerfield outlined the supposed corruption of the Parliament, stating: “many of the *Old Rump Officers were new rigg’d*, and had Pensions paid them by the Gentlemen of the *Kings head Club*, and that Commissions were given out by the Relicts of the Rump, under the names of the Keepers of the Liberties of *England*.”⁴⁶ To Cellier’s knowledge, these claims were not only completely true, but would be the lynchpins to a case constructed against her Protestant opponents. What she failed to recognize was that Thomas Dangerfield, having received a smaller paycheck than he expected, was getting antsy; in an outburst at the Rainbow Coffee House, he had been overheard arguing that if “the Papists [refused to] give him...money, *he would go to the Presbyterians, and they would give him enough*.”⁴⁷ Though the truthfulness of this allegation would be hotly contested throughout her trial, Cellier stood her ground; according to *Malice Defeated*, Dangerfield was revving up for betrayal.

Unbeknownst to the midwife, “Willoughby” had been carefully hiding his written reports against the Protestants in a large tub of meal located in his mistress’ pantry. Many of them cemented rumors that high-level Whig officials– namely Sir William Waller and Colonel Roderick Mansell– were plotting against the Crown (an offense that if false, would make Cellier guilty of treason). At the commencement of October, Dangerfield

⁴³ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 13.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 15.

claimed that Mansell kept several more “Treasonable Papers importing the whole design of the Faction” in a house at Westminster—promising that if given permission to search the house, he could certainly unravel the entire conspiracy.⁴⁸ Cellier naively helped Dangerfield appeal to the Custom House and obtain a warrant to enter the home—oblivious to the fact that the papers in question, planted by Dangerfield underneath Colonel Mansell’s bed, were mere fabrications that would join the other incriminating documents in Cellier’s grain-store. Whether it was from sheer coincidence or a sly tip, Sir William Waller—the very man named in Dangerfield’s reports—later entered the midwife’s home in hopes of arresting her on two charges: (1) “harbour[ing] the St. *Omers* Youths” (ie: Catholics) under her roof, and (2) refusing to take the “Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance”.⁴⁹ To add insult to injury, “all that night [Waller] and his Crue kept their Rendezvous in [Cellier’s] house, tearing and pulling down the Goods, and filling his and his Footmans Pockets and Breeches with Papers of Private concern”—“unintentionally” digging up the reports skillfully planted in Cellier’s meal-tub.⁵⁰ Almost immediately, the midwife’s charges multiplied in severity. Now, she was not merely culpable for being a “dangerous Woman” who liked to keep correspondence with “Traytors”; she was guilty of high treason.⁵¹ Thomas Dangerfield, tossed into Newgate for being an accomplice, spent his time in solitary confinement perfecting his accusation for the court; according to the trickster, several of the Catholic noblemen already imprisoned in the Tower—Lords Peterborough, Gadbury, and Sir Robert Peyton—offered him a total of 2,500 pounds to murder both King Charles II and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Supposedly anxious to carry out this sinful quest on her own terms, Cellier solicited Dangerfield to assassinate the two royal officials—a request that was adamantly and piously denied by the latter. Upon Dangerfield’s refusal, Cellier (along with her companion, the Lady Powis) planned to fatally stab the King and the Earl themselves. Though the majority of this tale was fictional, a few minor details were truthful—rendering the account more difficult for judges to categorically deny.

II. “Tedious Confinement,” “Excessive Iron[ing],” and “Jaylors Extortion”⁵²: Cellier’s Cruel Usage at Newgate Prison

Whilst Dangerfield was plotting, Cellier was reeling from the “dread of being lock’d up on the top of *Newgate*, and attended on by Fellons.”⁵³ Her recurrent visits to the Prison as an almsgiver had given her a particularly grisly picture of the torture, starvation, and financial exploitation that occurred behind bars. Within

⁴⁸ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 15.

⁴⁹ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 20.

⁵⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

her narrative, for example, she discusses seeing inmates walk by “loaded with Irons,” their “Flesh worn away” by debilitating shackles.⁵⁴ Other prisoners were fitted with “Cap[s] of Maintenance”— devices “fixed to [the] head with a thing like the Rowel of a Spur being put into [the] Mouth.”⁵⁵ Long before the Meal-Tub Plot unfolded, the midwife even came to learn that the Newgate Goaler “[took] 3 s 6 d. [from prisoners] per week for Lodging when the Statute allows but 2 d. Per night or thereabouts”— essentially lining his pockets with the earnings of already-impoverished Catholics.⁵⁶ Needless to say, a mere hour after Cellier was deposited to the King’s Bench for questioning, she fell into a fit of convulsions— a spectacle so moving to the Keeper that he promised she could serve her sentence in the garret of his own house. Despite being able to avoid the Commoners’ Section of the prison, the reality of Cellier’s attic confinement was far from rosy; her claustrophobic chamber reeked with stale air, and was infested with all manner of rodents and insects. In one instance, the midwife remembered observing “Rats and Weezles” playing on the floorboards of her cell at “Barly-break... *boldly Robb[ing her] before [her] face.*”⁵⁷ To make matters infinitely worse, one of the only windows in Cellier’s room lay parallel to the cell of her nemesis: Thomas Dangerfield. Naturally, the conversations between the inmates— often taking place through their open windows— were charged with resentment; whilst Dangerfield prodded and provoked his former confidant, Cellier staunchly defended her innocence:

Dangerfield: Madam, Madam, Pray Madam speak to me, and tell me how you do.

Cellier: I am Sick, very Sick of the Bloody Barbarous Villain.

Dangerfield: Pray Madam speak low, and do not discompose your self.

Cellier: Nothing you do, can discompose me: I despise you so much, I am not Angry.

.....

Dangerfield: I am very sorry for your Confinement, but I could not possibly help what I have done.

Cellier: Bloody Villain, I am not confin’d, for *Stone Walls and Iron Bars, do not make a Prison, but a Guilty Conscience:* I am Innocent, and gaine that here, which my Enemies did not intend me for; I have now nothing to do but to serve God, *but you are Confin’d, and one of the Devils Slaves.* Ah Villain; for which of my Good deeds do you seek my Life?⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

Within this excerpt, Cellier draws a thick line between her own emotional disposition and that of her opponent. While Dangerfield is presented as a caricature of faux-contrition and passive-aggression, the midwife is portrayed as an outspoken feminist immune to the perturbation and emotional delicacy of the normative seventeenth-century woman. Warning Cellier to guise her rage with stoic composure (and at one point literally attempting to silence her), the trickster makes an earnest effort to connote *passion* with maleness— a correlation immediately rejected by his opponent. Transforming the concept of “Prison” from a physical claustrophobia to eternal conscientious unrest, Cellier places “Willoughby” in a psychological cage of his own construction— thereby flipping the gendered power-dynamic on its head. While this excerpt is, like any other first-person narrative, subject to hyperbole and self-aggrandization, even her staunchest enemies could agree that the “Popish Midwife” was an unabashed and “Resolute Champion” of female non-traditionalism.⁵⁹

Deepening Cellier’s obstinacy was a slew of unprompted visits from Sir William Waller and Dangerfield, during which she was repeatedly asked to accept a plea bargain. Whilst the latter warned her to “consider [her] own Condition, *and not ruin [her] Family*” by admitting guilt, the former swore that she would be able to “speak with [her] Husband before a Keeper twice or thrice” if she would “make Discoveries” in favor of the Prosecution.⁶⁰ One morning, “Willoughby ” was even found “waiting at his Window... throwing little Coals at [Cellier’s]” in the hopes of reasoning with her once more.⁶¹ As the midwife colorfully phrases it, “*like the Dog was returned to his Vomit*, [he asked me to blame] ... the Duke, to say the Earl of *Peterborough* gave me those Papers, and that I had received a Thousand pounds in Gold of Sir *Allen Apsley* to pay him for the Murthering the Earl of *Shaftsbury* and to raise soldiers against the King.”⁶² To this— as with all the offers she was bestowed— Cellier responded that she would rather die by the noose than belie herself. Openly naming her enemies mouthpieces of the Devil, “worst of Rogues,” and “Blood-thirty ingateful Villain[s],” the midwife repeatedly refused to proffer falsehoods to the court in exchange for her freedom.⁶³ Still, this was a small feat in comparison to her testimony at trial— a witty collection of responses that simultaneously exploited the loopholes in English statutory law, evaded incriminating admissions, and circumvented the State’s leading questions.

III. Snaring Questions and Deft Answers: The Trial of Elizabeth Cellier

After being brought to the King’s Bench for questioning, Cellier was asked whom she had written to whilst imprisoned at Newgate, and what she wrote. She admitted to communicating with members of her family

⁵⁹ *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 6.

⁶⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 20, 22, 23.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

three or four times at most— one letter sent “in a little Box, and other times in Bottoms of Thread” (ie: the compartment underneath a sewing basket).⁶⁴ After the judge questioned the midwife on her husband’s convenient disappearance from the country, Cellier matter-of-factly rebutted, “he is a man in Trouble, and I thought That the best place for him.”⁶⁵ This statement is one of many instances where Cellier presents herself as the spouse with more agency in her marriage. Though one might have expected her to be reliant upon her husband for both financial support and political power, the gender dynamics between Elizabeth and Peter Cellier appear to have been reversed. At one point during her trial, the midwife even notes: “for *Singly and Alene*, without the Advice or Assistance of any Catholick breathing, *Man or Woman*, I was left to study, manage, and to support my self in all my troubles to my Expence and Loss *much above a thousand Pounds...*”⁶⁶ Cellier’s position of authority— both within the domestic and societal spheres— marked her as a nonheteronormative female figure in seventeenth-century England. Though it was rather typical for women to educate themselves using the texts housed in their husbands’ libraries, it would have been considered a rarity for working-class wives to 1) earn more than their spouses, and 2) assume responsibility for the “management of [their] Husband[s] Estate.”⁶⁷ This is exactly what Cellier did— one of many reasons why it would be an egregious oversight to gloss over her contributions to early modern political discourse. As the midwife stated in her own words, she had never been and would never become an archetypal “Distressed Damosel.”⁶⁸

Despite her “*Headstrong Ambiti[on]*,” Cellier struggled under the weight of the court’s ceaseless, quotidian inquisition.⁶⁹ For weeks, judges bombarded her with a host of questions that, in a modern courtroom, would likely have been stricken from the record for being substantially more prejudicial than probative. At one point in her trial, her judge blatantly stated that Cellier “writ [letters to the outside world] when [she was] asleep”— to which she was forced to respond, “*No my Lord, I am no Noct-ambler.*”⁷⁰ A vast section of the questions posed by the State had little or nothing to do with the midwife’s alleged crime. Among them were queries about her supposed use of the horoscope to predict the redux of Catholicism (“What do you expect from *Jupiters* coming into *Gemini*? do you think that Catholick Religion shall be restored!”), her physical condition (“Are you with Child Mrs. *Cellier*?”) and her innocent support of the presumptive heir (“But you drank the Duke

⁶⁴ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 23.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 24.

[of York's] Health?").⁷¹ Throughout the ordeal, Cellier kept opposing-counsel in line by continuously referring to the guiding principle of the King's Bench: English statutory and theological law. Primary text evidence found within her pamphlet *Malice Defeated* makes it clear that the midwife was well read—equipped with the words of Sir Edward Cook's *Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (1644) and the psalmodic verses of the King James Bible. When the State brought her maid "Margaret" to the stand to elicit testimony against her former mistress (likely under threat of torture), Cellier effectively disqualified the witness on account of her negative bias: "... she is no lawful Witness, for she was my Servant, and turned away in Disgrace, and if she accuse me of any thing, it is the effect of her Malice."⁷² Armed with the knowledge of her rights as an English citizen, the midwife insisted that as long as she brought herself to trial without a subpoena from the King, she could choose the court that would sentence her ("if I bring my self to it, it must be at the Kings-Bench Bar [not the Old Bailey]").⁷³ Later during her trial, when she was informed by officers that she was accused with high treason, the midwife was swift to serve up a memorized quotation from Chapter 22 of Sir Edward Cook's third legal tract: "*And by the Law, no person ought to be committed for Treason, till accused by two honest, sufficient, lawful, and credible Witnesses, witnessing one and the same Individual Fact.*"⁷⁴ Clearly, Cellier was prepared to reason with the same complex legal jargon as the male prosecutors who believed themselves intellectually-superior. This feat of courage was rendered even more impressive by the defendant's physical position in the courtroom—far beneath the towering benches of chancellors in powdered wigs and flowing black robes. Emotional fortitude became the new modus operandi of this seventeenth-century feminist; as stated by the midwife herself, "none can truly say... that I preserv'd... the Timorousness common to my Sex."⁷⁵

Cellier's cleverness did not go unnoticed by the court. In a line of questioning meant to cast her as immodest, loose-tongued, and flippant, the Prosecution brought a witness to the stand who stumbled through the following accusation with feigned disgust: "She said— She said— that— She said— That if she did not lose her Hands, she could get Mony as long as...*Men kissed their Wives... [and] Mistresses.*"⁷⁶ Instead of struggling to preserve her modesty, Cellier defended her earlier statement—arguing, "*Did I so, pray what else do [Men] keep [their Mistresses] for?*"⁷⁷ Shocking the court, the judge softened, muttering "that was but witty."⁷⁸ Here, Cellier's

⁷¹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 24, 28.

⁷² Ibid., 25.

⁷³ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 28.

inexorable to drive to state her opinion— an action tagged as traditionally-male— is juxtaposed with the male opposition’s audible embarrassment and eventual silence— a behavior often connoted with female chastity. Scholar Mihoko Suzuki even goes so far as to say that Cellier appears to be completely “uninhibited by the ideologeme of female [piety], silence, and obedience”— aware of heteronormative expectations whilst actively transgressing them.⁷⁹ There is a general consensus among literary analysts that the midwife’s strategic responses in court were more than mere displays of humor or acuity; they were complete reversals of prescribed gender norms in seventeenth-century society.

As one may have expected, however, Cellier’s guile had the paradoxical effect of rendering her a menace in the eyes of the Prosecution. Hours turned into days, and days turned into months: by the 17th of January, the defendant was still being held in the garret of the Newgate Keeper’s house, removed every so often for another “*Trepanning*” interrogation.⁸⁰ As can be discerned through the quotations embedded above, the court had no direct evidence— let alone eye witnesses— that could prove Cellier wrote the documents found in her meal-tub or attempted to murder the King alongside Lady Powis. In fact, the State’s most incriminating piece of evidence was a statement Cellier supposedly made in the Devil’s Tavern back in September: “there was no Plot but a *Presbyterian Plot* and that it would appear so in a Month, [I] tim’d it well.”⁸¹ Being hearsay, the allegation could not be substantiated. Subsidiary lines of questioning were added to the mix, prodding the midwife to 1) disclose the extent to which she hinted at a planned Catholic rebellion within her personal correspondence, 2) discuss whether or not she truly paid Dangerfield to incite a riot at the Rainbow Coffee House, 3) reveal if she had offered ten thousand pounds for a “Sir George *Wakeman*” to poison the King’s posset⁸², and 4) admit having conspired with Sir Robert Peyton (member of Parliament) to betray the Protestant majority. To all of these accusations Cellier responded tactically— either arguing that she was “*not obliged to Answer that Question*” or reciting a memorized response (similar to how defendants in modern courts commonly prepare potential “scripts” for cross-examination).⁸³ At one point during her interrogation, the midwife even likened her trial to a “Play”— thereby fortifying the relationship between the courtroom and the theater (a topic that shall be discussed at length in the third chapter). Mihoko Suzuki’s *Subordinate Subjects* notes that by the end of her trial, Cellier had effectively “redirect[ed] ... publicity in order to dramatize herself; her ‘play’ here [was] a comedy, where the

⁷⁹ Mihoko Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects: Gender, the Political Nation, and Literary Form England, 1588-1688* (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2003), 251.

⁸⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 29.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

⁸² A posset— typically eaten by English nobility throughout the seventeenth century— was a dessert made from cream and often flavored with lemon.

⁸³ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 30.

woman prevails, not a tragedy where she is put to death.”⁸⁴ In other words, the midwife’s uncommon command of linguistic constructions and rhetorical strategies transformed her from a malleable actor into an assertive director— one as much in control of her fate as the men devising her sentence.

In addition to prodigiously studying the English legal code, Cellier made an active effort to strike the testimony of Thomas Dangerfield from the record— a measure that would effectively discredit the State’s star witness and thus erase their only source of meaningful evidence. Readers must understand that even before the Meal-Tub Plot developed, Thomas Dangerfield’s credibility was crumbling; in fact, the only reason why English citizens backed figures like “Willoughby” and Titus Oates was because their growing Catholic resentment needed a place to latch. An account written by nineteenth-century Protestant theologian Charles Dodd highlights the former’s criminal record, noting:

He had been twice condemn’d to die, before he was nineteen years of age; a rogue upon record in twenty-eight prisons; once transported, and burnt in the hand; five times sentenced to the pillory; seven times fined; twice out-lawed for felony; had broken out of prison eight times. And yet, under all these shocking disqualifications, had been admitted, as a legal witness to take away men’s lives by the strength of a pardon, had not his Outlawry been providentially omitted, to make it deficient.⁸⁵

The omission that Dodd refers to is a result of Cellier’s trial, during which she carefully examined Dangerfield’s royal pardon and created a list of felonies for which the trickster had not yet incurred punishment. The objective of the search was to bring forth brand new charges against Dangerfield without warning— thereby forcing him to either gather evidence to dismiss the accusations, or scurry around London begging for an updated set of pardons. Whilst he did so, Cellier worked to undermine the testimony and credibility of the Prosecution’s other witnesses, including her “domestics” Margaret Jenkins and Susan Edwards.⁸⁶ By the time Dangerfield had hurried back to the King’s Bench with a “black box” of insufficient documents, he was “met with riotous laughter by the courtroom.”⁸⁷ Though the trial was not technically over, this was the final straw in his battle for credibility; Cellier had clearly won. According to court records, Chief Justice Scroggs committed Dangerfield to prison, leading him

⁸⁴ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, 251.

⁸⁵ Charles Dodd, *The Church History of England, from the Year 1500, to the Year 1688. Chiefly with Regard to Catholics*, vol. 1 (Brussels, Netherlands: n.p., 1737), 327.

⁸⁶ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 25.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

“away weeping.”⁸⁸ In a moment as dramatic as a Shakespearean production, the midwife was released from her bonds— by this point having lived a full thirty-two weeks in solitary confinement at Newgate Prison.

IV. “The Wretched Subject the Whole Town Talks of”⁸⁹: Portrayals of Cellier in the Seventeenth-Century Sensationalist Print Market

As much as it is tempting to view this as a fairytale victory, Cellier had yet to face a second major battle, this time with the Englishmen who vehemently opposed her release and made it their mission to mar her reputation. Within days of her imprisonment, scores of ephemera populated London newsstands— some pretending to be products of Cellier’s own hand, others satirizing her statements in court, and still more purporting to contain never-before seen evidence in support of the Prosecution. The pamphlet as a material object— defined by poet John Taylor as “a Whore by day-light or by candle / ... free for every knave to handle”— was designed to be cheaply-produced and accessible to all.⁹⁰ Thus, one of the only ways for a working-class pamphleteer to drive up his or her profit was to sensationalize both content and paratext— a process that naturally led to the inclusion of massive inflammatory titles, satirical woodcuts, deeply-partisan rhetoric, and the oversimplification of political figures into cartoonish stock characters. The last element rung especially true when it came to Cellier’s attacks; almost instantaneously, pamphlets began connoting her non-heteronormativity with *sexual wantonness* and *sacrilege*. Monikered the “*Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*,”⁹¹ “Romantick Handicraft Wom[an],”⁹² “Lady Errant,”⁹³ “*Lady of the Wicket*,”⁹⁴ “Midwife unmask’d,”⁹⁵ “Female-Prelate,”⁹⁶ a “Common Harlot[t],”⁹⁷ and most famously, the “Popish Midwife,”⁹⁸ Cellier’s *femaleness* became her defining factor.

When analyzing this political event, readers must remember that the grand majority of Cellier’s political rivals were men, many of whom literally profited from the delegitimization of female intellects. Their diction was biting yet predictable; words such as “Lady,” “Midwife,” and “Harlot” reached for the lowest hanging fruit— the midwife’s gender— and exploited it with the knowledge that any attempt at an informed, eloquent rebuttal would be undercut by her blemished moral character. Even the concept of the seventeenth-century “midwife”—

⁸⁸ Winkelman, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 25.

⁸⁹ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 157.

⁹⁰ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9.

⁹¹ *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 1.

⁹² Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 3.

⁹³ *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 1.

⁹⁴ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 5.

⁹⁵ *The Midwife Unmask’d, or, The Popish Design of Mrs. Cellier’s Meal-Tub Plainly Made Known Being a Second Answer to Her Scandalous Libel, in Short Remarques upon the Same, for the Satisfaction of the People, and the Vindication of the Justice of the Nation, and of Several Persons of Honour by Her Most Vilely Abused*. (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 1.

⁹⁶ *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 2.

⁹⁷ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 15.

⁹⁸ *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 6.

described by Cellier as a “Wom[an] of Great Learning... excellently skill’d in Physick”— was redefined by men like Dangerfield as a “Female Tittle Tattle” prone to moral looseness and snide confabulation.⁹⁹ To her adversaries, the very act of engaging with the *organes génitaux*, even for the unerotic purpose of delivering a child, was precedent for generalized claims of sexual deviance. Mihoko Suzuki’s *Subordinate Subjects*, a textual analysis on the discursive effects of excluding women from the political sphere, attempts to explain this phenomenon— noting that “the articulation of equivalences between men of different ranks [was] accomplished by the shared demonizing of women as ‘whores’ ”.¹⁰⁰ To put it briefly, oversexualization was a means of “seriality,” of collapsing the nuanced and eclectic female population into a dismissible category.¹⁰¹

This kind of flattening is even evident in the woodcuts and intaglio prints used to depict Cellier to the average seventeenth-century reader. Always adorned with a hood of “false modesty”— which some scholars have equated to a “kind of habit... linking her to matrons, who wore a scarf”— Cellier’s silhouette became as recognizable as a Shakespearean stock-character (see Figures 3-7).¹⁰² While broadsides such as *The Popish Damnable Plot* (1680), *The Solemn Mock Procession of the Pope, Cardinalls, Jesuits, Fryers, etc.* (1680), *A Tale of the Tubbs or Romes Master Peice Defeated* (1680), and *The Plot in a Dream* (1681) repeatedly place the “guilty” midwife next to her meal-tub— thus branding her with the principal emblem of her crime— others, like *The Happy Instruments of England’s Preservation* (1681) depict her actually clutching fabricated documents in her hand. This type of symbolism was not employed arbitrarily. Accompanying the Civil War (ca. 1640) was the rapid growth of the ephemeral print market¹⁰³; for the first time in English history, the financial accessibility of corantos, pamphlets and broadsides made it possible for the working-class to participate in mass political debate. Literary audiences mushroomed in size and varied in demography, meaning that *all* Englishmen— even those who were illiterate— needed to be able to recognize public figures like Cellier without having to read. To achieve this goal, engravers found it useful to picture politicians, royalty, tricksters, and lawbreakers alongside the object(s) that

⁹⁹ Source 1: Mihoko Suzuki, *Elizabeth Cellier: Printed Writings 1641–1700*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lane Prescott, vol. 5 (New York City, NY: Routledge, 2006), xii.

Source 2: Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, 246.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰² Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 166.

¹⁰³ According to Joad Raymond’s *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, the number of extant titles produced between 1640 and 1641 (the advent of the Civil War) skyrocketed from a little over five-hundred to over four-thousand. The word “extant” is pivotal to correctly analyzing this statistic; seeing as scholars have only been able to conduct research on the titles that survive into the modern era, it must be assumed that the number of works produced during the mid-1600s was even *higher*. This is especially true when analyzing jobbing prints and other ephemera, seeing as they were (1) often printed on lower-quality, less durable paper, (2) less apt to be preserved or conserved by Early Modern collectors, and (3) oftentimes seized or burned if deemed treasonous by the Crown. This includes many copies of *Malice Defeated*, piles of which were reportedly burned in front of Cellier whilst she served time on the pillory for a subsequent charge of libel. (Source: Joad Raymond, “Development of the Book Trade,” in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, vol. 1 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 59-75, 63.)

identified them. For the midwife this often meant her flour-barrel, but there were several prints (ex: Figure 7) that depicted her with a hidden dagger, symbolizing an alleged attempt to murder King Charles II and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Contemporary readers should also note that while commissioning a custom engraving was an added expense for Early Modern pamphleteers— one that would drive up the price of the final product— this did not necessarily alter the quantity or identity of those who could view it. As aptly stated by Kirstin Evenden’s “Printed Representations of Elizabeth Cellier”: “broadside were often posted in coffee houses, which were a constant source of political news. Prints were also sold in marketplaces and bookshops, as well as posted on the outsides of buildings, thrown into coaches of passers-by, or, if the political message was important, simply given away.”¹⁰⁴ This kind of wide dissemination “functioned to construct consensus” amongst the Protestants on contested issues like Cellier’s “criminality.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, while it would be accurate to argue that Protestant pamphleteers actively caricatured Cellier in an attempt to erase her human complexity, we must also recognize that the very mechanics of the print market— namely its profitization of sensationalism and unique obligation to inform the illiterate viewer— both promoted and facilitated this flat characterization.

V. “She had a Bok to Print, and it was her own Case”¹⁰⁶: The Construction, Contents, and Reception of

Malice Defeated

Though Cellier was legally-free, her Catholic network was not; Protestant legislators and plotters like Dangerfield, Sir William Waller, and the newly- “converted” Miles Prance were still advocating for the extortion, torture, incarceration, and execution of “Papists” at Newgate Prison with cool indifference. With every day that passed, reams of pamphlets fluttered across the bustling streets of London— each brandishing new accusations against those who refused to pledge the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance. The formula was simple: if a religious dissenter refused to conform when pressed by state authorities, he was labeled a Popish Plotter, assigned a fabricated timeline of criminal exploits, forced into examination at the King’s Bench without an attorney present, and immediately placed into “Close Confinement.”¹⁰⁷ To generate a guise of credibility, each allegation differed slightly with regard to the names of witnesses and severity of the crimes; some Catholics (like maidservant Elizabeth Oxley) were supposedly paid to commit arson, while others (such as Cellier and the Lady Powis) directly attempted to stab the Sovereign after putting him in a poison-induced slumber. However, the bottom line was

¹⁰⁴ Kirstin Evenden, “The ‘Popish Midwife’: Printed Representations of Elizabeth Cellier and Midwifery Practice in Late Seventeenth-Century London,” *RACAR: Revue D’art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 20, no. 1 (1993): pp. 43-59, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *The Tryal and Sentence of Elizabeth Cellier for Writing, Printing and Publishing a Scandalous Libel Called, Malice Defeated &c., at the Sesions in the Old-Bailey, Held Saturday the 11th and Monday the 13th of Sept., 1680 Whereunto Is Added Several Depositions Made before the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor.* (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 18.

¹⁰⁷ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 6.

clear: the Plotters were attempting to override the Exclusion Bills by murdering Protestant leaders and keeping Charles' line of succession intact. Before Cellier was entrapped at Newgate Prison, she had the forethought to ask both her husband and domestics to smuggle in paper and ink so that she could keep record of the Catholics' cruel usage. This became the fodder for a much larger project— one that would (1) reveal the questionable pasts of the state's star witnesses, (2) catalog the legal transgressions occurring behind the walls of London's penitentiary, and (3) recapitulate Cellier's trial in her own preceptory words. The work in question, written during the summer of 1680, would be called *Malice Defeated*.

The midwife minced no words when defining the work to her audience; according to its subtitle, this text was “a brief relation of the accusation and deliverance of Elizabeth Cellier,” specifically curated for “all lovers of undisguised truth” (irrespective of their gender, religion, party, or socioeconomic status).¹⁰⁸ Aware that the Catholic population was economically-oppressed, Cellier chose to relay her narrative using one of the cheapest bibliographic vessels on the market: the pamphlet. As testified by her printer, Mr. William Downing, the midwife agreed “to have 10 [shillings] a Ream for Printing, and... [wanted to] Print Four Ream of every Sheet,” implying that the cost of production was roughly sixteen pounds total (1.92 pence p/copy).¹⁰⁹ Testimony from the midwife's subsequent libel trial reveals that she sold her pamphlet to individual consumers at 2 shillings a piece and shopkeepers at 18 s. a dozen— prices large enough to secure Cellier a comfortable profit margin without breaking the bank of the nation's laboring class. Other bibliographic characteristics of the text, namely its small font, short textual body, and low page-count, rendered *Malice Defeated* succinct and portable enough for *all* English readers (“every knave,” as John Taylor would say) to carry with them across the city and read in less than thirty minutes. Cellier was keenly aware that the key to garnering mass public support was, first and foremost, accessibility.

The second (and more obvious) means of inducing Protestant reflection was to craft a multiform compendium of persuasive arguments, each designed to target a specific bracket of her target-audience. Frances E. Dolan's critical work, *The Whores of Babylon*, phrases it best by arguing that while “Cellier keeps her focus squarely on herself,” she expertly cycles through a catalog of roles— “the royal jester, the martyr, the tragic heroine, and the clever legal tactician”— to assess political, moral, and theological questions from a number of critical

¹⁰⁸ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ **Calculating Total Production Cost:** Cellier's pamphlet was printed in folio (2°), meaning that each sheet contained four pages of text (see Philip Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, pp. 88, for a diagram of this format). Since *Malice Defeated* was 32 pages long, we can calculate that it was comprised of 8 sheets. Downing printed four reams of every sheet (32 reams), each costing 10 shillings; when multiplied together, this amounts to 320 shillings (ie: exactly £16).

Calculating Price Per Copy: In 1680, there were 240 pence to a pound. £16 x 240 was 3840 pence, and when divided by 2000 copies, this resulted in a per-copy cost of 1.92 pence. (Source 1: *The Tryal and Sentence of Elizabeth Cellier*, 18.)

perspectives.¹¹⁰ While it would have been all too easy for the opposition to dissect and dismantle a *singular, unvarying* line of reasoning, it was far more complicated to undermine a dozen carefully-constructed arguments, each conveyed in a completely separate format. As shall be heavily discussed in Chapter 3, *Malice Defeated* is essentially a patchwork quilt of paratextual arrangements, ranging from the article of indictment and pamphlet-play to the women's petition and typed deposition. Rooted in D.F. McKenzie's critical theory that "form effects meaning," the physical appearance of the text— a mimicry of preexisting parent genres— fed readers a set of cues informing them how to navigate and interpret the words on the page.¹¹¹ Perhaps without even realizing it, Cellier's audience was forced to approach *Malice Defeated* in the same way it would view a respected piece of literature. Consequently, a sense of rhetorical legitimacy had been conferred upon the pamphlet as a bibliographic vehicle *and* the arguments being made within it.

The subsections of the actual text vary in length and substance but follow a rough chronological progression. After familiarizing readers with the "Doctrines... [of her] Publick Morals" and revealing why she chose to convert to Catholicism as an adult, Cellier jumps directly into "a Narrative of [Titus] Oates and [William] Beddo's Acquaintance in Spain"— an epistolary passage focused on eroding the reputation of her legal opponents.¹¹² Noting that "Beddo [ie: William Bedloe] cheated [a] Master *Francklyn*... of three hundred Doubloons, at 18 s. Per Doubloon," stripped "a poor Priest of four Royals," and "robb'd a poor *Franciscan* Fryar of his Bread and Cheese," the midwife paints an explicit picture of Protestant crime.¹¹³ Her description of wanton thievery places Bedloe, a highly-educated member of the English elite, in the same ranks of the impoverished debtors who swindled cash from the Cellier family outside the Continent. Importantly, the midwife ends the passage by noting that these acts of larceny were not just stains on the fraudster's character; they were a "dishonour... done to the whole *English Nation*." Here, Bedloe is coded as fundamentally anti-British— a marked contrast from Protestant allegations that the *Catholics* were the faction most disloyal to the Sovereign.

Seamlessly gliding from this section to the next, Cellier moves on to a miniature pamphlet-play enacting the barbaric torment of individual prisoners at Newgate Prison. Surreal and anecdotal, accounts of torture-crazed inmates tearing their "bed in pieces," being "squeez'd and hasped" into claustrophobic cells, and dripping with the "Blood" of lacerated flesh evoke a perfect mixture of sympathy and disgust.¹¹⁴ Rather than revealing the prisoners' gross maltreatment from a rhetorical distance, the lines of Cellier's script allow inmates Mary White,

¹¹⁰ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 172.

¹¹¹ D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13.

¹¹² Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1, 2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3, 21.

Francis Corral, and Miles Prance to speak for themselves— paradoxically offering them a form of linguistic agency even whilst chained to the wall. Lingering on the subject of flagrant abuse, the midwife sails into a faux article of indictment charging the goalers, guards, and keepers of the prison with crimes ranging from monetary extortion to the “debarring... [of] liberty of Conscience.”¹¹⁵ Likely a bibliographic parallel to Cellier’s personal indictment, this article is composed of seventeen full allegations, each commencing with words such as “The” or “That” (ie: semantic conventions of seventeenth-century legal documentation). Structuring this section of the pamphlet as a sheet of charges— a bibliographic form that readers would have associated with criminality and scandal— allowed the midwife to flip the power hierarchy on its head. Suddenly, it was the Newgate goalers, not the Popish Plotters, being framed as true offenders.

Having completed her castigation of the seventeenth-century penal system, Cellier breaks into a passage emulative of a historical almanac to discuss a series of chronological events that might otherwise be muddled by the detached reader. Carefully-labeled with the month and day on which they occurred, a slew of faux diary-entries brings us to the moment the midwife met Mr. William Stroud— a prisoner at the King’s Bench who claimed to possess documents proving the falsity of Bedloe’s inculpatory testimony. According to these papers, Bedloe was entirely ignorant of any Catholic design to murder the Sovereign, and was instead a puppet of famed fantasist, Titus Oates. Whilst communicating with Stroud, Cellier also came to learn that several Protestant legislators promised him “Pardon for the Murther he was then Condemn’d for” if he “*would swear stoutly*” that the Popish Plot was true; in other words, he was one of dozens being recruited as a witness for the Prosecution.¹¹⁶ Though she would initially dismiss Stroud’s claims as “roguery,” Cellier eventually paid the bail of her confidante, Thomas Dangerfield, so he could investigate the truth of the matter on her behalf.¹¹⁷ On May 20, 1679, “Willoughby” claimed to have found the documents revealing the relationship between Bedloe, Stroud, and Oates, and immediately sent them to Cellier. They, among numerous other papers, would be found in the midwife’s flour barrel on the day she was arrested. Recognizing that this passage of information would likely be contested by the opposition, Cellier follows it with transcripts of four *full depositions* written by those who could substantiate her claims (two by Thomas Hill, one by Anne Moseley, and another by John Adderly¹¹⁸). Borrowing the paratextual

¹¹⁵ “Liberty of Conscience” referred to freedom of religion. According to *Malice Defeated*, if an inmate wished to go to “*Chappel*,” he or she would be forced to ascend “3 or 4 pairs of Stairs” wearing 40-50 pounds of “Shears and Irons.” Cellier notes that whilst these “Engine[s]... [of] Torture” were in place, “persons on smooth ground [could] move but 3 or 4 inches at a time”— a fact that kept them from being able to climb up to the chapel. The idea here was to promote a guise of religious freedom while keeping prisoners from exercising it. (Source: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 5.)

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Cellier never reveals much about the identity of these three individuals, so we cannot tell for sure whether they were indicted for testifying against the state. However, we know that they were integral to bolstering the midwife’s most crucial argument: that it was Thomas Dangerfield, not herself, who fabricated the documents found in her meal-tub.

elements of authentic courtroom documentation, Cellier encourages her Protestant audience to view these depositions as they would regard a piece of sworn testimony. This is yet another example of the midwife exploiting the symbiotic relationship between form and meaning to guide reader interpretation.

The rest of *Malice Defeated*— a sequential narrative shepherding readers through the midwife’s arraignment and trial— oscillates consistently between a dramatic pamphlet-play, trial archive, and assertive petition. These genre choices were far from arbitrary; as shall be examined later, Cellier cherry-picked arrangements that would best achieve the goals of the particular passage she was writing. If the objective was to elicit pity from her adversaries, she would employ a form conducive to emotional expression, like the playlet or personal affidavit. If she wished to frame her opponents as delinquents unworthy of a public platform, she opted for passages mirroring the structure and tone of a criminal biography. As aptly argued within Dolan’s *The Whores of Babylon*, this “sequence of postures and voices suggests both self-consciousness about the options available for self-representation and an awareness of the shortcomings of any one.”¹¹⁹ As a fully-integrated participant of London’s ephemeral print market, Cellier understood her text to be more than a polemical composition floating somewhere in a vacuum; it was a piece of physical reading material designed to be held, perused, and interpreted *alongside* other texts on the market. Cellier used the greater discourse to her benefit, borrowing the bibliographic elements of established, respected genres to legitimize her own controversial words.

Before Cellier had even brought her manuscript copy of *Malice Defeated* to the print-house, London was abuzz with heated debate over the candor of her claims and outcome of her federal trial. While Thomas Dangerfield, Miles Prance, and a handful of anonymous authors acted swiftly to beat Cellier to the newsstand— likely in an attempt to preserve their own reputations— others waited patiently to digest her account before penning their responses. In an eager attempt to halt Cellier in her tracks, Robert Stephens (a messenger of the royal press) stormed the composing room of printer William Downing¹²⁰ on August 16, 1680— demanding that all production of the midwife’s pamphlet stop. Having only received the first 22 folios (signatures A-F) of the text

¹¹⁹ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 172.

¹²⁰ According to Henry Robert Plomer’s *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668 to 1725*, William Downing was a printer in London who owned two presses— one located at Great St. Bartholomew’s Close, and the other at St. George Court. Though Downing’s name rarely appears in the historical record, Plomer credits him with printing the following works: *Female Poems on several occasions, written by Ephelia* (1679), *A Reply to the D. of Buckingham’s Letter* (1685), the *Dublin Intelligence* (1690), and *Edward Ward’s Delights of the Bottle* (1720). Evidently, Downing was experienced in printing shorter ephemera— a fact that likely made him appealing to Elizabeth Cellier. After being pressured by the Prosecution, Downing was forced to appear as a witness against the midwife in her libel trial, providing contemporary scholars with a rare glimpse into the seventeenth-century print-house. He stated: “My Lord, about the 22^d. of August, a Messenger came to me from Mrs. Cellier, to tell me... She had a Bok to Print, and it was her own Case. I told her I was a stranger to her Concerns, if there was nothing in it that was Offensive, I would Print it.” (Source 1: Henry Plomer and Arundelle Esdaile, *Henry Robert Plomer’s A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668 to 1725* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1922), 83. Source 2: *The Tryal and Sentence of Elizabeth Cellier*, 18.)

by that point, Cellier was forced to search for a second press to finish the job. Within a number of days, the (now illegal) task was handed off to Nathaniel Thompson¹²¹, a “Tory Printer, Ballad Monger and Propagandist” known for producing the blacklisted works of “Papist” revolutionaries. As soon as production had finished, Cellier made haste to disseminate it to the masses— at one point even standing outside of her house on Arundel Street and selling thousands of copies to passerby on the road.

Malice Defeated made quite the splash. By the Fall of 1680, Cellier had become a household name, her pamphlets kindling heated debate between Catholic sympathizers and resolute Protestants. As discussed in subsection IV, the market flooded with animadversive responses— one of which, *Thomas Dangerfield’s answer to a certain scandalous lying pamphlet*— would be the direct stimulus for an addendum to her initial text (entitled *The Matchless Picarro*). A pamphlet war of colossal proportions ensued within a matter of months, enticing all manner of pamphleteers— even those who were completely detached from the Popish Plot or its principal actors— to toss their own opinions into the ephemeral mix. Cellier’s face began appearing in broadside ballads, scandalous corantos, and animadversive quartos across the nation (*The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, *Miles Prance’s Answer to Mrs. Cellier’s Libel*, *The Midwife Unmask’d*, and *The Pope’s Letter to Maddam Cellier*, to name a few). As the midwife would soon discover, Protestants eager to retaliate against her previous legal victory were even preparing to drag her back to the King’s Bench for a second hearing— this time under charges of libel.

Sooner than she had anticipated, Cellier was faced with three separate charges: (1) “*Being of the Popish Religion, not having the fear of God before her Eyes, [and] being moved and seduced by the Instigation of the Devil,*” (2) bringing “*hatred and contempt*” against “*our Sovereign Lord King CHARLES the Second... the Government of this Kingdom of England... [and] the true Protestant Religion,*” and (3) bringing “*Scandal and Infamy upon divers*

¹²¹ Unlike William Downing, Thompson is peppered all over the historical record. The most comprehensive account of his work comes from G.M. Peerbooms’ *Nathaniel Thompson: Tory Printer, Ballad Monger and Propagandist*, which notes that his printshop moved twice— the first time to the Cross Keys in Fetter Lane, and the second time to the entrance of the Old Spring Garden near Charring Cross. A brief scan of the texts he printed immediately reveals that Thompson was no conformist; he actively worked to support Roman Catholics living in London during the latter half of the seventeenth century. In 1676, he was committed to Newgate prison for printing seditious pamphlets, only to be released and re-indicted one year later for printing part of a Mass Book in French. In the Report of the Proceedings of the House of Lords Committee, it was divulged that Thompson had additionally manufactured *The Long Parliament Dissolved*— a pamphlet whose title naturally alarmed the Protestant majority. Despite being locked away on numerous occasions for his legal and political transgressions, the printer continued to rebel; before his death in 1688, he would produce at least a dozen more inflammatory works (to the deep chagrin of the legislature). To Cellier, Thompson’s protracted record of civil disobedience rendered him an obvious choice for the completion of *Malice Defeated*; this was a pamphlet that, by the time it reached his hands, had been banned by the state. It would have been extraordinarily difficult to convince a conventional printer to stand anywhere near, let alone produce, copies of the midwife’s defense. (Source: Gerard Maria Peerbooms, *Nathaniel Thompson: Tory Printer, Ballad Monger and Propagandist* (Nijmegen, Netherlands: Radboud University Nijmegen, 1983), 12-14.)

*Persons produced as Witnesses.*¹²² As Carol L. Winkelmann suggests in her own chapter on the trial, the first charge was technically not a crime, and the second had already been ruled upon in the first hearing for high treason. It was the third charge—defaming the state’s witnesses—that truly concerned the court. Though Cellier had ample time to prepare for her first case whilst imprisoned in the garret of Newgate Prison, this affair was vastly different; the midwife was dragged to the King’s Bench without a moment to gather witnesses, memorize scripted answers, or consult her legal texts. When Cellier reached the courtroom, she quickly realized that the state had recruited nearly *all* of her close confidantes (and staunch rivals) as witnesses. Miles Prance and Francis Corral (two of the men Cellier observed being tortured at Newgate), Captain Richardson (a jailor at the prison), John Penny and Mr. Fowler (men who had purchased *Malice Defeated* from Cellier directly), Robert Stevens (the royal messenger who halted production of the pamphlet), and even printer William Downing were brought to testify against her. Though Cellier attempted to ask one “Gregory Grange”—a man entrusted with locating her requested witnesses—if he had found the individuals she wanted to call to the stand, he conveniently noted that many of those she summoned were not at home when he checked. As the trial neared completion, it had become overwhelmingly clear that the “Popish Midwife” would finally be convicted.



Figure 2. Design for a playing card drawn by Francis Barlow (1680). Held by the British Museum.

Cellier’s punishment was extraordinarily severe. On September 13, 1680, the midwife was dealt the following sentence: “The Court doth think fit for Example sake, that a Fine of One thousand pounds be put upon you...[and] That you be put on the Pillory three several days, in three several publick Places... [while] some Parcels of [your] Books... in [your] own view, be burnt by the Hands of the *Common Hangman*.”¹²³ This was the ultimate disgrace; the pamphlets into which Cellier had invested so much money, time, and care were to be set ablaze before her very eyes. As she stood on the pillory for days at a time, the midwife— an official figurehead of the Popish Plot— was pelted with all manner of objects by vexed passerby. On her third session, she even requested a racquet to protect herself against the onslaught of rocks and turnip tops. Within a matter of weeks, the print market had

¹²² *The Tryal and Sentence of Elizabeth Cellier*, 10.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

exploded once more; images of Cellier in the stockade were littering the streets, plastered on coffee house walls, and even transformed into playing cards (pictured above). Though this was not the last time Cellier would appear on the historical record¹²⁴, it marked the end of her role in the Meal-Tub Controversy.

Despite this rather unsatisfactory conclusion, contemporary scholars have continued to laud Elizabeth Cellier for her non-heteronormativity, savoir-faire, and rhetorical ingenuity. *Malice Defeated* remained in circulation for years even after prints had been seized by Parliament (as evidenced by the great number of extant copies housed in libraries across the globe), and continues to be recognized as a crucial slice of forgotten history, a prime example of the seventeenth-century animadversion, a subversion of traditional gender hierarchies, and a testament to the development of the pamphlet as a medium. Though Cellier's texts are rarely studied on their own (the number of scholars who have written extensively about her could be counted on one's fingers), they certainly carry enough rhetorical and bibliographic weight to be removed from the footnotes of modern scholarship and brought into the main body of analysis. While we can appreciate the work that academics like Suzuki or McClain have done to view *Malice Defeated* in the narrower context of feminist or Catholic literature, it would be an egregious oversight not to *also* frame this powerful narrative as an impactful contribution to the broader political conversation, full stop. Cellier's minority status was certainly a defining aspect of her identity, and, by consequence, the compositions she authored; however, *solely* analyzing her works within the constructs of subordination somewhat strips the pamphleteer of her ability to compete with– and successfully discredit– her Protestant male peers. This is an issue that shall be addressed in Chapter 2, a comparison analysis between Cellier, Dangerfield, and their revolutionary predecessor, John Lilburne.

IV. Figures and Captions



Figure 3

¹²⁴ In 1687, Cellier would go on to publish a series of pamphlets advocating for the construction of a Royal College of Midwives– a project that was granted but never completed.



Figure 6



Figure 5

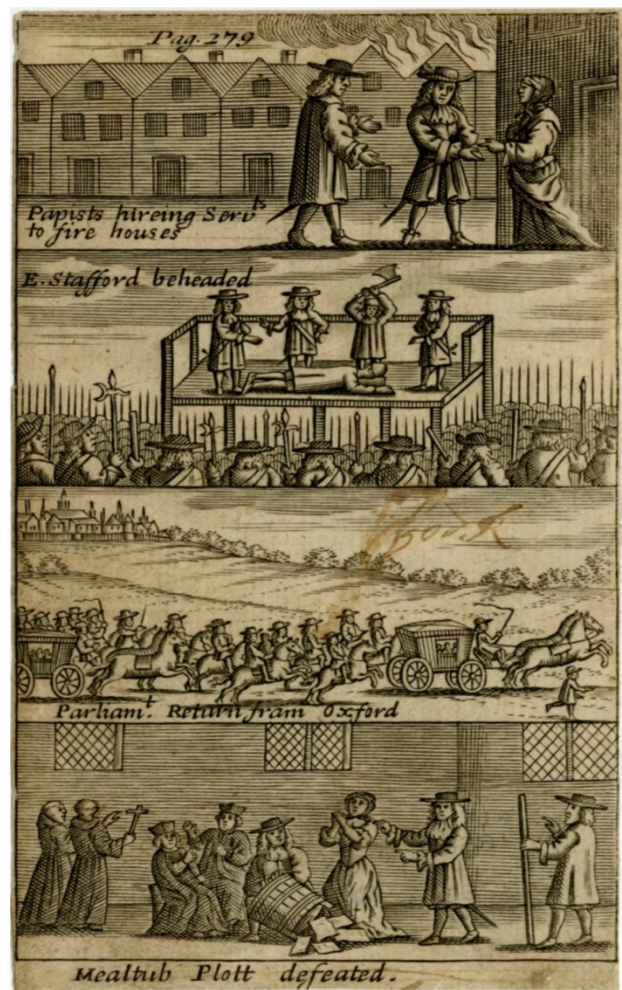


Figure 4

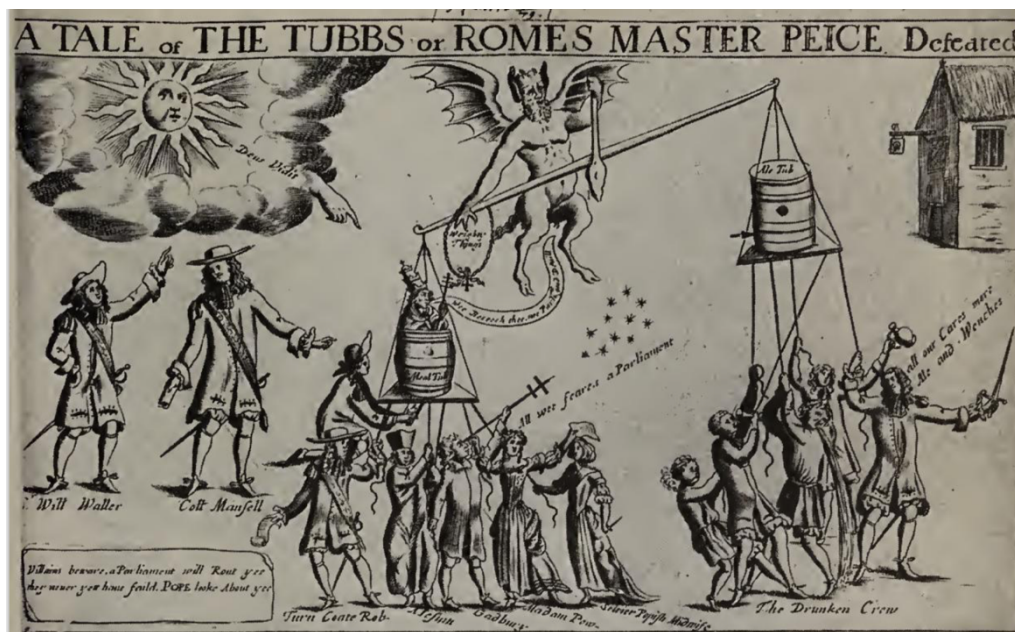


Figure 7

Figure 3. From *The Popish Damnable Plot* (1680). Full engraving 33.13 x 47.5 cm. Detail showing Sir William Walker discovering the contents of Cellier's meal-tub as she looks away in fear.

Figure 4. From *The Solemn Procession of the Pope, Cardinalls, Jesuits, Fryters, etc. through the City of London, November the 17th, 1680*. Full engraving 47.5 x 50 cm. Detail showing Cellier on a pageant float dumping incriminating documents (the "Sham Plott") into her "Meal Tub" alongside members of the Anglican elite, dressed as "Fiddle[rs]" and "Juglers" in "Masquerade."

Figure 5. From *The Happy Instruments of England's Preservation* (1681). Full engraving 26.25 x 47.2 cm. Detail showing Cellier holding a paper that says "To turn the Plot upon the Protestants."

Figure 6. From page 279 of *The Plot in a Dream* (1681). Full engraving 13.4 x 6.9 cm (trimmed). Shows four scenes in chronological progression: (1) Catholic servant Elizabeth Oxley accepting money to light Protestant houses on fire, (2) the execution of the Earl of Strafford, (3) Parliament's return from Oxford after debating the Exclusion Bills, and (4) Sir William Waller emptying Cellier's meal-tub onto the street.

Figure 7. From *A Tale of the Tubbs or Romes Master Peice Defeated* (1679). Full engraving 20.3 x 23 cm. Note Elizabeth Cellier (the "Popish Midwife") standing at the bottom center, holding a miniature dagger behind her back. The incriminating meal-tub, whose documents have been replaced with the Pope himself, lies on a scale dangled above her head by Satan.

CHAPTER 2

More than a "Short Compendium of... [Legal] Transactions"¹²⁵: *Malice Defeated* as a Vessel of Humanist

Rhetoric and Levellian Logic

¹²⁵ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield's Answer*, 1.

Though marketed as an unadulterated “relation of accusation and deliverance,” Elizabeth Cellier’s defense pamphlet was *not* an objective recitation of historical fact, nor should it be interpreted as such.¹²⁶ In fact, one of the reasons why the text *can* be studied by literary analysts (not just historians) is because, at its core, *Malice Defeated* is a persuasive animadversion— an impressive combination of legal deductions, humanist entreaties, and political rebukes working in tandem to alter public opinion. Though figures such as Dangerfield and Oates, both members of the Protestant/male majority, could publish under the presupposition of personal credibility and religious legitimacy, Cellier— a victim of “papal” persecution, gender stigmatization, and sexual defamation— was forced to write from the lowly vantage point of the subordinate subject. To put it briefly, the political playing-field in seventeenth-century England was anything but level; *long before* the midwife could even begin defending her innocence, she would be required to undertake a number of *broader* tasks— chief among them the demystification of Catholicism, the humanization of her own character, and the erosion of her adversaries’ reputations. To achieve these mammoth objectives, Cellier pulled from a bank of existing genres, frequently mimicking the perceptual language of established forms (ex: the “article of indictment” or the dramatic script) to induce audience sympathy. To boot, she borrowed the grounded, sensory-rich rhetoric of her literary predecessors— thereby contributing to a longstanding tradition of pathological argumentation. Readers must recognize that while Cellier may have *physically* been “*Singl[e] and Alene*” in the garret of Newgate Prison, she was effectively operating within a much larger discourse of religious resistance.¹²⁷

The overarching goal of this chapter is to supplement the historical context provided in Chapter 1 by elucidating exactly what made *Malice Defeated* so effective as a piece of persuasive literature. The questions posed by this discussion are manifold: does the narrative tend to lean toward dense theoretical analysis, or audiovisual anecdote? Is its diction working to present Cellier as a compassionate Mother Mary-figure— the physical embodiment of Catholic purity— or a woman with human flaws? To what extent is the work an homage to the writings of figures such as Richard Overton, William Walwyn, and John Lilbume— all animadversive rhetoricians in their own right? Calling upon the critical analyses of scholars ranging from Mihoko Suzuki and Lisa McClain to Frances Elizabeth Dolan and Carol L. Winkelmann, this chapter shall work to frame *Malice Defeated* not only as a calculated legal argument, but as an emotive attempt to devillify the Catholic “Other.”

I. Piety, Altruism, and Human Vulnerability: Cellier’s Reconstruction of Catholicism

¹²⁶ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

At the time Elizabeth Cellier was accused of plotting to murder King Charles II, the Protestant and Catholic churches had never been more ideologically-disparate. Though disagreements on political policy did yield partisan resentment, each faction's presumption of its own *moral superiority* morphed the conflict into a Manichaeian battle between "goodness" and "evil." Arguably, the rise of the coranto (ie: informational broadsheet) in the mid-seventeenth century added fuel to an already-raging fire by generating a print market conducive to the formulation of echo chambers— ideological spheres wherein readers only encountered beliefs that coincided with their own (thus reinforcing their preexisting biases). The transition from expensive, esoteric texts to cheap, accessible ones precipitated the explosion of sensational news pamphlets, most of which profited from fabricating an "us vs. them" dichotomy between the nation's religious factions. We can see evidence of this phenomenon in Richard Atkyns' *The Original and Growth of Printing* (1664), which laments:

Whereas before [pamphleteers] Printed nothing but by the Kings especiall Leave and Command, they now... set up for themselves to print what they could get most Money by; and taking Advantage of those Virtiginous Times... they fill'd the Kingdom with so many Books, and the Brains of the People with so many contrary Opinions, that these Paper-pellets became as dangerous as Bullets.¹²⁸

The byproduct of this process was a deeply-seated abhorrence for the other side of the theological spectrum, a sentiment directly observable in texts such as *Malice Defeated* and *Tho[mas] Dangerfield's Response*. Both authors allow extremist evangelical rhetoric to supplant subdued diplomatic jargon; whilst Cellier is swift to label her adversaries "abstract[s] of Debauchery and Villany," "Tyrannical Barbaria[ns]," and "*Devils Slaves*," Dangerfield deems his Catholic rivals "Monsters of both Sexes," "*Devils* in that Mischievous Dress of Humane Shape," and "*Catterpillers* whose whole Studie... is to Canker and Destroy the very Root of the *Nations* happiness."¹²⁹ Evidently, the goal here was not only to discredit the political Other, but to portray him/her as a dangerous nonhuman— someone fundamentally incapable of coherent reasoning. It should be noted, however, that while the midwife could perpetrate a similar brand of rhetorical vilification as her adversaries, her gender still put her at an obvious disadvantage; Dangerfield could always revert to "sexualizing and delegitimizing" her as a "whor[e]," while she had no such privilege.¹³⁰ At one point in his response pamphlet, "Willoughby" even accuses Cellier of taking a "*Black* [man] to her Chamber, where [she] allow'd him more Freedom than his Heart could

¹²⁸ Richard Atkyns, *The Original and Growth of Printing Collected out of History, and the Records of This Kingdome : Wherein Is Also Demonstrated, That Printing Appertaineth to the Prerogative Royal, and Is a Flower of the Crown of England* (London, UK: n.p., 1664), 7.

¹²⁹ Source 1: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 12, 5, 20.

Source 2: Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield's Answer*, 3.

¹³⁰ Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, 246.

wish for... [and] gratified her own *Lascivious* desire.”¹³¹ In this quotation, Cellier is portrayed as a “*Bawd[y]... Procureess*”—a woman whose moral scruples are so neglected that she is willing to trade the loyal affection of a “civilized” French husband for the “*Love Passion*” of a “savage” slave.¹³² Combining blatant racism with biting misogyny, this excerpt rests upon a brand of defamation *specifically designed* to silence the voice of its female subject by targeting an aspect of her identity unshared by her male oppressors, making it impossible for her to reciprocate. To be clear, the environment that Cellier entered upon writing *Malice Defeated* was hierarchical by nature—carefully-crafted to assume the guilt of Catholic women before they were able to publish a word of their political views. How was the “Popish Midwife” to be heard above the noise? For Cellier, the answer lay in the “language of perception, cognition, and affectation”; if she could not unilaterally alter preconceived notions about her religion, she would completely reintroduce the tenets of Catholicism to her Protestant opponents.¹³³ In other words, she would humanize her faction—portraying it not as an abstract religious enemy, but as a group of beings just as *tangible and corporeal* as their Presbyterian adversaries.

This rebranding process begins quite literally on the first page of *Malice Defeated*, where Cellier embeds a custom woodcut¹³⁴ symbolizing the prongs of Catholic virtue: purity, piety, and moral resilience. At its center, neighboring all other elements of the engraving, is an erect cross—the universal emblem of Christian sacrifice and



Figure 8. Emblem printed on the front page of Cellier's *Malice Defeated*. Published by ProQuest.

indefatigable devotion. Roosting on its peak is a dove with an olive branch, embodying the divine Spirit of Christ, freedom from persecutory bonds, and the victory of *bonum* over *malum*. We know that the midwife's opponents both recognized and comprehended this constellation of evocative images. One anonymous pamphleteer—the author of *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked, Being the Mistery of the Meal-Tub the Second Time Unravell'd* (1680)—noted: “the next we are represented with, is the Emblem of the sweetfac'd Gentlewoman, or rather (if she could

¹³¹ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield's Answer*, 16.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 98.

¹³⁴ This is not to be confused with a printer's insignia, which would have appeared on all works produced by the same printhouse. Cellier had two printers (Nathaniel Thompson and William Downing), neither of whom printed this symbol on any of their other texts from the period. The phrase “I NEVER CHANG,” prominently displayed at the center of the image, is Cellier's family motto—indicating that she personally requested this woodcut to be sketched, carved, and printed on the front leaf of *Malice Defeated*. Seeing as this would have considerably added to the total price of the print-job, we can assume that the midwife valued the symbolic depiction of her faith *over* the practical costs of production. We see this lack of pragmatism again when Cellier chooses to print her pamphlet in folios instead of quartos (a format that would have used up less paper). It would appear that despite her limited means, the midwife wanted to produce a work of slightly greater quality than its peers on the market.

perswade us to it) her proper self transubstantiated into a Dove. But now the dispute is, where it be a Turtle Dove or not, for they are held the Chastest Birds Created, therefore most unseemly for this place, if [the Prosecution's witnesses] swore the Truth."¹³⁵ Not only did the midwife's readers understand the message she was conveying, but they debated its veracity— proving that the Protestants were, to some extent, actively reassessing their assumptions. Though the first three symbols in the image were already spurring a pamphletary discourse, Cellier did not stop there; she marks Catholic territory by planting her cross in a clump of grassy earth, quite literally mirroring the Seven Hills of Rome, the original frontier of the Holy See. Entwining the crucifix is a heavy metal anchor, expertly fastened to the foot of the delicate bird (not unlike the way victims were shackled to the wall at Newgate). The fowl, a transmutation of the English Jesuit, is quite literally tethered down to its faith, mirroring Catholic obstinacy, constancy, and grit. If that was not clear enough, the midwife pairs the image with “a Motto [that her] Parents had used, and [she her] self also: I NEVER CHAING” (a maxim that permeates the pamphlet from beginning to end).¹³⁶ Encircling the entire image is a Latin proverb in emphatic capitals, reading “DAT VENIAM CORVUS VEXAT CENSURA COLUMBUS” (“*the innocent suffer, the guilty go free*”).¹³⁷ Though Cellier would certainly not have expected all of her readers to be able to translate it, this textual border further evokes the *Jobian suffering* so emblematic of the Catholic experience. Taken as a unit, the woodcut holds “powerful semiotic potential”— effectively allowing the midwife to lay out the cornerstones of her moral philosophy without writing a single paragraph.¹³⁸

When Cellier *does* choose to begin writing, she neither calumniates her rivals nor maligns their theological perspective; instead, she takes her readers back in time to the moment she converted to Catholicism. Briefly empathizing with her enemies, the midwife notes that she was initially just like them— “born and bred up under *Protestant* Parents.”¹³⁹ According to her narrative, it was not until after witnessing the “persecut[ion] of her “own ... Relations,” the “Murthe[r]” of the King, the destruction of the “Bishops and Church,” and the “*oppres[sion]*” of the “whole *Loyal Party*” that Cellier “professed [her] self of another Church.”¹⁴⁰ Here, Cellier presents herself

¹³⁵ The author of *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked* actually includes an entire paragraph on Cellier's woodcut, further demonstrating the influence that this image had on her Protestant readers. Seeing as this passage is the source material for a substantial portion of my own analysis, it is copied here for reader perusal: “Next [to] his Holinesses Cross, that heretofore was wont to fright the Devil from the Dead... the pretty innocent Tom-Pigion Pearches with an Olive-branch in its Bill; not altogether unmindful of the usage late in *Newgate*, for about his left Leg a Rope is fastned, and to that an Anchor, resting on Romes seven Hills, as not remembering how fatal *Primrose-Hill* has been... Ronnd about the pretty whimwhams [is a] stolen Verse, that was written by the well-meaning Author to a better intent: (*Dat veniam corvus vexat censura Columbus*), in English thus, *The Guilty go free, and the Innocent are oppress'd.*” (Source: *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 2.)

¹³⁶ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 17.

¹³⁷ *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 2.

¹³⁸ Winkelman, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 93.

¹³⁹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

not as a blind traditionalist indoctrinated with Catholicism at birth, but as a subject of reason capable of responding appropriately to her shifting circumstances. Having witnessed countless atrocities committed by the Presbyterian majority during the Exclusion Crisis and Glorious Revolution, Cellier made the deliberate choice to commit her loyalty elsewhere— a causal chain that even her most deprecatory critics could recognize as *rational*. One such reader, author of *The Midwife Unmask'd: Or, the Popish Design of Mrs. Cellier's Meal-Tub Male Known*, even went so far as to (unsarcastically) grant that Cellier had “good reason” to give up a “Disloyal Party” in exchange for a church that “agree[d] to [her] Publick Morals, and in no way... contradict[ed] [her] Private ones.”¹⁴¹ While there were opponents whose immutable partisan biases blinded them to the midwife’s appeal (the author of *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, for example, maintained that “there is no such thing as Loyalty appertaining to the Popish Religion [even if one originally showed] Loyalty to any Protestant Prince”), the very fact that Cellier’s readers were even entertaining a reevaluation of her character was ostensibly positive.¹⁴²

The act of writing her own narrative awarded the midwife considerable rhetorical agency; however, in a choice that defied expectations, she did not use all of it to reverse the power-hierarchy between the two churches. In fact, she often chose to passivize the “Papist” population, exploiting its subordinate position to induce Protestant reflection. This process is evident in the very diction that Cellier uses to narrate her lived experience; on page one of *Malice Defeated*, for example, she employs the words “persecuted,” “Murthered,” and “*oppress’d*” — all of which emphasize the *condition* of the Catholics as opposed to their self-driven actions. The same occurs on pages three to four, where the text claims that Francis Corral (the suspected accomplice to the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey) “*had been* put into Newgate,” “*ha[d] [his]* Flesh worn away” by the weight of his Irons, “*ha[d] been* Chain’d” to the wall, and “*had been* squeez’d and hasped into a thing like a Trough” (italics mine).¹⁴³ Within this excerpt, Corral is the resigned recipient— not the direct experiencer— of barbaric physical torture. On page four of *Malice Defeated*, the prisoner Mary White is not “pregnant” but rather “big with child”— a linguistic construction that conforms with the “Aristotelian notion that women’s biological role in the reproduction of children” was not to be an active creator, but rather to be the passive “Vessel” for the man’s “seed.”¹⁴⁴ She does not “undergo” abuse, “sustain” torture, “encounter” cruel usage, or “don” debilitating devices, but *is* “much abus’d,” “several ways tortur’d,” “cruelly used,” and *made to wear* “a pair of Sheers that weighed

¹⁴¹ Source 1: *The Midwife Unmask’d*, 1.

Source 2: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹⁴² *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 2.

¹⁴³ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 3, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Source 1: *Ibid.*, 4.

Source 2: Evenden, “Printed Representations of Elizabeth Cellier,” 53.

forty pound.”¹⁴⁵ Three pages later, inmate Elizabeth Evans is depicted with about as much agency as a corpse; rather than “fighting” her shackles, “hungering” for victuals, or “enduring” the Scold’s Bridle, she *is* “double Iron’d,” “*kept* without sustenance,” and “*fixed with*” a “Cap of Maintenance” (italics mine).¹⁴⁶ The pattern is clear; instead of framing the Catholics as agents of their own fate— a choice that would effectively rob the Presbyterians of their positional superiority— Cellier does the opposite. Paradoxically, it is the act of portraying “Papists” as subservient victims that removes their capacity to commit atrocity— thus turning the mirror towards their Protestant rivals. As is aptly stated by Frances E. Dolan’s *The Whores of Babylon*, “defenseless... masochistic figures” that appeared “ ‘discursively passive,’ [could often be] structurally threatening’ ” to Protestants insecure with their own apathy and indifference to Catholic pain.¹⁴⁷

Within *Malice Defeated*, the rhetorical passivization of the Catholic experience works in conjunction with colorful imagery to frame the Jesuits as *corporeal, tangible bodies*— not vague, formless threats. Rather than confronting her readers with thick paragraphs emulating the theological treatises of Pierre de Bérulle or Richard Simon, Cellier shocks them with preceptory, anecdotal accounts of Jesuit torture. Painting a grisly picture of the bleeding, festering, broken Catholic *corps*, she effectively forces her Presbyterian audience to confront the material consequences of their brutality. In her description of Francis Corral, for example, Cellier writes that she found him “a sad Spectacle, having the Flesh worn away, *and great Hole in both his Legs*, by the weight of his Irons.”¹⁴⁸ The skin and muscle missing from his calf are physical manifestations of Catholic loss, representations of all that had been stripped away from the Jesuits during and after the Civil War. On a grander scale, the prisoner’s damaged tissue could be considered a grand metaphor for England’s body politic— a population just as fractured as the bones in his leg. These macabre descriptions are not just visual; on the third page of her pamphlet, Cellier discusses hearing the “Terrible Groans and Squeeks” of Miles Prance “pon the rack,” so piercing and anguished that the midwife initially mistakes them for “a Woman in Labour.”¹⁴⁹ Here, the concept of childbirth— a pure and natural process whereby *life* is created— juxtaposes the grim tableau of Prance being stretched to *death* on a medieval torture device. The faux-labor of this grown man is almost a bastardization of the Holy Birth, the “Condemn’d Hole” his perverted Manger.¹⁵⁰ Though Cellier and several midwives— metaphors for the three wisemen— attempt to visit the underground cell, they are thrust away by the Turnkey, unable to offer their gifts. On page nineteen

¹⁴⁵ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁴⁷ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 184.

¹⁴⁸ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

of the pamphlet, Cellier even goes so far as to exploit *her own* vulnerability by chronicling the terrifying “fit of Convulsions” she endured directly before her interrogation at the King’s Bench.¹⁵¹ Burdened by the weight of Protestant “oppress[ion],” she quite literally falls to her knees in a frenzy of spasms— serving readers a portrait of pain almost as visceral as Act V of a Shakespearean tragedy.¹⁵²

By the time news of her affliction reached the general public, Cellier had transformed. No longer was she another ambiguous, faceless threat; she was a real human being with a brain and body. Likely in a reactionary attempt to undermine this display of “bodily integrity,” the midwife’s adversaries were swift to morph the scene from a fit of fear-induced seizures into a sham-miscarriage wherein Cellier purported to “be with Child” to avoid close confinement in prison.¹⁵³ According to Miles Prance’s¹⁵⁴ *Answer to Mrs. Cellier’s Libel, and Diverse Other False Aspersions Cast Upon Him* (1680), not only did Cellier pretend to retch and sob, but she actually hid animal blood underneath her dress to simulate a terminal pregnancy:

At last after a world of *Groanings* (worse than those of a Soul in Purgatory) and a thousand most bewitching *wry faces*, an able Physician and several discreet Women... discover’d the *whole Cheat*, and found that the good Lady was no more with *Bearn* than the *Town-bull*, but only having over-night privately gotten a *Bladder of Blood*,¹⁵⁵ had used her skill in creating the necessary *symptomes*, and preparing certain *Clotts* of it, and put them into her body.¹⁵⁶

The event, later monikered by the Protestants as the “Adventure of the Bloody Bladder,” was part of a larger smear campaign to frame Cellier as an anti-saint— a “cowardly, inconsistent and emotional” woman whose feigned pregnancy “manifest[ed] a lack of spiritual integrity.”¹⁵⁷ However, one could argue that by illustrating the midwife as defenseless and emotions-driven, these sensational accounts only humanized Cellier; after all, how different was her response than that of the hundreds of Catholics who had rashly switched their allegiances under

¹⁵¹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 19.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 178.

¹⁵⁴ Attentive readers may be wondering why Miles Prance— the very same man who pages earlier was being stretched “pon the rack” at Newgate for his Catholic affiliations— wrote a negative response-pamphlet against the midwife. Just like many of his peers, Prance was forced into switching factions as a result of the agonizing torture he endured in prison. Accepting a plea deal, he “admitted” to being a Protestant paid by the “Papists” to work against his own church. In a fear-driven attempt to prove his true loyalty, he published *Mr. Prance’s Answer to Mrs. Cellier’s Libel* and agreed to testify against the midwife in court. Whether or not we can put him in the same camp as someone like Titus Oates or Thomas Dangerfield is questionable though; while he did betray Cellier in more ways than one, his motive was purely survivalist.

¹⁵⁵ If this event indeed happened, it is likely that Cellier attained the bladder of an animal that had been butchered and filled it with blood for easy storage underneath her skirt.

¹⁵⁶ Miles Prance, *Mr. Prance’s Answer to Mrs. Cellier’s Libel, and Divers Other False Aspersions Cast upon Him Containing Likewise a Vindication of Sir William Waller from Popish Scandals, Some Mistakes in a Pamphlet Entitled, The Narrative of William Boys Rectified, and Other Remarkables : to Which Is Added the Adventure of the Bloody Bladder : a Tragi-Comical Farce, Acted with Much Applause at Newgate by the Said Madam Cellier, on Saturday Sept. 18, Instant / Faithfully Related by an Eye-and Ear-Witness*. (London, UK: n.p., 1680), 18.

¹⁵⁷ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 178.

threat of torture (Prance included)? In some paradoxical way, the midwife's faux-ailment stripped away her guise of invincibility, transforming her from a chaste martyr-figure into a mortal human. Dolan bolsters this argument, claiming that within the texts of her enemies, the midwife's "agency is wholly and degradingly corporeal. Cellier's shameful performance of lack of bodily control—vomiting, shitting, and bleeding—associates her with [someone] whose emissions and porous boundaries are not under voluntary control."¹⁵⁸ Even the midwife herself pushes this portrayal by including her "Convulsions" in *Malice Defeated* and later advising her female readers to "pardon the Errors of [her] Story, as well as those bold Attempts of [hers] that occasion'd it."¹⁵⁹ Evidently, Cellier was intentional about highlighting her own limitations.

Supplementing these shocking accounts of torment and agitation are pervasive references to physical consumption (or lack thereof)—yet another element of *Malice Defeated* that forces Protestant readers to reckon with Catholic humanity. Almost immediately after opening the text, the midwife's audience is confronted with the repeated image of Cellier dutifully plucking "Victuals" and "Drink" from her purse to feed the "starv'd" inmates of the Prison.¹⁶⁰ Though several of her political opponents may have interpreted these visits as self-aggrandizing "press events"—public attempts to portray Cellier as the *deus ex machina* of London's Catholic network—others may have recognized a much more artful persuasion tactic at play: the use of starvation to induce Protestant empathy. In seventeenth-century English society, hunger respected no one; the need to eat was (and still is) the universal human experience. It had only been about a century since more than three-hundred *Presbyterians* were imprisoned, starved and burned at the stake by the despotic Queen Mary I—meaning that the nation's Protestants firmly understood what it meant to be deprived of food, dignity, and freedom. Cellier tactfully exploited this collective memory for her benefit, coercing her audience not only to see themselves in their enemies, but to assign corporeal functions to the Catholic bodies they had dehumanized. This process begins on page four of the pamphlet, on which the midwife depicts inmate Francis Corral as a walking skeleton "kept from *Thursday* till *Sunday* without Victuals or Drink."¹⁶¹ Arms strung to the wall with chains, body ravenous for sustenance, the prisoner is portrayed as a mortal version of Impassioned Christ—an innocent brutally punished at the hands of deluded zealots. Forced to "drink his own Water," he sits at a bastardized version of the Last Supper—exchanging sweet wine for his own acrid waste.¹⁶² Even his wife, analogized as a virtuous Madonna-figure, is prevented from bringing jars of "Milk" to her husband after they are smashed "on the Ground" by the

¹⁵⁸ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 179.

¹⁵⁹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 32.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4, 5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

vicious “Jaylor.”¹⁶³ Cellier portrays herself in a similar predicament; whilst locked in solitary confinement in the Keeper’s garret, she witnesses “Rats and Weezles...*boldly Robb[ing]*” her foodstore before her very face— dispelling rumors that she had somehow evaded maltreatment in that private chamber.¹⁶⁴ A far cry from the “*anorexia nervosa*” (ie: female food refusal) historically associated with “saints of the Middle Ages” and “‘fasting girls’... of the [early] modern period,” Cellier’s famine is unintentional and undesired— a fact that strips her of martyrdom, keeping her “querulously in this world rather than safely in the next.”¹⁶⁵ While literary characters such as Anne Frankford of Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603) fast as a form of “political resistance to episcopal authority,” Cellier’s malnourishment is the ill-intended *result* of the hierarchical system that imprisons her.¹⁶⁶ Though never completely devoid of agency, the midwife actively portrays herself as a fleshly, corporeal body in an attempt to nuance the caricature she had become, to humanize the amorphous threat of the Catholic Other, to force the Protestants to recognize bits of themselves in the people they so abhorred. Where other pamphleteers may have attempted to demonize their opponents, framing them as fattened gourmands oblivious to Catholic starvation, Cellier does the opposite, painting even her “Rogue[st]” enemies with the same pitiful brush.¹⁶⁷ Whilst describing Thomas Dangerfield, for example, she notes that she “gave [him] two shillings six pence, for which he was very thankful, saying *He had eaten nothing in two dayes*” (the same period of starvation that she ascribes to Mary White, a pregnant Catholic).¹⁶⁸ On page twenty, “Willoughby” is shown lamenting that he was “disserted by every Body [during his stint in Newgate], and if [he] had not been Hang’d, [he] should have been Starv’d”— a plea that effectively equates his dire condition with that of his Catholic peers.¹⁶⁹ The midwife’s scheme was clear: rather than martyring her own religious faction whilst vilifying the other— a status quo of seventeenth-century polemic— she would emphasize the physiological vulnerability of *both* sects. The formless, distant Catholic “beast” of political folklore would morph into a shape just as familiar as the Protestant’s own reflection.

II. “Let all honest men, take example by them”¹⁷⁰: *Malice Defeated* as a Redux of the Levellian Stratagem

¹⁶³ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁶⁵ Source 1: Nancy A Gutierrez, “‘Shall She Famish Then?’: Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England,” *Early Theatre* 9, no. 1 (January 2006): pp. 137-142, 137.

Source 2: Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 172.

¹⁶⁶ Gutierrez, “‘Shall She Famish Then?’” 137.

¹⁶⁷ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁰ “‘The World Turned Upside Down’: The Imaginative Conservative,” *The Imaginative Conservative* (The Imaginative Conservative, April 18, 2021), <https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2020/10/the-world-turned-upside-down.html>.

Despite its persuasive innovation, the midwife's pamphlet was not *completely* unorthodox; Cellier was contributing to a long-held discourse of political resistance ranging back to the early 1640s, when Parliament began its nine-year conflict against the absolute rule of King Charles I. Deeply influenced by the techniques of wartime authors (with little regard to their gender or religious affiliation), Cellier was a rhetorical sponge—absorbing, rearranging, and personalizing the linguistic constructions of her predecessors for use in her own texts. Several of these “literary ancestors” were early feminists; Quaker activist Mary Howgill and Baptist prophetess Elizabeth Poole (among others) can be credited with providing the midwife the lexicon she needed to expose the misogynistic English judicature. Others were seasoned attorneys; transcripts of Cellier's trial reveal that she had memorized several chapters of Sir Edward Coke's *Third Institutes of the Laws of England* verbatim (“the Lord Cook says, That he never read in any Act of Parliament... [that] the Party accus'd should not have sworn Witnesses”).¹⁷¹ However, the corpus that seems to have had the deepest rhetorical impact on *Malice Defeated* was written by a fellow dissenter: political “agitator” John Lilburne (1615-1657).

Born about forty years before Cellier, Lilburne is most often recognized as the original founder of the Leveller faction— a group of English Puritans who deeply opposed both the “eleven-year... personal rule” of King Charles *and* the widespread corruption of the Parliament who sought to check his authority.¹⁷² Unlike traditional antiroyalists— many of whom blindly supported the legislature simply because it stood against the Sovereign— the Levellers pushed for reform on *both* sides of the conflict, maintaining that many of the Parliamentarians who purported to criticize the king were simultaneously reaping the benefits of *their own* greed. Sitting in their ivory towers, protected from bloodshed, these politicians were accused of taking credit for the victories of soldiers actually fighting (and dying) in the Civil War. The demands of Lilburne and his pseudo-party, captured in a document famously-entitled *A Remonstrance for Many Thousand Citizens* (1646), were radical; England needed an “established constitution,” “a Parliament... to be called once every yeere,” liberty of religious “Conscience,” “Voting [on] all Affaires of the *Common-wealth*,” an end to “*illegall Taxations*,” and a “subver[sion]... [of] the Monarchiall” House of Lords.¹⁷³ In a concerted attempt to proliferate these democratic ideals across the nation, the Levellers infiltrated the New Model Army— Parliament's military force— and used their broadened base to disseminate two new tracts: *The Case of the Armie Truly Stated* (1647) and *An Agreement of the People* (1647-49). What truly made the faction effective, however, was its hurried production of shorter ephemera— *reams upon*

¹⁷¹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 37.

¹⁷² Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 56.

¹⁷³ Richard Overton, “A Remonstrance for Many Thousand Citizens,” *A Remonstrance for Many Thousand Citizens* (London, UK: n.p., 1646), 3, 9, 7, 8.

reams of which flooded the print market with Levellian proclamations, petitions¹⁷⁴, political caricatures, and character-defenses rebuking the defamatory statements of the opposition. One such rebuttal, penned in 1653, was aptly named *Malice Detected, in Printing Certain Informations and Examinations Concerning Liet. Col. John Lilburne*— a title that should sound awfully familiar. Publications such as this one were remarkably-productive; the “Agitators” of the movement spurred such an uproar that the traditionalist opposition-faction was forced to negotiate their demands in a series of constitutional conventions known as the Putney Debates (October-November 1647). However, when these forums ended in a deadlock in 1649, Lilburne’s adversaries— led by staunch antiroyalist Oliver Cromwell— found their opening to restore the status quo. After imprisoning the movement’s figureheads, suppressing its military revolts, and snuffing out any lingering hopes of proposed reforms, Parliament had dismantled the once-powerful Levellers. By the time Cellier entered the political fray, Lilburne had been dead for twenty-four years. However, his material legacy— *hundreds* of animadversive ballads, remonstrances, manifestos, and legal defenses— were still being circulated across the English Commonwealth. Not only would Cellier have been familiar with their contents, but she would have recognized them as comprising one of the first postwar print campaigns to successfully challenge the tyrannical state (at least until the rise of Cromwell). Whether or not she lifted rhetorical techniques directly from *Malice Detected* is impossible to prove; however, we do have considerable evidence that Cellier acquired the majority of her historical, linguistic, and bibliographic knowledge from texts already disseminated. When asked by the prosecution in court to confirm an event divulged by the Countess of Powis, she dutifully responded, “*Yes, my Lord, I read it in a Pamphlet.*”¹⁷⁵ It is

¹⁷⁴ Though men such as John Lilburne, William Walwyn, and Richard Overton are often credited as the outspoken heads of the Leveller Movement, there were a number of female Levellers (ex: Elizabeth Lilburne and Mary Overton) who entered the political sphere by revolutionizing a new animadversive form: the women’s petition. At its core, this was a genre composed of two elements: the first a catalog of demands, and the second a list of printed signatures from those who wished to voice their agreement. While there are records of officials from the House of Commons instructing these female petitioners to “goe home... and meddle with [their] huswifery,” these women expertly justified their involvement in the political sphere, claiming:

We are so over-prest, so over-whelmed in affliction, that we are not able to keep in our compass, to be bounded in the custom of our sex; for indeed we confess it is not our custom to address our selves to this House in the Publick behalf, yet considering, That we have an equal share and interest with men in the Common-wealth.

Like Cellier, the female Levellers of the 1640s did not display the “timorousness” commonly associated with their sex, and *did* make critical contributions to the discourse (despite being left out of most historical records). Though the “Popish Midwife’s” pamphlet does not mimic the typographical arrangement of the women’s petition, it does make use of the genre in a “humble” plea addressed to the “King’s most Excellent Majesty, and the Right Honourable the Lords of his Majesties Privy Counsel.” Written whilst she was “close confin’d” at Newgate Prison, this miniature petition highlights Cellier’s authoritative position within her own household— maintaining that as the “manage[r] of her Husband’s Estate” and the mother of “two... Children,” the midwife *needed* to be “Inlarged” to protect the vulnerable members of her family. Fittingly, Cellier writes of this agency whilst employing the rhetorical genre that her female predecessors used nearly fifty years prior to assert their own. The only reason why an analysis on this “plea” has not been embedded into the main body of this chapter is because the petition was extraordinarily short— only about three sentences long. It would appear that while Cellier was familiar with the genre, she more directly depended on other rhetorical techniques to defend her innocence.

Source 1: Rachel Foxley, “Women and the Levellers: Beyond Domesticity,” Gender History Research Cluster (University of Reading, January 18, 2021), <https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/gender-history-cluster/2021/01/18/women-and-the-levellers/>.

Source 2: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 32, 31.

¹⁷⁵ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 30.

thus extremely likely that Lilburne's works were offering direct inspiration to the midwife as she authored her own religious dissent.

Despite their shared commitment to civil disobedience, a brief glance at the "Popish Midwife" and her antiroyalist muse would suggest that the two were political competitors. While the former would undoubtedly have opposed the King's execution (were she old enough to form an opinion), the latter actively championed the monarch's immediate removal from England's hallowed throne. Lilburne, a Calvinist, was whipped, pilloried, and imprisoned for nearly a decade by the Catholic-leaning Charles I, while Cellier, a "true" Jesuit, claimed that she "owe[d] [her] Li[fe] to the defence" of his heir.¹⁷⁶ It goes without saying that had they met in real life, the two activists would have fought on opposite sides of the war. This is part of what made Cellier's rhetorical choices so exceptional; rather than "tak[ing] example by" pamphleteers solely within her own religious sect, she sought authors—both friends and foes—who were objective *experts* at crafting political criticism.¹⁷⁷ Extracting the most compelling elements of Lilburne's *Malice Detected* and adapting them to her own circumstances, Cellier crafted a defense-pamphlet that—withstanding its pro-Catholic message—is a linguistic mirror of its antecedent. This begets the question: what exactly did she imitate?

The most obvious correlation between the two texts is their titles, both which foreground the concept of malice: a "bitterness of spirit... [rendering innocent citizens] odious, and fit for death, in the esteem of [their] friends, [their] Jury, and the Parliament."¹⁷⁸ Though victims of the Meal-Tub Plot and targets of the Cromwellian Parliament were suffering from separate brands of oppression—the former group systematically arrested for its religious nonconformity and the latter reactively-attacked for its grassroots resistance—both knew what it felt like to be assaulted by "subtil, crafty, and bloody-minded Prosecutors" in a judicial system designed to fail them.¹⁷⁹ An abhorrence for the institution writ-large is visible in the names of both pamphlets, *Malice Defeated* a direct homage to *Malice Detected*. What separates Cellier's mimicry from outright plagiarism is that she does more than copy the Lilburnian stratagem; she augments it, framing her text as an upgraded redux of the classic Leveller animadversion. While the "Agitators" merely "Detec[t]" foul play among the venal legislature, Cellier "Defeat[s]" it by discrediting her opposition's witnesses at the King's Bench.¹⁸⁰ While the subtitle of Lilburne's text centers the vengeful actions of his adversaries, who "print[ed] certain [lying] informations and examinations concerning

¹⁷⁶ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹⁷⁷ "The World Turned Upside Down."

¹⁷⁸ John Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, in *Printing Certain Informations and Examinations Concerning Lieut. Col. John Lilburn, the Morning of His Tryal; and Which Were Not at All Brought into His Indictment*. (London, UK: n.p., 1653), 1.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Source 1: Ibid.

Source 2: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

“Liet. Col. John,” Cellier’s spotlights her *own* rhetorical agency— stating that the attached “abstract of her arraignment and tryal” is written “by her self.”¹⁸¹ Choosing a title so allusive to Lilburne’s confers Cellier some credibility by association, effectively framing her pamphlet as an opus of religious dissent *equally* powerful, if not more so, than its mid-century precursor. Mihoko Suzuki’s *Subordinate Subjects* speaks to this choice extensively, agreeing that borrowing the “form [and content] of Lilburne’s political exposé” enabled the midwife to “register her own political resistance” within the greater literary conversation.¹⁸²

As soon as readers enter the main body of both texts, they are bombarded with solemn professions of “humility” and “Repentance”— emotive statements designed to evince pity from the opposition.¹⁸³ Having studied Lilburne’s works, Cellier would have recognized that he employed this tactic often; as aptly stated by scholar H. N. Brailsford’s *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, “this man was an extrovert who spoke out all that was in him: his hatreds and his vanity, his idealism and his courage. We know the worst there is to know about him [because] he blurted it all out.”¹⁸⁴ By emphasizing his own vulnerability, “Freeborn John” attempted to subvert Manichaeian notions that the Levellers were subhuman rebels, “wors[e]” than the “Antichrist” (to use the words of Puritan clergyman Thomas Goodwin).¹⁸⁵ Quite literally in the second sentence of *Malice Detected*, he makes reference to his “weaknesses and infirmities (which God knows are many)” — a phrase that mirrors the message of Cellier’s “hope” that readers will pardon her testimony’s “Errors,” her clear lack of “Modesty,” and even her excess “Masculin[ity]” (ie: non-heteronormativity).¹⁸⁶ This kind of diction stands in marked contrast to that of Thomas Dangerfield’s response pamphlet, which labels his enemies “*Devils* in that Mischievous Dress of Humane Shape” whilst portraying himself solely as a “very honest, modest man.”¹⁸⁷ Within his *Response*, the only sentences in which “Willoughby” admits to some form of vulnerability are strategic set-ups for subsequent rebukes; on page five, for example, immediately after conceding to falling into a fit of “Tears and Beging” at Newgate Prison, Dangerfield retracts the statement as a “lie... munificently Rigg’d” to support Cellier’s image of Catholic altruism.¹⁸⁸ Just four pages later, he speaks of “torture [he] had undergone the night past, and the dread of worse for the night to come,” only to lessen the weight of the statement by arguing that “it [was] not such a

¹⁸¹ Source 1: Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, 1.

Source 2: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

¹⁸² Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects*, 249.

¹⁸³ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Henry Noel Bradsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, ed. Christopher Hill (London, UK: Cresset Press, 1961), 74.

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Carlyle, ed., *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches: With Elucidations*, vol. 4 (New York City, NY: Scribner, Welford and Co., 1871), 24.

¹⁸⁶ Source 1: Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, 1.

Source 2: Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 3, 10.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

sort which [Cellier] seem[ed] to represent to the *World*, such as *Irons or Cords*,” but was rather a sense of shame for the “crimes... which she and her accomplices had engaged [him] in.”¹⁸⁹ Dangerfield is a master in the art of deflection; when he does admit to a guilty conscience, it is not for his own sin, but rather his gullible trust of Cellier— a nefarious “Mother Midnight” cloaked in deceptive white.¹⁹⁰ All strings lead back to the midwife, all contrition a thin guise for self-vindication. This brand of defense was adroitly avoided by Cellier and Lilburne— neither of whom could boast same the presumed *innocence* as members of the dominant political faction. To appear less bestial, both pamphleteers were paradoxically required to foreground their human flaws.

An emphasis on corporeality and anatomical vulnerability also permeates the Leveller corpus— a rhetorical choice that Cellier liberally employs. Though subtler than the midwife’s gory portraits of innocents being fettered to torture racks, their wrists raw from confinement, Lilburne’s *Malice Detected* does draw attention to its author’s mortality by bespattering each paragraph with allusions to his own vital fluid. References to “[those] whose hearts are not tainted with the desire of Blood,” “bloody-minded Prosecutors,” and the “blood-thirsty” opposition continuously push the image of Lilburne as the fleshly prey of the Cromwellian Parliament.¹⁹¹ This manhunt is further connoted through the statement “[they] make me fit for slaughter”— a sentence completely dismantling the legislature’s hyperbolic claims that the Levellers were shapeless demons “‘obscuring’ the remainder of the image of God in their nature.”¹⁹² Unlike Cain and his mutant offspring, the “Agitators” conformed to the Laws of Nature; they, like their adversaries, could be cut, phlebotomized, butchered. The corporeal theme continues when the pamphlet warns that “poison [being spewed from the opposition] will insinuate it self into the understandings of men, without any possibility of Antidote.”¹⁹³ Though detached from Lilburne’s *corps*, this claim analogizes anti-Leveller defamation as a deadly toxicant coursing through the veins of the English reader— thus framing the entire conflict as a *bodily-affliction*. Notably, Cellier borrows this metaphor whilst discrediting William Stroud, one of the witnesses testifying on behalf of the Presbyterians at the Bench. Finding his “thoughts to be laden with venome,” she portrays the English judicature as an unwitting victim corrupted with serpent’s bane (ie: the lies of “Bloody Villain[s]” who concocted the Plot).¹⁹⁴

Though contemporary readers might typically associate Christian sainthood with spiritual transcendence— the exit of the martyred soul from the physical body into the ether— Cellier and Lilburne tether

¹⁸⁹ Dangerfield, *Tbo. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 9.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹¹ Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, 1, 4.

¹⁹² Source 1: *Ibid.*, 3.

Source 2: Bradford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, 24.

¹⁹³ Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, 2.

¹⁹⁴ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 9, 19.

themselves tightly to Earth, rendering their *receptivity to death* all the more valorous. Unshielded from God's protective hand, they prepare to ascend the gallows, knowing all the while that agony awaits. Directly preceding the signature at the end of his pamphlet, Lilburne argues that "though [he is] not over-sollicitous for the matter, if at least [his] death may be of greater advantage to the undeceiving of the People, and recovery of their Liberties, then... into the hands of *God* [he] commit[s] [him] self: Death or Life."¹⁹⁵ Juxtaposing traditional saints who, knowing they are destined for Heavenly Bliss, express a "fervent desire for death," Freeborn John communicates a mortal fear for his own end—transforming his ultimate resignation into a symbol of stoicism and agency.¹⁹⁶ Cellier does the same; when pressed to accept a plea deal by Sir William Waller at Newgate Prison, the following conversation transpires:

Sir Will.: Well, I see you are an obstinate woman, and do not understand your own good, I'll come no more to you.

.....

Cel.: *I am not such a Distressed Damosel to use your Service ... [Y]ou have put me in, yet it is not in your power to fetch me out of this enchanted Castle... I shall come out e'er long to a Glorious Death, or an Honourable Life, both which are indifferent to me, blessed be God.*¹⁹⁷

Straying from the hagiographic trajectory, the midwife refuses to surrender her agency to a *deus ex machina*—whether it be a sly Protestant officer or the Lord Himself. While texts such as the *Ars Moriendi* (ca. 1415, 1450)¹⁹⁸ depict saints as passive figures waiting to be escorted from the "vale of... myserye" in the arms of Christ, Cellier is determined to walk into the oblivion on her own two feet.¹⁹⁹ This authority is further reflected in her linguistic constructions; the centralization of the nominative "I," for example, (as in "*I shall come out*") pivots focus away from her male prosecutors and redirects it towards her own volition.²⁰⁰ A subsequent allusion to "Glorious Death" reframes the concept of *ex negativo*—the absence of existence itself—as *liberation* from the bonds of mortal reality, not divine retribution for religious dissent. Sarcastic references to "Distressed Damosel[s]" and "enchanted Castles[s]" harken back to the sexual dichotomies of chivalric romances (think Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* or

¹⁹⁵ Lilburne, *Malice Detected*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 180.

¹⁹⁷ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 27.

¹⁹⁸ The *Ars Moriendi* (ie: "The Crafte to Dye"), were two "lytell treatyse[s]" originally published in Latin in the years 1415 and 1450, designed to provide medieval readers with the procedures necessary to experience "grace[ful]," "blyssed," and "peace[ful]" deaths. For our purposes it is essential to note that the tracts make consistent references to the lives and practices of "sayntes"—many of whom had "great cause to be glad for to departe from this wretched worlde." The idea was that if one was both devoid of sin and devoted to Christ, he would follow in the blissful footsteps of the martyred figures who came before him. (Source: *Ars Moriendi. Here Begynneth a Lytell Treatyse Shortlye Compyled, and Called Ars Moriendi/That Is to Saye the Crafte to Dye, for the Helth of Manes Soule* (n.p., 1415), 2-3, 6.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁰⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 27.

Lorris' *Le Roman de la Rose*) and flag them as archaic constructs incapable of defining the Early Modern female experience.²⁰¹ Scholars have even argued that these idioms “regender the knight errant as feminine” (hence the pejorative moniker “Lady Errant”), allowing Cellier to combine the narrative roles of the Entrapped Princess and Chivalrous Savior into one multifaceted protagonist. Acutely aware that the print market was *designed* to iron her nuanced character into a cartoonish stock character²⁰², Cellier paints herself as a binary-transgressor, “simultaneously active and innocent, heroic and alive.” Like her Levellian predecessors, she frames herself as neither saint nor sensational caricature, opting instead for a path of complexity. It is perhaps the humanness of this characterization— the rejection of tropes— that renders *both* Cellier and Lilburne all the more laudable. Unlike divine martyrs who are eased into death or flat political cartoons who cannot feel it, both pamphleteers know that suffering is imminent— and yet embrace it with open arms.

The takeaway from this analysis is that the midwife was relying upon *established* rhetorical techniques to reconstruct and introduce the cornerstones of Catholicism to her Protestant adversaries. Adapting the linguistic constructions of the Leveller pamphlets to fit the details of her own case, Cellier aligns herself with dissenters who experienced critical success during the Civil War era (thus inheriting their legitimacy). It is also worth emphasizing that while there were acclaimed *women* writing between 1640 and 1680— Elizabeth Poole²⁰³ and Mary Howgill²⁰⁴ to name just two— Cellier chooses to position her work alongside the ephemera of a *male pamphleteer*. This was likely intentional; acknowledging that the majority of her readers would recognize the rhetorical similitude between Lilburne's text and her own, Cellier encourages them to regard her as an authorial

²⁰¹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 27.

²⁰² As noted in a previous section of the thesis, woodcuts and intaglio engravings of Cellier typically depicted her as a caricatured villainess; hunched over her felonious meal-tub, incriminating documents in tow, her idiosyncrasies were replaced with stock symbols of crime. Other elements— namely her bonnet of “false modesty” and shameful pillory-racquet (used to guard her face against pelted stones, “rotten Eggs and Turnip tops”)— also make their way into the majority of these cartoons. For reference, see Figures 3-7 of Chapter I. (Source: Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 174.)

²⁰³ Elizabeth Poole (ca. 1620-1690) was a Baptist prophetess most recognized for authoring *An Alarum of War, Given to the Army, and to Their High Court of Justice* (1649). Within this prophetic text, Poole discusses seeing a vision in which the Commonwealth was personified as a wife, King Charles I a wayward husband. According to the dream, it was the responsibility of the wife to “take minimal action to preserve her own safety”; however, she could not “renounce her husband... [unless she wished to be viewed as] ‘a whore and no real wife.’ ” In other words, Poole accepted the sovereign's imprisonment, but did not wish to see him executed for fear of appearing disloyal. This is one example of an argument that female authors (especially those who were *not* writing under pseudonyms or guises of anonymity) would be expected to make during the late seventeenth century. Even as Poole formulates a political statement, she does so within the constructs of marriage and female subordination— parameters that Cellier transgresses. (Source: Manfred Brod, “Politics and Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England: The Case of Elizabeth Poole,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): pp. 395-412, 398-399.)

²⁰⁴ Mary Howgill (ca. 1620-1680) was a Quaker pamphleteer known for the publication of *A Remarkable Letter of Mary Howgill to Oliver Cromwell* (1657)—an epistolary grievance against the persecution of minorities by the Cromwellian legislature. Couched in religious phraseology, the letter almost reads like an early modern sermon— allowing Howgill to bury claims of maltreatment underneath Biblical excerpts and moral platitudes. Cellier, on the other hand, is forthright with her arguments; though *Malice Defeated* does contain a strong religious component, it frames the midwife less as a theologian and more as a non-theoretical, anecdotal writer. (Source: Mary Howgill, *A Remarkable Letter of Mary Howgill to Oliver Cromwell, Called Protector a Copy Whereof Was Delivered by Her Self to His Own Hands Some Months Ago, with Whom She Had Face to Face a Large Discourse Thereupon : unto Which Is Annexed a Paper of Hers to the Inhabitants of the Town of Dover* (London, UK: n.p., 1657).

equivalent to him (and, by extension, other male contributors to the political discourse). Doing so allows the midwife to play by a different set of rules. Rather than being constricted to the genres reserved for females—chiding prophecies, theological epistles, or women’s petitions—Cellier is able to experiment with forms traditionally employed by men (ex: the playlet, the criminal autobiography, and the legal treatise). Poole and Howgill could only *react* to decisions, *plead* for change, or cautiously *chastise* those who failed to heed their warnings; conversely, the midwife could *advocate* for her own definition of righteousness, *subvert* the hierarchies that oppressed her, and *challenge* the men who detained her. This is one of several reasons why it would be erroneous to view Cellier’s work exclusively within the vacuums of feminist or Catholic literature. Though these categories are pivotal to her understanding how the midwife’s inferior status informed both her political opinions and writing-style, they tend to overlook her powerful contribution to the intergenerational, interreligious, and intersexual discourse.

CHAPTER 3

McKenzie’s Maxim in Action: How Cellier and Dangerfield’s Respective Typographical Arrangements Visually Reinforced Their Distinct Animadversive Styles

Throughout chapters 1 and 2, readers may recall encountering the repeated idea that *Malice Defeated* is chameleonic, capable of cycling through a variety of paratextual arrangements to reap the rhetorical benefits of the “parent genre” they mimicked. This characteristic was *not* unique to Cellier’s work; it was the *modus operandi* of the entire early modern print industry. If you were to traverse the bustling streets of seventeenth-century London, passing by a host of hawkers and chapmen selling their ephemeral wares along the way, you might be surprised at the sheer quantity of pamphlets copying the paratextual elements of several “established” genres already on the market—combining them into new hybrid forms. While some rebuttals might feature dramatic dialogue and italicized stage directions indicative of a theatrical script, others may showcase lengthy, unbroken pages of type reminiscent of a printed sermon. Folios containing the truncated lines of poetic verse might sit across from stacks of satirical-epistles. Conveniently, heaps of highly-controversial works printed in roman typescript might lie directly adjacent to their pamphletary responses—each heavily quoting from their source material in italics and responding antagonistically underneath. Upon approaching this eclectic mix of ephemera, the average seventeenth-century customer would be fully aware that the typographical and paratextual arrangements placed before him arose neither arbitrarily nor instantaneously; rather, they developed *glacially* via a deliberate process of cross-fertilization between several parent genres.

To understand how this happened, one must first acquire at least a baseline understanding of the axioms undergirding the process: (1) that *forms effect meaning*, and (2) that *bibliography includes sociology*. Though it has not yet been applied to Cellier and Dangerfield's work in contemporary scholarship, the notion that the two elements share a symbiotic relationship is not new to the field of bibliography; the exact phrase was coined by one of the discipline's leading theorists, D.F. McKenzie, in his work *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. As noted in the first few pages of the book, even the etymology of the word "text" implies a dependency on physical form:

[The word text] derives, of course, from the Latin *texor*, 'to weave', and therefore refers, not to any specific material as such, but to its woven state, the web or texture of the materials... The shift from fashioning a material medium to conceptual system, from the weaving of fabrics to the web of words, is also implicit in the Greek *ύφος* 'a web or net', from *υφαίνω* 'to weave'. As with the Latin... the primary sense [of the word text] is one which defines a process of material construction.²⁰⁵

Of course, while the most elemental definition of the verb "to weave" refers to the physical processes required to manufacture a text, it also metaphorically applies to the act of *interpreting* the written word— ie: subliminally interlacing one's religious/political biases, value-constructs, and expectations with those of the author to generate an informed judgment of a text. A range of bibliographers— Nicolas Barker, David Foxon, Giles Barber, Roger Laufer, D.F. McKenzie, and G.T. Tanselle, to name a few— have argued that "scripturation," "typography," and a vast array of other material qualities inform this hermeneutical process (and vice versa).²⁰⁶ McKenzie's chapter on the "Book as an Expressive Form" analogizes this phenomenon as a theatrical performance, arguing that just as the source of an event (ie: the "dramatist, director, designer, composer, [and] artistic technicians") convey messages to an audience via "body, voice, costume, props, set, [and] lights," so too do typeface, margin lengths, paper quality, and bibliographic format send a compendium of "codes and subcodes" to readers informing their reactions.²⁰⁷ Audience-responses in turn "sustain, or disturb" the actors in their roles, just as reader-interpretations influence the steady evolution of print culture.²⁰⁸ This process is, at its core, a feedback loop of grand proportions— hence McKenzie's argument that form *effects* (not just *affects*) meaning. This recent focus on the human agency behind text production, distribution, and consumption also explains why the field of bibliography

²⁰⁵ Importantly, McKenzie adapts this concept to the 21st century by claiming that despite the text's etymological links to woven threads (implying a categorical distinction between printed books/manuscripts and non-paper forms), the word can apply to "all forms of recorded information, including sound, graphics, films, representations of landscape, and the new electronic media." (Source: McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 14.)

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 17.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 50.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

has expanded to include sociological analysis. The written word (especially as they pertain to the seventeenth-century pamphlet) is far from static; blotted and corrected manuscript copies almost never look identical to finished prints, and lightly-stitched bindings have almost all been reinforced as archivists have collated pamphlets into eclectic volumes. Among these changes, water stains, inky thumbprints, handwritten marginalia, insect wear, and page reorganization— all of which have affected extant copies of *Malice Defeated*— serve as evidence of human interaction.

Both of McKenzie's maxims— that form effects meaning and bibliography includes sociology— are absolutely critical to understanding how and why typographical and paratextual arrangement in pamphlets had become so varied by the 1680s. Genres developed and interbred as authors learned what kinds of visual elements could manipulate the audience-perception of a given work, and the interpretive-process evolved as forms took on different appearances. It would thus make sense why *all* seventeenth-century pamphleteers, regardless of ideology, were so highly attuned to their Catholic/Royalist or Protestant/Parliamentarian audiences— drawing from a bank of preconceived notions about pamphlet culture to determine (a) what rhetorical genres would work best for their respective objectives, and (b) what *mises en page* would best mimic these genres. *A Critical History of Pamphlets* (1715), a primary source from the time period, proves that authors were aware of this phenomenon; according to author Myles Davies, it was often necessary for “Stitch'd Pamphlets” to take the “familiar Shapes” of preexisting “Volumes of Collections of Theological and State-tracts, of Sermons, Poems, and Miscellanies” to both garner the same air of legitimacy as their highbrow predecessors and to appeal to the extant audiences of said genres.²⁰⁹

John Milton's *Animadversions upon the remonstrants Defence, against Smectymnuus*— the second in a series of three tracts opposing Bishop Joseph Hall's pro-episcopacy claims— also serves as an effective example of an early modern author drawing from a vast arsenal of previously-developed forms to compose written attacks. The first four pages of the work are printed in unbroken blocks of small italics, a typographical element that author Mark Bland argues was “intended as a direct representation of speech” upon its conception.²¹⁰ By signifying that his written text was meant to be interpreted as a spoken homily, Milton uses print to recreate “oral sermon.” The main body of the text then emulates a seventeenth-century playbook, featuring a running dialogue

²⁰⁹ Davies, *Critical History*, 4.

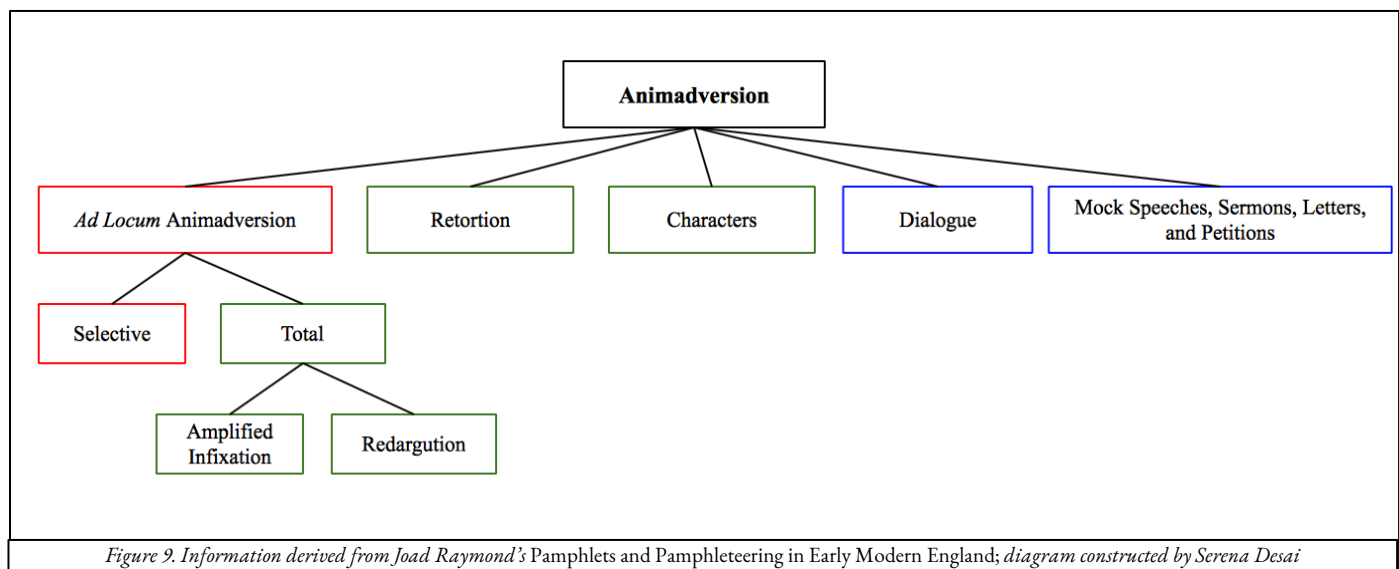
²¹⁰ Mark Bland, “The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England,” *Indiana University Press Journal* 11 (1998): pp. 91-154, 98.

between the “Remonstrant” and the Answerer—Milton himself.²¹¹ After dozens of blocks of uninterrupted prose, pages 58-59 contain an italicized poem visually-reminiscent of the early modern broadside ballad.

By this point in the analysis it has become clear that Cellier and Dangerfield *also* borrowed the visual appearance of the playlet, deposition, letter, autobiography, indictment, and a number of other arrangements to construct their works. This was a standard practice and had a clear explanation— but curious readers may still be left with questions: from where did these forms derive, what did they look like, and how *exactly* did the two pamphleteers use them to evoke substantial meaning? The answer is rather complex, but as it shall soon be revealed, all forms essentially led back to the multipronged taxonomy of the early modern animadversion.

I. The Forms at Cellier’s Disposal

James Egan’s etymological analysis, “Oratory and Animadversion: Rhetorical Signatures in Milton’s Pamphlets of 1649,” notes that the word “animadversion” derives from the Latin roots *ad* (to) and *verter* (turn)— implying that to animadvert is to extensively refute one’s argument via “logical, pathetic, and ethical proof,” thereby overturning it entirely.²¹² According to Egan, the post-Civil War era saw the animadversion “become synonymous with infighting, censure, and acrimony, both literal and mimetic; animadversions were ubiquitous.”²¹³ Though attempting to silo each animadversive mode into a perfectly-labeled bin would be a futile affair (seeing as most quartos and folios were interwoven cross-breeds of several arrangements) it is possible to list the styles in a very rough taxonomy (charted below).



²¹¹ John Milton, “Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence, against Smectymnuus,” *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence, against Smectymnuus* (London, UK: n.p., 1641), 1.

²¹² James Egan, “Oratory and Animadversion: Rhetorical Signatures in Milton’s Pamphlets of 1649,” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 27, no. 2 (2009): pp. 189-217, 194.

²¹³ Ibid.

As can be discerned by the sheer number of branches on the diagram, Elizabeth Cellier and her rivals had about nine different animadversive strategies at their disposal, and this was *not* including the several “mock-genre” varieties listed within the box to the far right. With so many choices at her fingertips, the midwife had a number of pivotal decisions to make: which form, for example, would best convey her accusation against the Newgate goalers? Which would most authentically express the statements of witnesses who could corroborate her testimony? Which would evoke more sympathy towards the Catholic plight: a chronological archive of her experiences, a sermon preaching the errs of Protestant behavior, or a pamphlet-play that dramatized her trial for the impressionable reader? Which would make her pamphlet stand out amongst the hundreds of others sitting alongside it on the newsstand? When reflecting upon Cellier’s decisions, we must recognize that the midwife was already a crucial member of Darnton’s Communication Circuit—a cyclical chain “focus[ing] on the roles played by authors, publishers, printers, distributors, booksellers and readers in the production of the printed book.”²¹⁴ In other words, as someone who had subsisted on pamphlets since she could read, Cellier would have immediately recognized the “codes and subcodes” woven between the lines of each animadversive style (and understood their respective effects on the interpretive process). With this knowledge in mind, she deliberately selected two offshoots of the animadversion chart to format her entire argument (outlined in blue): the *dialogue* and the *mock genre*.

The former of the two was adapted from the seventeenth-century playbook. Featuring characteristics such as “list[s] of dramatis personae,” “indication[s] of scene or locality,” “act and scene divisions,” “stage directions for entrances... exits, and exeunts,” speech directions “(e.g. ‘to him’; ‘aside’)” and properties such as “speech-headings or prefixes,” the dialogue allowed pamphleteers to literally put themselves in conversation with *anyone*—ranging from the political rival next door to the ghosts of antiquarian rhetoricians or Lucianic spirits from Hell.²¹⁵ This was ideal for Cellier, who needed to craft scenes between “characters” of opposite social status in order to frame the Catholics as debaters who could outwit their opponents. As shall be further discussed in the case study on her pamphlet-play (subsection II), this dramatic form—predisposed to emotional, preceptory content—was also the perfect way to relate sensational imagery of Catholic suffering. When she is not using the dialogue, Cellier is typically employing the *mock genre*—a form that emulates the physical appearance of workday literature like mock speeches, sermons, lectures, petitions, and indictments. These sub-forms, derived from the

²¹⁴ Janneke Adema, “Toward a Diffractive Genealogy of Book History: Living Books,” Living Books (PubPub, August 31, 2021), <https://livingbooks.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/3lfpsvmh/release/1>.

²¹⁵ T. H. Howard-Hill, “The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1990): pp. 112-145, 113.

typographical conventions of formal Quarter Sessions entries, religious treatises, and epistles, were fashioned to mimic preexisting genres in an attempt to appropriate their legitimacy and appeal to pre-cultivated audiences. Aside from the *ad locum* animadversion (discussed next), this branch of literary forms comprised the majority of pamphlets being produced between 1640-41—a time period during which the number of printed ephemera multiplied exponentially as a result of the Civil War. Within her legal defense pamphlet, the midwife mirrors a patchwork of varying typographical arrangements not only to keep skeptical readers engaged, but to force them to view her content with the same interpretive lens as they would use to analyze an authentic petition/trial deposition/article of indictment.

Thomas Dangerfield, on the other hand, chooses a much more straightforward approach to his *Answer to a certain scandalous lying pamphlet* (1680): the *ad locum animadversion* (outlined in red). According to Joad Raymond's *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern England*, this genre was essentially a point-counterpoint rebuttal, featuring lengthy quotations of an opponent's work (often marked with brackets, quotations or italics) followed by responses in roman script. Within the Oxford English Dictionary, a sixteenth-century usage of the term reveals its cross-examinatory form: "My petye animadversions, [have been written] uppon the anotacions and corrections delibered by master Thomas Speghthe uppon the last editione of Chaucer's Workes."²¹⁶ At an even closer level, the form is further divided into two subcategories: "selective" and "total."²¹⁷ The former (the one Dangerfield uses) includes only a *partial* quotation of a rival's work, allowing the pamphleteer to chop up the enemy-text wherever he pleases, strip it of context, and dismantle it piece-by-piece.²¹⁸ As stated in Chapter 1, "Willoughby" did not have to undergo the same creative maneuvering as Cellier to convince readers that his statements were legitimate; the Protestant majority was *already* in a position of political authority. Rather than construct a defense from the ground up, Dangerfield only needed to pick apart a preexisting argument. If we were to compare this scenario to today's legal standards, it would appear that the burden of proof was ironically placed on Cellier—the Defendant—while witnesses for the Prosecution like Dangerfield were only forced to generate reasonable doubt in her version of the story. Since the roles were essentially flipped, "Willoughby" could afford to employ a dryer, less sensationalist form—making the *ad locum animadversion* the obvious choice.

²¹⁶ "Animadversion, n.," Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/7740?redirectedFrom=animadversion#eid>.

²¹⁷ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, 211.

²¹⁸ To attain a clearer understanding of the difference between "selective" and "total", compare *The Midwife Unmask'd* (1680) to *Satisfaction concerning mixt Communions* (1643). While the former text merely cherry-picked short phrases from *Malice Defeated* before following them with lengthy rebuttals, the latter one quoted its opponent's entire text, choosing to break it up with "jostling shoulder notes." The difference was slight, yet discernible. (Source: Ibid.)

The last few boxes on the diagram, outlined in green, were used by neither the midwife nor her greatest rival; however, they were relatively common rhetorical styles that would not have raised eyebrows if spotted on the seventeenth-century newsstand. The first of these, falling under the larger umbrella of the *ad locum*, were *regurgitations* and *amplified infixations*—employed within texts ranging from John Taylor’s *Mercurius Aquaticus* (1643) to *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked, Being the Mistery of the Meal-Tub the Second Time Unravelled* (1680).²¹⁹ The former mode of argumentation, occurring slightly less-often than its counterpart, quoted an enemy-text in *full*—and without disjunctions—before following with a passionate rejoinder. Taylor’s work, for example, prefaces with a full transcript of *Mercurius Britannicus* before undermining the enemy-text in a succinct twelve pages. The latter mode, quite literally the opposite of its counterpart, was known for amalgamating the enemy-text (printed verbatim) with one’s own counterattacks, creating a single block of text perfused with points and counterpoints. Though it is not a prime example of the technique—seeing as it does *not* embed a full transcript of *Malice Defeated* within its paragraphs—the *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked* can be recognized as an attempt at synthesis. Organized into dense, protracted passages, the work expertly incorporates biting polemical rhetoric with direct paraphrases of Cellier’s pamphlet to craft a persuasive composition.

Next in the diagram are *retortions*, works that “juxtapose[ed]... passages [of a rival’s work] with contradictory of self-incriminating words by the same author” in an attempt to expose his/her hypocrisy.²²⁰ Within his 1681 pamphlet, *The Observer*, English courtier Roger L’Estrange reveals this objective explicitly: “Take it in few words then. My business is, to encounter the *Faction*, and to Vindicate the *Government*; to detect their *Forgeries*; to lay open the Rankness of their *Calumnies*, and *Malice*; to Refute their Seditious *Doctrines*; [and] to expose their *Hypocrisy*...”²²¹ While other animadversive modes were only conducive to counterattacks against a rivals’ words or arguments, this one allowed pamphleteers to strike at the source of the real issue: their opponent’s lack of credibility. Another form that allowed pamphleteers to discredit their adversaries was the *character* pamphlet— a satirical genre that encouraged authors to pose *as* their opponents, crafting self-deprecating attacks upon those they wished to undermine. This style and its derivatives can largely be attributed to the works of the Greek philosopher Theophrastus, whose most well-known text (aptly named *Characters*) includes a myriad of chapters each named after the archetypal figure they define; whilst the Boor “wears his shoes

²¹⁹ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, 212-213.

²²⁰ Ibid., 213.

²²¹ Roger L’Estrange, *Selections from the Observatory*, ed. Violet Jordan et al. (Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles, 1970). *This text has no page numbers.

too large for his feet” and “talks in a loud voice,” the Ironical Man “praise[s] to their faces those whom he attacked behind their backs, and will sympathise with them in their defeats.”²²² Along the same vein is *Mistress Cellier’s Lamentation for the Loss of Her Liberty* (1681), a work that purports to be written by the “Popish Midwife” herself. Portraying Cellier as a woman of unwarranted confidence and self-pity, it parodies her plight: “No Woman would have been so much Priest-ridd as I have been, few of my Sex would have carried their heavy Cross half so long and to no purpose: well, I’m perswaded my Tongue will break open these Ivory Barrs, I shall not be able to hold my Clack any longer, I must be my own Midwife and deliver my self of this damn’d Plot...”²²³ As is highlighted by Raymond, readers of this genre would not have been forewarned that the entire text was farcical, and were expected to use their knowledge of the current political sphere to determine that “persuasive intention [was] subordinate to entertainment.”²²⁴

Taken as a collective, each genre of the animadversion (which *itself* was merely a thread of the rhetorical tapestry) generated a “Babel” of conflicting voices, each vying for recognition, sympathy, and approval of the literate public.²²⁵ To clear a path through the noise, Cellier and Dangerfield participated in the McKenzian feedback loop—choosing the rhetorical strategies that would most effectively convey their respective arguments based on preexisting knowledge of the hermeneutical process. In doing so they drew from bibliographic convention, employing typographical features that were conducive to expressing the animadversions they had chosen. The following subsections of this analysis shall analyze the resulting relationship between the physical appearance of the text and its meaning by performing two typographical case-studies on the most prominent argumentative styles used in *Malice Defeated* and Dangerfield’s *Answer*: the *dialogue* and the *ad locum animadversion*. By the end of the chapter, readers should walk away with an understanding of how distinct bibliographic features (ex: font choices, use of blank space, or punctuation marks) altered the final interpretation of the texts that contained them.

II. “What do you make a play of it?”²²⁶: Employing Indents and Em Dashes to Emulate Theatrical Script in *Malice Defeated*

²²² R. C. Jebb, tran., “The Characters of Theophrastus,” *The Characters of Theophrastus* (HOC, February 2016), <https://www.eudaemonist.com/biblion/characters/>.

²²³ “Mistress Cellier’s Lamentation for the Loss of Her Liberty,” *Mistress Cellier’s Lamentation for the Loss of Her Liberty* (London, UK: n.p., 1681), 1-2.

²²⁴ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, 221.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

²²⁶ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 30.

On page thirty of Cellier's pamphlet, the midwife begins a series of witty exchanges with a Protestant Lord questioning her allegiance to the Catholic cause at Newgate Prison. Notably, she compares her struggle to a tragic play:

Cel. Blessed be God, then I hope the Play is near an end, for Tragedies whether real or fictitious, seldom end before the Women die.

A Lord. What do you make a Play of it?

*Cel. If there be no more Truth in the whole Story, then there is in what relates to me, every Play that is Acted has more Truth in it.*²²⁷

Here, Cellier reveals one of the most crucial elements of her emotive, sensory-driven defense: it is a performance. This is not to imply that the midwife was forging or contriving her narrative, but rather that she was acutely-aware of the way in which it was presented to readers— similar to the way a thespian might be concerned about the *portrayal* of a certain scene. Rendering this theatrical analogy even more potent is the fact that the text itself is written in the form of a dramatic script. Instead of framing this portion of the narrative as a formal deposition, often written in the third person and focused on factual information, she draws heavily from the seventeenth-century playbook— a form conducive to sensory descriptions and first-person accounts.

To demonstrate why a Catholic like Elizabeth Cellier believed that dialogue would be the most efficient way to achieve her religious and political objectives, it is necessary to frame the playlet as a product of sociological change— an analysis prescribed by McKenzie. Though it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment it premiered on English newsstands, we can roughly date the pamphlet play back to a mid seventeenth-century reprise of “Lucianic dialogues,” originally named after Greek rhetorician Lucian of Samosata (ca. 120-180).²²⁸ Covering a plethora of controversial theological and moral topics, Lucian typically organized his pamphlets as scripted debates between “characters” from a mix of demographics, ranging from second-century Cynic philosophers to Supernaturalists, from divine deities to middle-class Grecians. Clearly, this rhetorical strategy was at least partially developed to establish a semblance of *parity* between debaters— a quality that made it the ideal choice for Catholic minorities wishing to “parley” with their Protestant oppressors on paper. The visual appearance of the dialogue reflected this original purpose. Featuring lines that constantly oscillated between two labeled characters, scripts carved out speaking-time (and literal space on the page) for subordinate subjects whose voices were rarely heard in the real world. They also allowed both characters the opportunity to speak in the first-person— thus restoring

²²⁷ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 30.

²²⁸ Tim Whitmarsh, “Greek and Roman in Dialogue: The Pseudo-Lucianic Nero,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 119 (1999): pp. 142-160, 142.

nominative agency to groups that would typically be passivized. On a grander scale, we can think of dialogues as textual representations of pamphlet culture as a whole: a corpus of conflicting narratives and genres vying for equal representation.

It should also be noted that as a form originally designed to be performed on stage, the playlet encouraged readers to assign a certain physicality to the lines they were interpreting. Emotion, inflection, movement, and passion were intrinsic to the form itself, making it much easier for pamphleteers like Cellier to imbue their works with sympathy-inducing, sensory-rich language. According to Carol L. Winkelmann's *The Discourse of Conflict and Resistance*, Cellier's "primary strategy [was] to re-enact... events. She invite[d] the readers to experience her experience" by presenting the story as a dialogue.²²⁹ The word "experience," repeated numerous times within the aforementioned passage, subtly alludes to the language of perception— a rhetorical device that Cellier exploited as much as possible throughout her stretches of dialogue. A prime example of this occurs on page three of *Malice Defeated*²³⁰, wherein Cellier linguistically transports her readers into the bowels of Newgate Prison during a session of torture " 'pon the rack."²³¹ The "Terrible Groans and Squeeks which came out of the... Condemn'd hole" are described with enough detail for us to hear the shrieks in our own ears; the sight of the "Passengers under the Gate... amazed with Horror and Dread" becomes imprinted in our minds.²³² The rush of wind generated by an officer "[running] from the Noise" is almost palpable; the putrid smell of the prisoner's rotting flesh assaults us as Cellier describes "*great Hole[s] [worn] in both his Legs, by the weight of his Irons.*"²³³ A "scene" of similar vernacular power occurs on page twenty, during which Cellier confronts Dangerfield for his ultimate betrayal; painting her opponent as a man of false contrition, she ascribes him a "Howl[ing]," whining voice and a face dripping with "Crokadils tears."²³⁴ Even the metaphorical "set" of her play is mapped in detail; the room in which she was locked featured "Window shutters... nail'd up," depriving her "a breath of Air."²³⁵ In *all* of the aforementioned examples, Cellier's dialogue is borne of dramatic intensity; her sensory language is so explicit that it forces her Protestant adversaries to view the passages they are reading not just as fictional fairytales, but as palpable scenes with real stake in the here and now. As heavily discussed in Chapter 2, it would appear that garnering sympathy was the intention of this process— a purpose acknowledged by her audience. The author of

²²⁹ Winkelmann, "Discourse of Conflict and Resistance," 94.

²³⁰ It should be noted that the word "dialogue" in this context refers not only to the actual lines of speakers within *Malice Defeated*, but also to descriptive stage directions and setting descriptions (characteristics typically found in real scripts).

²³¹ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 3.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17, 21.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

A True Copy of a Letter of Consolation Sent to Nat. the Printer,” for example, recalls feeling inclined to “love, hug, and carress [the suborners on the pillory].”²³⁶ Within his *Weekly Pacquet*, Whig propagandist Henry Care criticizes his “arch-enemy,” Roger L’Estrange, for having a “kindness for the soft obliging Sex... perhaps [loving] a Person of [Cellier’s] quality by Sympathy” alone.²³⁷ Whether readers were “detesting, abhorring, glorifying, esteeming, revering, fearing, repenting, lamenting, [or] pitying,” all of these responses were the reactionary products of Cellier’s “staged, exaggerated emotion.”²³⁸ Dialogues allowed the pamphleteer to write an autobiographical play, “cast it with characters,” and then “enlarg[e] their hearts with affectations.”²³⁹ This begets the question: exactly how, if at all, did the typographical arrangement of the dramatic dialogue support this rhetorical objective?

II. a. Indentation: The Hidden Meaning of Blank Space Within the Early Modern Playbook

To answer this question, readers must be aware of a pivotal fact: just as the dialogue *subgenre* developed as a result of glacial sociological shift, so too did the unique bibliographic features that eventually rendered it an easily identifiable form. The first of these, one could argue, was the slow incorporation of the “indent” into the early modern theatrical script. Before indenture had become convention, dialogue was often “presented to readers as unbroken blocks of text” -- a process that would likely have continued, had it not been for the creative genius of Rastell²⁴⁰, Wynkyn de Worde²⁴¹, and Richard Pynson²⁴² (ca. 1450-1530)²⁴³. Importantly, these printers were responsible for crafting a “typographic scheme” for articulating changes in speaker that “imported the recognizable strategy of scribal rubrication– the use of pilcrows to articulate discrete textual units– to break the text down into discrete units of speech.”²⁴⁴ As a result of this bibliographic evolution, pieces of metal type bearing pilcrows (¶) were ordered from foundries in relative bulk– at least in comparison to the number of em-quads that would eventually replace them in the majority of dramatic texts. In their very earliest scribal uses, these symbols

²³⁶ *A True Copy of a Letter of Consolation Sent to Nat. the Printer, near the Pope’s Keys in Fetter-Lane, from the Meal-Tub Midwife, in New-Gate Printed to Prevent False, Seditious and Lying Reports* (London, UK: n.p., 1681), 1.

²³⁷ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 74.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ John Rastell (ca. 1470-1530) was an English printer, author, and politician well known for printing *Fulgens and Lucrence*– a 15th-century play by Henry Medwall. (Source: Claire M. L. Bourne, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 3.)

²⁴¹ Wynkyn de Worde (d. 1534) was a publisher and printer known for working directly with William Caxton, the first person to introduce the printing press to England in 1476. He was responsible for the manufacture of myriad popular prints during the late medieval period, but some of his most acclaimed works included Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*, Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, and Juliana Berners’ *The Book of Saint Albans*. (Source: Ibid.)

²⁴² Richard Pynson (ca. 1450-1530), born in the generation directly succeeding William Caxton, is known for being one of the first printers of English books. Eventually, he would be awarded the position of King Printer to Henry VII and Henry VIII– a post he used to print one of the earliest surviving cookery books in English alongside an illustrated edition of *The Canterbury Tales* (the first English book to feature roman typeface as its primary font). (Source: Ibid.)

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

were utilized to both support and reinforce the “ratiocinative scrutiny” of scholarly works, implying a causal relationship between a text’s visual organization and a concerted increase in readers’ cognitive efficiency.²⁴⁵ Just as contemporary readers might recognize the paragraph as the monomer of intellectual thought in a typed work, so too would medieval audiences have begun to identify the pilcrow as the basic unit of content in a dramatic text. The very fact that printers were developing methods to convey drama to the average reader implied that the play was no longer a solely- performative genre; now it could be perused and interpreted in the same way as a synthesis essay, theological tract, or legal treatise. In fact, the treatment of the playbook as a structured argument was likely both a product and driver of the belief that dialogues *could* be employed as animadversions— suggesting why early modern pamphleteers like Cellier felt that the “script” was an acceptable rhetorical mode.

Whilst printing his edition of Henry Medwall’s play, *Fulgens and Lucrece*, John Rastell altered the convention slightly; rather than printing dialogue in a continuous block of text with glyphs in between each line, he physically broke up the script into its constituent parts. In an attempt to simplify the reading experience, two changes were made: firstly, speaker names were moved to “the left-hand margin on both versos and rectos,” and secondly, “every time the speaker change[d], the new speech beg[an] on a new line.”²⁴⁶ Though this was not a ubiquitous practice in the late medieval period, it would become the official silhouette of the written drama— a visual structure that almost all early modern readers would have recognized. In fact, some of the only differences

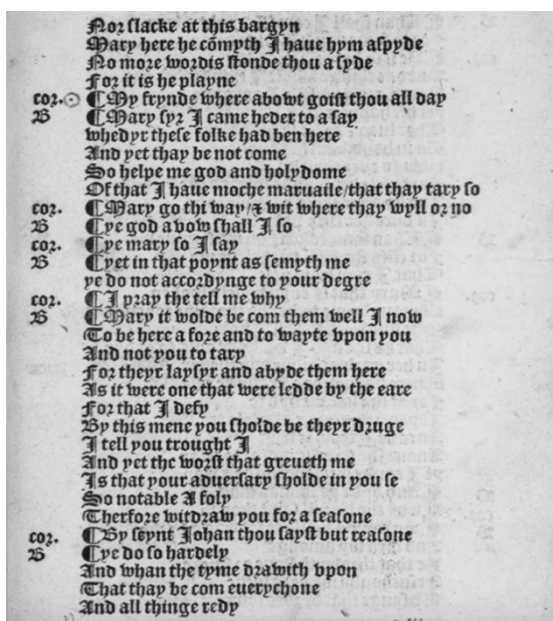


Figure 10. Henry Medwall’s *A godely interlude of Fulgens Cenatoure of Rome. Lucrece his daughter* (1512-16?). Published in Claire M. L. Bourne’s *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*.

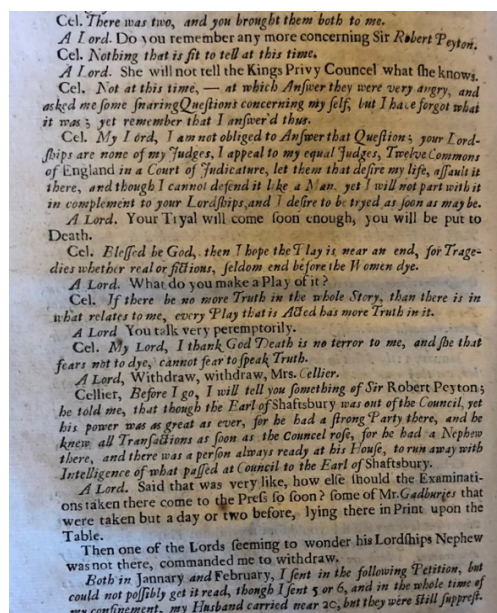


Figure 11. Page 30 of Cellier’s *Malice Defeated* (held in G. Pamphlet 2204 at the Weston Library). Photo taken by Serena Desai.

²⁴⁵ Bourne, *Typographies of Performance*, 34.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

between this version of *Fulgens* and Cellier's *Malice Defeated* were that the latter text replaced pilcrowes with em quads (blank indentures), and utilized both roman and italic typefaces to differentiate between adjacent speakers (see Figures 10 and 11 above for a visual comparison).

Here, Cellier draws from a bibliographic convention that had been established nearly 170 years prior to her publication. When *Malice Defeated* was released in the summer of 1680, the average English reader would have registered the midwife's typographical and paratextual choices, matched them with a form that they were already familiar with, and used preconceived notions about the genre to interpret her dramatic intentions. In other words, Cellier's audience would have walked into the reading process *already primed* to absorb poignant, visceral imagery, to physicalize the movements of characters across the mental stage, to corporealize the speakers on the written page, and to imagine a sense of parity between opposing groups. The last of these codes, the implicit equalization of dominant and minority factions, is heavily-influenced by indents and speaker-separations— two typographical features that create physical “breathing room” between lines of Protestant and Catholic characters and allot each individual the space to make their point without interruption. Though conversations between Parliamentary officials and Jesuit citizens in the real world would have been completely one-sided— dictated by hierarchical dynamics outside the midwife's control— here she uses her authorial agency to erase the power imbalance, allowing subordinate subjects the same “screen time” as their opponents. Moreover, visual breaks between speakers allow Cellier to construct a typographical barrier between her words (characterized by truthfulness, morality, and piety) and her adversaries' (suffused with lies and malign intentions). Keeping her lines pure and untouched, the midwife quite literally distances herself from the sinful statements of her opponents. While it is quite easy to overlook the use of blank space within a text— seeing as most readers are wont to pay attention to the inked portion of the page— it is absolutely crucial to recognize these indentures as powerful bibliographic elements capable of altering the reading experience.²⁴⁷

II.b. The Em Dash: A Minor Typographical Element with Major Humanist Implications

²⁴⁷ Skeptical readers may argue that despite Cellier's clear choice to frame her narrative as a script, she may not have been responsible for the exact arrangement of the final print. According to Philip Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography*— arguably the most comprehensive account of bibliographic processes in modern scholarship— the design of a finished work “was [typically] left to the compositor to decide on the basis of “house style” and the precedents of similar books.” Though most manuscript copies delivered to print houses were “fair-copied,” some were “ill-written,” “blotted,” and “corrected”; even legible, organized copies were often no more than handwritten works on “loose leaves of paper.” Ultimately, Cellier's lack of authority in this portion of the production process does not render an examination of her pamphlet's typography inappropriate; seeing as she was heavily involved in seventeenth-century pamphletary debate, she was most likely highly-attuned to the visual appearance of typical playlets, and would have written her manuscript copy with established conventions in mind. By the time she published her work, the standard appearance of the dramatic script had been solidified for nearly two centuries— meaning it was very unlikely that she expected her pamphlet to look any different. (Source: Philip Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972), 40-41.)

Yet another feature of the printed page that transformed the interpretive process was the em dash (–), a piece of punctuation that came to signify “bodily actions and interactions” in the seventeenth-century dialogue.²⁴⁸ Though the majority of dashes in today’s works merely designate textual asides or subordinate clauses, stationers in the early 1600s employed them as punctuational shortcuts for physical movement, interruption, hesitation, or involuntary noise. As emphasized by Claire M. L. Bourne’s *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*, this usage of the dash made the body “indispensable” to the text; though pamphleteers could always use descriptive imagery to chronicle characters’ sudden actions, the em dash was the manifestation of movement *itself*, the literal interruption of words on the printed page.²⁴⁹ Just like the development of the indentation (which began as a pilcrow and slowly shifted to the em quad), the elongated hyphen became convention after at least a century of gradual change. Back in the 1500s, most action was designated by brief Latin stage directions “situated to the right of... speeches” -- oftentimes paired with pilcrows (as in George Whetstone’s *Promos and Cassandra* [1578]) or manicules²⁵⁰ (as in John Heywood’s *A Play of Love* [1548]).²⁵¹ The objective here was to completely separate movement from the text; physical gestures, the literal, tangible portions of the script, were often deemed inferior to the conceptual arguments of medieval dialogue. Bourne’s chapter on “[Ben] Jonson’s Breaches and the Typography of Action” bolsters this argument with primary evidence from the period:

As early as the 1590s, just as the market for printed commercial theater plays was beginning to take off, the printer-publisher Richard Jones addressed the problem of mediating the non-lexical business of comic stage action with moveable type. He admitted having ‘purposely’ omitted ‘some fond and friulous Iestures’ from *Tamburlaine the Great* when preparing the pair of plays for the press. Jones described the ‘Iestures’ as ‘vnmeet for the matter’ and ‘a great disgrace to so... stately a historie...’²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Bourne, *Typographies of Performance*, 77.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁵⁰ The manicule (☛) was the image of a pointing hand, typically used by medieval authors to draw attention to specific paragraphs, verses, or images. Handwritten marginalia from the time period shows us that readers not only recognized the symbol, but drew it on their own copies to mark various passages to which they would return.

²⁵¹ Bourne, *Typographies of Performance*, 82.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 80.

The words “frulous” and “vnmeet” imply that late sixteenth-century compositors were still in the process of reckoning with the identity of the dramatic script. Was it a series of arguments that could be dissected, schematized, or debated? Was it merely the transcript of a performance that would be read for entertainment? Or was it an amalgamation of the two—a hybrid between formalism and sensationalism? Printers seemed to be leaning towards the third characterization as they devised new typographical methods to close the gap between dialogue and movement. One such technique was the use of turn-overs and turn-unders-- action-words tucked above or below the “line(s) of dialogue to which they corresponded” in order to “accommodate descriptions” too wide to fit within the printer’s forme.²⁵³ Used within plays ranging from Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Hamlet*

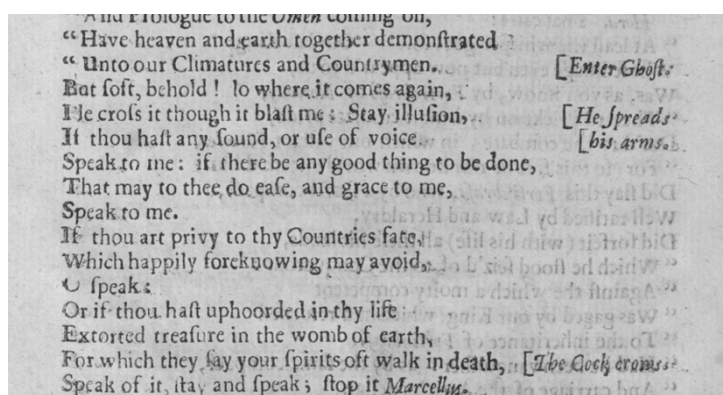


Figure 12. Excerpt from Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Hamlet the Prince of Denmark* (printed in 1676). Published in Claire M. L. Bourne’s *Canonising Shakespeare*.

Prince of Denmark (1603) to Edward de Vere’s *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* (1594) to John Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605), this bibliographic element quite literally tethered stage directions to the spoken word, forcing readers to associate the dialogue on the page with a live human being. Later, it would be replaced with brief descriptions enclosed in rounded or square

brackets—allowing printers to interweave actions throughout the text whilst ensuring that the page stayed organized (depicted in Figure 12). Reading similarly to marginalia—an element of the text meant to be analyzed *alongside* the main body—these parenthetical notes implied a clear relationship between the written scene and its blocking.²⁵⁴

When comedic playwright Ben Jonson entered the historical record at the very start of the seventeenth century, he altered convention once more by replacing the majority of dramatic descriptions with punctuation embedded within the lines of the dialogue itself. According to Bourne, Jonson’s satires “featured characters whose imbalanced humoral constitutions triggered punishable... monomanias, affected verbal tics, and extravagant

²⁵³ The “forme” was essentially a wooden chaise used to keep lines of moveable type in place during the printing process. Once lines of type were created, they would be placed within the forme and locked in place using smaller wedges of wood. Then the entire chaise would slide underneath the press after being rolled with ink.

Source 1: Gaskell, *New Introduction to Bibliography*, 78.

Source 2: Bourne, *Typographies of Performance*, 84.

²⁵⁴ Blocking is a term referring to the predetermined movements of an actor across the stage. In twenty-first century theater productions, actors will often manually write in their movements (ex: exit right, enter left, cough here, etc.) next to the specific lines of the script they correspond to—demonstrating an implicit understanding that actions belong next to the dialogue itself.

physical compulsions.”²⁵⁵ The action was such “a ‘significant’ feature of [his] dramaturgy” that it “needed to be signified in a ‘page’ fashion.”²⁵⁶ The way in which the playwright expressed these sudden jolts was through the em dash, a line that symbolized heavy breathing, hiccups, kisses, chuckles, or other “breaches” in the flow of speech. Within the Prologue of his acclaimed play, *Cynthia’s Revels* (1601), dialogue is fractured by lengthy dashes, each representing a place where the speaker is taking puffs from a pipe of tobacco:

Boy 3. By this light, I wonder that any man is so mad, to come to see these rascally *Tits* play here-
 ----- They doe act like so manie *wrens*, or *pismires*----- not the fift part of a good face amongst *At the breaches*
 them all----- And then their *musicke* is abomindable----- able to stretch a mans eares worse *he takes his*
 then tenne----- pillories, and their ditties----- most lamentable things, like the pittifull *tobacco.*
 fellowes that make them----- Poets.²⁵⁷

About ten years later, Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton had latched on to the technique in their play *Roaring Girl* (1611), using a series of shorter hyphens to physicalize the effort “Sir Robert Trapdoor” takes to read a piece of correspondence sent from “[his] Captaine” to the character “Sir Alexander Wentgrave”:

Trap. A letter from my Captaine to your Worship.
Alex. Oh, oh, now I remember tis to preferre thee into my feruice.
Trap. To be shifter vnder your Worships nose of a clean trencher, when ther’s a good bit
 vpon’t.
Alex. Troth honest fellow---- humph – ha----let me fee.²⁵⁸

By the time Cellier had published *Malice Defeated* (about 70 years later), the em dash had cemented into dramatic convention. She employs it liberally throughout the text, typically to symbolize characters’ physical shakiness, sniffing, sobs, and belabored breathing (actions too subtle to receive individual stage directions but too relevant not to be included at all). In practicing this technique, the midwife pressures readers to acknowledge the *bodies* of her dramatis personae as they are speaking—a tactic that reinforces her rhetorical effort to corporealize the characters in her script via preceptory, often gory diction. When transcribing her conversation with Thomas Dangerfield through the windows of their respective prison cells at Newgate, she writes:

²⁵⁵ Bourne, *Typographies of Performance*, 90.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ben Jonson, *Cynthia’s Revels Or, The Fountain of Self-Love*, ed. Alexander Corbin Judson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1912), 15.

²⁵⁸ Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl: Students Facsimile Edition* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1914), 16.

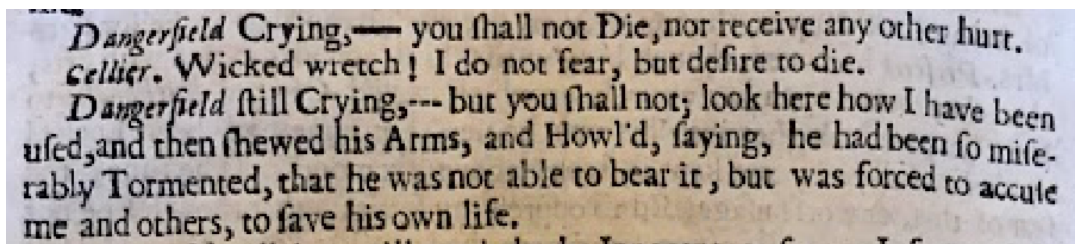


Figure 13. Excerpt from page 20 of Cellier's *Malice Defeated* (held in G. Pamphlet 2204 at the Weston Library). Photo taken by Serena Desai.

Cellier never specifies exactly what her punctuation is symbolizing here, but the precursory word “crying” indicates that her “breaches” represent the actions associated with Dangerfield’s show of false contrition. The full scene is left up to the audience’s imagination; while the thick em dash may signify a louder (or longer) wail, the series of successive hyphens might denote a fit of shorter sobs or hyperventilated breaths. Though the average seventeenth-century reader may not have stopped to reflect upon an element as “negligible” as the dash, he/she would have implicitly acknowledged both its presence and meaning from having read so many texts that employed the same typographical convention.

Later within her pamphlet, Cellier uses the em dash to symbolize the physical shakiness of Mr. Adams (a “Commissioner of the Statute of Bankrupt”) as he cites the midwife’s allegedly- vulgar language:

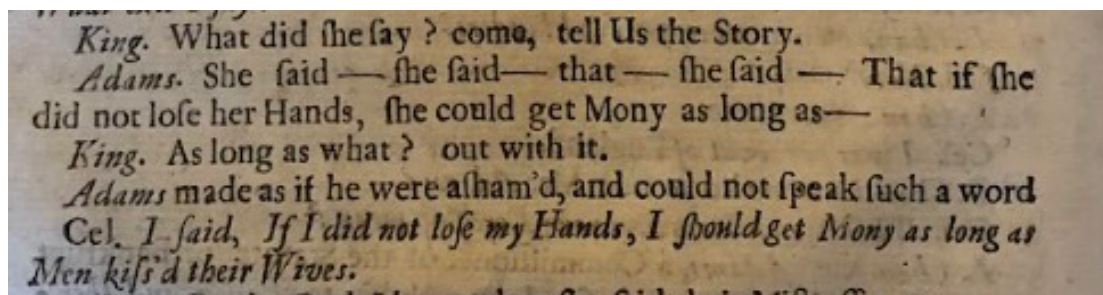


Figure 14. Excerpt from page 28 of Cellier's *Malice Defeated* (held in G. Pamphlet 2204 at the Weston Library). Photo taken by Serena Desai.

The inclusion of dashes within this sentence—along with the repetition of the words “she said”—mimic the broken, often mumbled speech patterns of a real human being, transforming this section of text from a rote transcript into an authentic-sounding deposition. Moreover, breaks in the sentence render Mr. Adams’ body (his quivering hands, wavering voice, and sweating forehead) *indispensable* to the words he is saying. Unlike readers from the mid sixteenth century, who could simply avoid reading italicized stage directions, the audience of *Malice Defeated* is forced to confront the physicality of the characters on the page.

Utilizing both the indent and the em dash had two purposes: (1) it allowed Cellier to mimic the visual appearance of the pamphlet play, thus sending “codes and subcodes” to readers on how to interpret her work, and (2) it embedded her rhetorical objectives (ex: the corporealization of the Catholic body; the creation of parity

between “Papists” and Protestants) *into* the text itself. Evidence from response pamphlets tells us that these cues did not go unheeded; the anonymous author of *The Midwife Unmask’d*, for example, makes consistent references to the physical body parts of the “Romish” men and women he/she criticizes throughout the rebuttal (“she wrung her hands and cried,” “lying Tongues,” “forehead brazen,” etc.).²⁵⁹ The pamphleteer who penned *The Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked* assigns the Jesuit body anatomical functions, making consistent reference to consumption and starvation (“she curst him for eating up her Bread and Cheese”).²⁶⁰ The person who crafted *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence* even went so far as to list the events of Cellier’s morning routine, framing her more as a typical seventeenth-century woman than an amorphous she-devil:

Our Lady Midwife, one Sunday Morning, weary of her *Dull Husband Cellier*, Rouses him about six of the Clock, packs him out of doors to Masse; then wills *Susan* [the maid] to reach her a clean Smock, she washes her body with Rose-water, Powders and Perfumes her self, slips into Bed again; commands *Susan* to place certain Sweet-Bags under her Head and Buttocks, and then to withdraw.²⁶¹

Though Cellier’s harshest political opponents entered *Malice Defeated* already prepared to dismiss all of her arguments, these quotations demonstrate that they, at the very least, subliminally registered her rhetorical and typographical attempts to humanize the Catholic faction.

III. Thomas Dangerfield’s *Ad Locum Animadversion*: Using Italics to Signify the Enemy-Text

While we can credit Elizabeth Cellier for using the bibliographic form of her text to reinforce its intended meaning, we should also recognize that *every other* pamphleteer in the political sphere—including her rival, Thomas Dangerfield—was doing something similar. As noted previously, the trickster consciously chose to frame his argument as an *ad locum* animadversion, a point-counterpoint “conversation” between quotes from Cellier’s text and his own antagonistic responses. It is very likely that he had two primary reasons for employing this form—the first being that it would allow him to carve physical space between the midwife’s tainted “falsities” and his own divine truths, and the second being that it would give him the opportunity to slice up (and dismantle) her claims however he saw fit. The objective of quoting directly from Cellier was to not only strip her words of context, but to point out their inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and hypocrisies—thus leaving her without enough credibility to hold weight in the political discourse. Dangerfield reveals this intent *himself* on page four of his

²⁵⁹ *The Midwife Unmask’d* 1, 3, 4.

²⁶⁰ *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 3.

²⁶¹ *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 16.

response-pamphlet, stating: “I have Perused [*Malice Defeated*], and find my self therein displayed so much beyond the life, Her so much short of her true Colours, and so much material Subject matter fit for my Reply, that I have taken the Pains to draw from it, so far as concerns my self, these following Observations, and shall confine my self to most of her own words, which (as she says) were wrote by her own hand...”²⁶² Clearly, Thomas Dangerfield understood exactly what the *ad locum* animadversion was going to do for him.

The resulting pamphlet he authored did not stray far from bibliographic convention. As his argument progresses, “Willoughby” oscillates between organized lists of italicized excerpts from Cellier’s pamphlet—each properly cited with parentheticals—and lengthy blocks of roman-script aimed at dismantling the flagrant “lies” of the “Romantick Handicraft-Woma[n]” who penned them.²⁶³ An excerpt of Dangerfield’s work, copied from the original housed at the Union Theological Seminary Library in New York, exhibits these typographical features:

Page 14, 15. That Willoughby got drunk, and pick'd a quarrel at the Rainbow Coffee-House, with one Kenelstone, about Sir Thomas Player, and thereby made himself obnoxious; so that having lost the hopes of obtaining a Commission himself, he sought to get one by means of others, and then swore God dam him, now the Papists would give him no money, he would go to the Presbyterians, and they would give him enough.

How far she thinks this may amount to her excuse, I know not; but as well living as dying, I must declare in the presence of God, (my quarrel being first by accident with that Gentleman, Mr. Kinastone, who I would now be glad to know) that the Countess of Powis, as well as her self, were the persons that put me upon the Tumultuous part of it, and did it on purpose not only to baffle the Electing that worthy Member of this present Parliament, Sir Thomas Player, but also to create a mutiny, or uproar in the City; for look ye, Gentlemen, to what purpose else should I leave a Challenge for Mr. Kinastone at the Coffee-House, have 30 men, or upwards, ready Arm'd with Trunchions, Pistols, Painsards, &c. had it been my quarrel only, and I so extremely poor as she expresses: where should I have rais'd 25 £. or upwards to buy the said Arms, or to gratifie so many people? But the question is easily answered: I had the money from the Lady Powis, and her self, who were purely my Abettors and Encouragers of the Action.

Figure 15. Excerpt from page 6 of Thomas Dangerfield’s *Answer to a certain scandalous lying pamphlet*. Published by ProQuest.

The passage above makes his counterargument crystal clear: Cellier’s colorful narrative about “Willoughby” getting drunk and hinting at an eventual betrayal is a dubious work of fiction. In fact, the only individuals responsible for Dangerfield’s riot at the Rainbow Coffee House were Cellier and the Countess of Powis—both of whom gave him orders to “create a mutiny” in the center of the city.²⁶⁴ If the man was truly as impoverished as

²⁶² Dangerfield, *Tbo. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 4.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

the “Popish Midwife” would have her readers believe, he would never have been able to afford the “Arms” he supposedly took up that day—each costing twenty-five pounds or more.²⁶⁵ The crux of the argument—just like the animadversive structure containing it—has a clear logical sequence.

Arguably, the clarity of Dangerfield’s response pamphlet derives partially from the typographical arrangement of the statements within it. Take, for example, the slight shift in style from *italics* to roman that visually differentiates Cellier’s “flawed” argument from her rival’s. To understand the importance of this change—a ubiquitous phenomenon in the early modern print market whose significance would have been discernible to the average reader—it is pivotal to discuss the origin of the italic fount. The first set of italic punches, crafted in 1500 by Venetian typecutter Aldus Manutius, was of “a character entirely independent [from] roman.”²⁶⁶ In fact, deeming its ligatures kindred to manuscript-cursive, the designer printed his edition of *Epistole Devotissime*—the *Devotional Letters of Catherine de Sienna*—exclusively in italics. However, by the time Cellier entered the historical record, the fount had been relegated to a subsidiary role, used alongside bodies of roman text “for purposes of differentiation, emphasis, and for ‘liminary and preliminary’ matter.”²⁶⁷ Though the typical seventeenth-century print house was still ordering at least 150 sorts (ie: alphabetical, punctuational and numerical varieties) of italic type from the local foundry, it began purchasing less of each, filing bulk orders of roman type instead to keep up with bibliographic trends. Having lost its dominant position in the typographical hierarchy, the fount came to designate lexical protrusions—words and sentences that were categorically-distinct from their roman counterparts. Mark Bland’s “The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England” even goes so far as to say that “the choice of italic marked the otherness of the text and the differentiation of voice; it linked the [squawking] song of the nightingale with the eloquence of the poet.”²⁶⁸ It comes as no surprise then, that when Dangerfield places excerpts of *Malice Defeated* in italics, he subtly degrades Cellier’s pamphlet, transforming it from a fully-fledged body of work into the mere subsidiary of another. The italicization of Cellier’s claims paradoxically lessens their intellectual weight—morphing them into “spectacles to be beheld with scrutiny or shock” as opposed to statements of serious import. From an orientational perspective, “Willoughby’s” words—typed in roman—even seem to overwhelm Cellier’s arguments on the page, sandwiching her sentences between his own and thereby limiting their visual impact.

²⁶⁵ Dangerfield, *Theo. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 6.

²⁶⁶ Daniel Berkely Updike, *Printing Types: Their History, Forms, and Use*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 129.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Bland, “Appearance of the Text,” 99.

Compounding this effect, Dangerfield typically uses the calligraphic typeface to signify words that warrant *negative* attention. The names of the defendants in a criminal trial, the designated place of execution, the last words of a man who was to be hanged, the weapons used in a design to murder Parliamentary officials, and myriad other words are commonly denoted with italics within his *Answer*. Examples of this practice are scattered across the facsimile excerpted above; Dangerfield italicizes the words “*Countess of Powis*,” “*Mr. Kinastone*,” “*Trunchions*, *Pistols*, *Painyards*,” and “*Arms*”—all of which are shrouded with implied violence and political disobedience.²⁶⁹ The first in the list was a supposed conspirator of the Meal-Tub Plot and an attempted murderess; the second was the gentleman with whom “Willoughby” quarreled at the Rainbow Coffee House; the third and fourth were instruments of brutality carried by the thirty men waiting outside the café where Dangerfield sparked a mutiny. Though there are some exceptions to the rule, the grand majority of italicized words and phrases in Dangerfield’s response pamphlet connote bleakness, corruption, or outright barbarity. This is not unique to his text; it can be observed in a number of “Popish Controversy” pamphlets being produced at this time, including *Malice Defeated*. Take the first page of her text for example, wherein Cellier italicizes phrases such as “[for their] *Affection to the King and Royal Family [they] were persecuted*, and “[the] *Loyal Party merely for being so, [was] oppressed and ruined*”—actively choosing to leave words of positive connotation in roman (ex: “my own Parents and Relations” or “Constant and Faithful”).²⁷⁰ As previously stated, there are a number of instances where the pattern does not hold; however, it occurs enough times to identify a rough relationship between typographical style and expected meaning. Thus, when Cellier’s quotations are italicized in Dangerfield’s response, they are not only marked as less important than his own; they are flagged as *unscrupulous* and *immoral*. A Dangerfield-apologist might even say they are just as slanted as the script that conveys them on the page.

Skeptical readers may argue two points—the first being that the author of an original manuscript copy likely did not have control over the fonts used in his printed works, and the second being that utilizing italics to denote speech was a *pragmatic convention* with no moralistic intention. Those who make the former argument are correct in claiming that printers, not authors, were usually given the final say when it came to stylistic matters; Gaskell’s *New Introduction to Bibliography* notes that one of the chief responsibilities of the compositor was to “ensure that the typographical ‘style’ of the result—the spelling, capitalization, punctuation, italicization, and abbreviation, which we call the accidentals—accord[ed] with the conventions of the time and place.”²⁷¹ A passage

²⁶⁹ Dangerfield, *Tbo. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 6.

²⁷⁰ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 1.

²⁷¹ Gaskell, *New Introduction*, 344.

written by English printer Joseph Moxon in 1683 bolsters Gaskell's assertion, stating: "*It is necessary that a Compositor be a good English Schollar at least and that he know... when (to render the Sence of the Author more intelligent to the Readers) to Set some Words or Sentences in Italick or English [gothic] Letters, &c.*"²⁷² However, for the purposes of this analysis it does not matter who made the decision to italicize one set of words over another; at the end of the day, the link between the font of the words themselves and their conveyed meaning stands. As for the second argument, one must recognize that the typographical decisions made by the compositor—just like every other bibliographic choice made during the hand press period—were far more than practical. Surely, using italics did have economic and visual advantages; not only was it thinner and more vertical, allowing for more words to fit on one page, but it starkly contrasted the wider roman font, thus making it easier for readers to identify different sections of one text. However, as is argued by Mark Bland, "this typography was conceptually humanist in its rhetorical character"; in other words, it had the capacity to express deeper cultural meaning.²⁷³ Italics were often used to differentiate the main text from its subsidiary fragments, to distinguish the primary narrator from his subordinates. Whether or not it did so intentionally, this practice generated a hierarchy of speakers within each pamphlet—a subliminal labeling system that was undoubtedly acknowledged and interpreted by the reading public.

The grand takeaway from this chapter should be that while Elizabeth Cellier and Thomas Dangerfield were creative pamphleteers, their choices did not come out of thin air; both authors (unwittingly or not) drew from a bank of preconceived notions about pamphlet culture and the hermeneutical process to craft ephemeral works that spoke directly to their intended audiences. Though the twenty-first century reader might flip through *Malice Defeated* or *Dangerfield's Answer* with little regard to paratextual and typographical elements (ex: font choice, paper quality, margin size, indentation, marginalia, or punctuation), these would have had a profound effect on the way in which their respective texts were interpreted. To analyze either work in a vacuum, without the context of the bibliographic culture surrounding it, would be akin to perusing a dictionary without any of its definitions. The appearance of the text carried as much meaning as the words it contained.

Conclusion

All of the techniques employed by Cellier and Dangerfield, both rhetorical and bibliographical, worked in concert to construct an argument informed by both seventeenth-century political discourse and early modern

²⁷² Gaskell, *New Introduction*, 345-346.

²⁷³ Bland, "Appearance of the Text," 100.

pamphlet culture. Knowing that she would need to evince Protestant pity, the “Popish Midwife” called upon visceral imagery to physicalize the Catholic body—a lexical strategy used by the Leveller pamphleteers that came before her. By mimicking the arguments of her predecessors, Cellier tagged herself as (1) a well-read individual aware of English history, (2) an author with just as much rhetorical power as her male counterparts, and (3) a revolutionary just as influential as John Lilburne, William Walwyn, or Richard Overton (the chief “Agitators” of the 1640s). The name of her work, *Malice Defeated*, appears to be a direct homage to *Malice Detected*—implying that the midwife was deliberate about her choices.

Not only did Cellier consciously craft a redux of the Leveller pamphlets-- an act that situated her arguments within the literary conversation-- but she borrowed the forms and paratextual arrangements of preexisting parent genres (ex: the pamphlet-play, the article of indictment, the trial archive, the deposition, and the women’s petition) to imbue her text with the same air of legitimacy. As an active participant within the seventeenth-century Communication Circuit (ie: a purchaser, author, and disseminator of dozens of works), the midwife understood the symbiotic relationship between the form of a text and its interpreted meaning. Aware that readers entered dramatic scripts primed to encounter both preceptory language and stage directions (ie: physical movements), Cellier knew that framing most of her text as a play would encourage readers to corporealize the Catholic body. To reconstruct the visual appearance of the dialogue, she embedded the pamphlet with indents, italics, and em-dashes—all of which had become stationer’s conventions by the 1680s. Conversely, Dangerfield opted for the dryer *ad locum* animadversion, a form that would allow him to problematize elements of Cellier’s original text without having to completely retell his version of the story. As noted previously, the burden of proof rested on the Defendant’s bench, not the Prosecution’s—meaning that “Willoughby” did not *need* to emulate other literary genres to usurp their legitimacy. The only objectives he had were to mar Cellier’s reputation whilst preserving his own. Shifting between roman (primary) and italic (secondary) fonts, Dangerfield marks his own claims as dominant and the midwife’s as subsidiary. Just like Cellier, he uses the *mise en page* to his advantage.

Upon reading this thesis, the first question that comes to mind for the majority of readers has been, “but who won this legal/rhetorical/animadversive war: Elizabeth Cellier or her Protestant rivals?” The answer may not wrap a perfect bow around the midwife’s feminist efforts, but it demonstrates the complexity of her position as a female Catholic in seventeenth-century England. While one could definitively conclude that the midwife lost her

battle with the courts²⁷⁴, she had crafted an exposé so scandalous that Dangerfield, one of the most powerful proponents of the Popish Plot, had been stripped of nearly all his credibility. This did not necessarily mean that her pamphlet was more *persuasive* than his, however; due to the nature of the ideological echo-chamber, most Protestants who entered the political fray only became more entrenched in the beliefs they already held. Just because Dangerfield was discredited did not mean that Cellier had officially debunked the entire Meal-Tub Controversy nor gained the approval of her adversaries. It would still be years before rumors of the Popish Plot would completely fade from the minds of the English public.

With this said, the midwife still achieved a colossal goal that warrants recognition: she singlehandedly ended the career and reputation of the “Rogue” who accused her.²⁷⁵ By the time Cellier’s libel trial was over, Dangerfield had been completely defamed; not only had the court caught him in dozens of lies, but he was outed as the person who planted the incriminating documents into Cellier’s meal-tub. After “living the life of a swindler” between 1682 and 1684, being tried for the publication of another pamphlet entitled *Mr. Tho. Dangerfields particular narrative of the late popish design*, and found “guilty of seditious libel,” the man would be fined £1500, pilloried twice, and “whipped from Aldgate to Newgate and from Newgate to Tyburn.”²⁷⁶ On July 4, 1685, whilst being transported back to prison after his second whipping, he was stopped in the street by attorney Robert Francis, who asked “how he enjoyed his race.” In a moment of intense rage, Dangerfield called the lawyer “the sonn of a whore”—enticing Francis to stab him in the eye with his cane.²⁷⁷ The next day, “Willoughby”, a man who had spent his entire adult life falsely accusing innocent Catholics, died in agony.

Even more noteworthy than this character-assassination was the fact that Cellier, a subordinate subject, made a critical contribution to a discourse designed to exclude her. Though it may not have immediately changed the minds of the Protestant zealots who read it, *Malice Defeated* left a feminist legacy so palpable that archivists would continue to study/preserve it for more than three-and-a-half centuries. Though her adversaries consistently sexualized the midwife was a “Romantick Handicraft Wom[an],”²⁷⁸ “Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked,”²⁷⁹ “Lady Errant,”²⁸⁰ and “Whore of Babylon”²⁸¹ -- a technique commonly employed by early modern Englishmen to

²⁷⁴ Note that Cellier was forced to spend three days on the pillory, where she was nearly stoned to death. Not only did she have to watch as hundreds of her pamphlets were burned, but she was fined a hefty sum of 1000 pounds. Though she evaded execution, the midwife was not able to challenge the tyrannical state without serious legal repercussions.

²⁷⁵ Cellier, *Malice Defeated*, 11.

²⁷⁶ Winkelmann, “Discourse of Conflict and Resistance,” 30.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Dangerfield, *Tho. Dangerfield’s Answer*, 1.

²⁷⁹ *Scarlet Beast Stripped Naked*, 1.

²⁸⁰ *Modesty Triumphant Over Impudence*, 1.

²⁸¹ Dolan, *The Whores of Babylon*, 1.

delegitimize their female opponents without actually dissecting their arguments—Cellier forced them to meet her at eye level. Transgressing heteronormative expectations, she demonstrated that women were both active *and* successful participants in the seventeenth-century political conversation. While there are a number of scholars who view the midwife through the constrictive lenses of Catholic or women’s literature, the objective of *this* project was to analyze the way in which her pamphlet interacted with the patriarchal, Protestant majority. Evidently, Cellier was not just able to compete with the men who accused her; she was capable of blacklisting many of them from the political sphere for the rest of their lives. Though the anonymous author of *Mistress Celliers lamentation for the loss of her liberty* wrote this in gest, it turned out to be true: Cellier would “be [her] own Midwife and deliver [her] self of this damn’d Plot that has three parts ruin’d the Kingdom.”²⁸²

²⁸² *Mistress Cellier’s Lamentation*, 1-2.

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