

EARLY MODERN WOMEN'S ANGER PART ONE

Anger, Revenge, and Feminist Ethics in *Titus Andronicus*

Cristina León Alfar.

I want to tap into Tamora's anger at Titus, whose willful murder, called "a sacrifice," of her son sets off the play's events (1.1.101). This essay asks whether we can read Tamora's violence against Titus and his children as just anger and as having an ethical basis. I will engage in a thought experiment to test the limits of my work on female parrhesiasts in early modern drama, who, I argue, speak from an ethical center that points to corruptions, tyrannies, systems of inequity at work in their particular plays. Tamora's protest against her son's murder is made persuasively and works as, at least, motive for the violence that follows. The truth she speaks against the tyranny of Titus's act makes her a parrhesiast (one who speaks truth to power), in Michel Foucault's characterization, which accommodates a number of emotions from shame to anger. Tamora presents particular problems for my argument due to the ruthlessness of her revenge against the Andronici, particularly, though not limited to, the rape of Lavinia. At the outset, then, I acknowledge this challenge. However, the troubles with Tamora expressed by scholars and that any of us may have are part of the point I wish to make regarding the complex workings of early modern drama's depictions of women and of ethics. Ethical critique is not reserved solely for those characters with whom we are comfortable, whom we admire, or who behave themselves in "acceptable" ways. In fact, the kind of speaking Tamora utilizes requires the unacceptable, requires the improper. Propriety prohibits women from speaking, so that by definition, feminist ethics must violate decorum and modesty. Tamora's contradictions in equal measure—her violence, her violations of gender conventions, and the moral weight her words are given in the play to shape its ethical stand against the violence of Roman rule—call attention to the complexity of the ethical dilemmas inherent in war, in taking of prisoners, and in exploitations of the female body. Thus, feminist ethics as I define it does not require its speakers to be pure and uncorrupted; these are loaded cultural terms in any case. Rather, practitioners of feminist ethics speak from positions of authority—fueled by just anger—that are deeply implicated in the ethical dilemmas of their plays, which is precisely what makes them so compelling.

The Productivity of Silent Anger in *The Winter's Tale*

Heidi N. Cephus

In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione maintains a sense of decorum as her husband, Leontes, grows irate and jealous with false accusations. At trial, she provides a defense based in logic, and although she realizes the speech is "boot[less]," she appears calm and collected until she succumbs to grief at the announcement that her son has died.

The play contrasts Hermione, a model of reason, with multiple characters who display their anger: the passionate Leontes, whose anger prevents him from thinking clearly about his wife; the god Apollo, whose anger is blamed for Mamillius's death; Polixenes, whose anger chases Perdita and is son from Bohemia; and Paulina, whose anger takes the form of caustic words that ultimately facilitate Leontes' repentance.

In this paper, I make the case that despite their initial contrast with images of anger as outburst, Hermione's respectful and silent responses are still consistent with the experience of anger.

Examining early modern cultural and physical understandings of anger, I argue that Hermione experiences an expected reaction to an attack on her honor and is thus marked physically with the signs of that emotion. Once I establish Hermione's anger, I examine her anger in terms of early modern defences and attacks on anger to show that Shakespeare presents her anger as a reasonable response to harms done. And finally, I turn to the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* to show that Shakespeare elevates female anger by emphasizing the productivity of Hermione's anger and by tying this productivity to the female contributions to reproduction.

The Materiality of Anger in Hester Pulter's *The Unfortunate Florinda*

Andrea Crow

Just before Hester Pulter's prose romance *The Unfortunate Florinda* suddenly cuts off unfinished, the narrative leaves readers with a striking image of the power of women's anger: the titular Florinda hosts a party where guests are greeted by the sight of her bleeding out from a vein in each arm, her parents holding their fingers to her wounds to staunch the blood.

The basic plot of Pulter's narrative is an old one: she recounts the story of Florinda la Cava, whose rape at the hands of the tyrannical king of Spain Roderigo led her father to ally with the Ummayyad caliphate and lead a conquest of the country. Florinda's story was retold in numerous works in the early modern period, from Walter Raleigh's *The Life and Death of Mahomet* to William Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, and in each case, the power of just anger as a political rallying tool takes center stage.

In Pulter's version, it is Florinda's performance piece that makes this shared anger materialize. After telling her guests of her rape, she pours out her blood into chalices, mixes it with wine, and serves it to the crowd, leading them to share her rage and rally against Roderigo. For the science-obsessed Pulter, this act is not merely symbolic: throughout her romance as well as the collection of poems bound in the same manuscript, Pulter explores the relationship between the regulation of bodily fluids, alchemical transformation, and the fate of nations. I place Pulter's romance in the context of her theorization of how the body's expression (literally) of emotions might enact political change, with particular attention to how she figures women's bodies (which she describes in *Florinda* as excessively "unctuous") as particularly suited to transform individual feelings, understood as fundamentally material, into movements.

Pamphilia's Wrath

Jennifer Higginbotham

Pamphilia, the speaker of Mary Wroth's sonnet cycle *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, expresses a wide range of negative emotions: the torments of desire, the grief of a lost love, the fear of betrayal, the uncertainty of hope. What she doesn't express, however, is anger. In Sonnet 11, she asks Love/Cupid not to give her "just cause...to say a place / Is found for rage alone on me to move" (lines 11-12), but Pamphilia evokes anger prophylactically, signaling a pattern of recursive doubt and guilt over that (justified) doubt. This repression of anger is particularly striking because the narrator of the prose romance to which sonnets are appended tells us routinely that characters are angry, including Pamphilia. As Mary Ellen Lamb has demonstrated, Wroth's romance is "an angry text," and as Gwynne Kennedy has shown, it is full of women angry at their lovers' inconstancy even as it represents women's avoidance of anger as an heroic expression of constancy. In the sonnets,

Pamphilia is long-suffering and arguably the epitome of the romance's ideal female lover. This paper thinks through the absence of anger in the sonnets in comparison to its presence in Urania and links it to the role of the narrator, who has the power to evoke anger without the danger of being hurt by expressing it.

Bad Tongues, Bloody Deeds: Elizabeth Sawyer and the Power of Female Anger

Hannah Korell

This essay draws together Henry Goodcole's *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer* (1621) and the collaborative play *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) to study how fictional representations of Elizabeth Sawyer play with her presentation as an angry early modern woman. I argue that Goodcole's pamphlet largely erases Sawyer's personal anger in the service of crafting a didactic and moralizing treatise on the risks of female anger as an overarching concept and threat facing society. Despite Goodcole's insistence of Sawyer's "malicious heart," her dialogue in the published interrogation presents a passive and ignorant woman coerced into the Devil's service, an act that she heartily repents along with her previous cursing tongue as she tells Goodcole she now feels "more quiet."

The Witch of Edmonton, however, explicitly stages the abuse Sawyer suffers at the hands of the community and allows her character to voice her anger both to other characters and directly to the audience. Through these graphic depictions of Sawyer's anger and her continual spoken desire for revenge, the play creates a link between female anger and the quest for occult knowledge: it is through her cursing that Tom, the devil dog, is summoned, and he teaches her how to make use of his demonic powers. Sawyer's anger and the access it provides her allow her to, albeit fleetingly, have some sense of agency in seeking justice for herself. However, her anger and newfound empowerment also become weaponized against Sawyer, providing the final evidence needed for her arrest and execution. Ultimately, *The Witch of Edmonton* reproduces—although not uncritically—the narrative that an angry woman is a dangerous woman, one which needs to be silenced, removed from the community, and killed.

Angry Women and the Politics of @ 1604

Christina Luckyj

King James began his reign in 1603 with a speech to Parliament in which he declared: "I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the head, and it is my body." Harnessing the pervasive analogy between household and state to assert his absolute power, James's deployment of the political marriage metaphor accords with his advice to his son in *Basilikon Doron*: "Ye are the head, she is your body. It is your office to command, and hers to obey." At the same time, however, James imagines dissenting subjects as angry women by figuring his Puritan enemies as Socrates' "evil wife," that notorious shrew. This paper explores male and female authors who weaponize early modern analogies between marriage and monarchy to legitimize women's anger as an expression of the rights and liberties of the subject – rights that were explicitly articulated in Parliament's 1604 *Form of Apology and Satisfaction*. My paper examines four texts created, printed or performed in or about 1604 that feature angry women defying husbands and / or tyrants: Emilia in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Mariam in Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam*, Elizabeth Caldwell in her *Letter . . . to her husband* and Elizabeth Melville in her *Godlie Dreame*. Despite their radically different genres – public

theatre play, closet drama, crime pamphlet, religious poem – these works suggest that early modern women’s anger could be used by men and women alike to articulate an anti-tyrannical politics in Jacobean England.

WILLIAM ROWLEY’S ANGRY WOMEN, or, THE VALUE OF VEXATION

David Nicol

Angry women who shout at, curse, and even spit upon their abusers appear with unusual frequency in plays associated with the Jacobean dramatist William Rowley, including *A Fair Quarrel* (1616, with Thomas Middleton), *All’s Lost by Lust* (1619-20), *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621, with Dekker and Ford), and *The Changeling* (1622, with Middleton). In some of these plays it can be argued that female anger is delegitimized in the ways typical of early modern drama, but others seem less condemnatory, and *A Fair Quarrel* and *All’s Lost by Lust* appear actively designed to suggest the importance and value of attending to a woman’s angry voice.

The individual angry characters in these plays have been much discussed in scholarship, but the collaborative nature of Rowley’s work has meant that some of the parallels between them have not been noticed. This paper will propose that a new perspective can be found by looking at them through the lens of another Rowley play, the little-known comedy *A New Wonder: A Woman Never Vexed* (date uncertain). This play directly addresses the topic of female anger by paralleling two women: one who is always angry, and one who never is. The joke is that while the angry woman longs for an end to her vexation, her unvexed opposite longs to experience anger, and even goes so far as to marry a prodigal with the aim of learning how it feels to be furious (unfortunately, her new husband instantly reforms upon their wedding day). Surprisingly, the play does not provide a satisfying conclusion for the woman never vexed, and she is left avowedly frustrated: her absence of anger makes her feel incomplete rather than perfect.

I will argue that this satirical depiction of a comically reluctant paragon of feminine quiescence draws attention to a connective thread throughout Rowley’s drama. Its implication – that anger is not only inevitable but even an essential part of human life, including women – suggests some ways to read Rowley’s dramas of female fury as explorations of the value of vexation.

Anger as Rhetorical Strategy in Elizabeth I’s Speeches

Stephanie Pietros

Elizabeth I’s speeches are perhaps the most studied of her textual legacy, with a strong focus on their complex negotiation of both masculine and feminine gender norms. What has not been considered as closely are the expressions of anger in these speeches, such as, for example, her 1566 speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons that urged Elizabeth to marry and formally establish the line of succession following the birth of Mary Queen of Scots’ son, James. Unlike earlier speeches on the same issue, here Elizabeth presents an impassioned, angry response to the delegation, which she articulates as an affront to her authority. As noted by our seminar description, anger was regarded variously as “proper to men or peculiar to women,” but either way women’s anger was considered illegitimate. I am interested in how this may be different for Elizabeth, who as monarch was conceived to represent the immortal body politic, which was (of course) male. What does that mean for how her expressions of anger might be perceived? Would they be regarded

similarly to those of other women, or would they, in the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, be regarded as proper to her kingly role? In the latter vein, I will consider Elizabeth I's expressions of anger as part of the overall rhetorical strategy in her speeches, justifying, solidifying, and strengthening her authority as monarch.

Catherine of Aragon: England's Deferential, Beloved, and Very Angry Queen

Maria Teresa M. Prendergast

My paper considers a consistent Elizabethan and Jacobean pattern in which authors present Catherine of Aragon as a pious, benevolent, deferential queen consort who is licensed to rail; paradoxically, these moments of railing only enhance Catherine's reputation for benevolence. This paradox can be partially resolved by taking into consideration early modern cultural conventions which licensed women's expressions of public anger if these expressions were directed on behalf of helpless citizens, or in defense of one's honor. Such moments of licensed anger became associated with the two most iconic moments of Catherine of Aragon's life—her intercessions on behalf of disenfranchised men during the height of her influence as queen consort (1515-25), and her defense of her personal character during her annulment trial (1529). In the two works that I focus on—Deloney's *Jack of Newbury* and Shakespeare and Fletcher's *King Henry VIII*-- such licensed utterances have positive feminist implications, even as they inevitably become bound up in male authorial fantasies, including fantasies of rhetorical ornamentation and of gaining upward mobility by allying oneself with a powerful female patron. At the same time, it appears that this anger can only be fully justified by scapegoating another figure, Cardinal Wolsey, as the stereotypically evil, conniving, and corrupt prelate against whom all expressions of anger are justified. Yet, even as Catherine's voice becomes an object of male ventriloquizing, of class and gender-inflected fantasies, and of scapegoating an othered male, these utterances—even those fully invented by male authors--grant complexity and subjectivity to Catherine's posthumous reputation as England's benevolent, pious, and deferential queen consort, bringing a sense of spirit, subjectivity, and verbal agency to an otherwise largely two-dimensional cultural memory.

From Chanting to Ranting: Catholic Women's Anger in Early Modern Southwark

Scott Oldenburg

This paper examines the case of Dorcas Stephens, who in 1603 was tried for seditious words, "plotting and intending to incite and provoke the subjects of our said lord King to rebel." Stephens had publicly questioned the authority of the king and all opponents of Catholicism. She was, as she told anyone within earshot, "a recusant and so would be to the end do what they could." Dorcas Stephens hailed from Southwark, and her bold declaration may have been inspired by memories of active and organized Catholic women in Southwark. Whereas Shakespeareans quickly identify Southwark as the site of the Globe Theater, from the 1460s through the 1550s Southwark was also home to the Sisters of Saint Anne, the only known all-women religious guild in England. Whether it was traces of Catholic women in her parish or the relentless demand to attend church during the plague-time of 1603, Stephens decided to openly resist Protestant uniformity. Stephens, the authorities surmised, had been "seduced by diabolic instigation" to speak her "false, malicious and seditious words." Her words were thus framed not as the logical outcome of faith but rather as the result of demonic influence, denying her agency. The words did not, according to the authorities, express real discontent; no, they were "false," even though she only spoke about her faith and the idea that the king could not bar her from it. As Sara Ahmed has pointed out, defining women's

anger, will, or “snap” typically measures women’s lack of complacency in the face of various personal and institutional pressures. Dorcas Stephens was sentenced to be pilloried for two hours “with papers of her seditious words against the lord King.” The punishment—the physically painful stocks and the emotionally painful shaming—aimed at intimidation of Dorcas Stephens and the community of Catholics with whom she associated. But the punishment also targeted Stephens as a woman, attempting to render her docile. In reproducing Stephens’ words, however, authorities risked amplifying her sentiments. As a microhistory, this case opens up a number of key questions: What part did a history of likeminded women play in Dorcas Stephens’ decision to openly resist Protestant authority? Might the pillorying of a defiant Catholic woman serve as cautionary tale or inspiration? Is the pillory paper containing Stephens’ exact words a form of women’s writing akin to the interrogation records of Anne Askew?

Dangerous Fury: Imagining Joan la Pucelle and Margaret of Anjou as Nationalists

Christina Romanelli

Shakespeare writes two powerful women warriors into his first tetralogy, Joan la Pucelle and Margaret of Anjou. Serving as foils for indecisive and ineffectual male leaders, these women share nasty reputations and violent tempers. Though women’s anger was frequently dismissed as futile and inconvenient in the period, for these women, their roles as soldiers and as leaders of armies complicate any straightforward attempt to dismiss the passion’s utility. Anger fuels a soldier’s necessary drive to kill and willingness to be sacrificed on the battlefield, and both Joan and Margaret express anger and incite anger in others that is productive for their cause. At times, these two women seem to be the only warriors on their respective sides of the battles with enough passion to sustain the conflict.

Unfortunately for their reception on an English stage, the characters also share another quality: they are both French. Despite the relatively peaceful relationship between England and France in the late sixteenth century, the wars described in Shakespeare’s history plays left a deep cultural memory of animosity. When Joan self-identifies as “the English scourge” and then personifies her country in her speech to Burgundy (“Look on thy country, look on fertile France”), the audience hears some of the first patriotism to grace or mar Shakespeare’s stage. But it is not without complexity: while she expresses love for France, she does not care much for Frenchmen who “turn, and turn again!” Similarly, Margaret of Anjou seems to have the only passion in her royal family for preserving England’s rightful succession. Margaret does not identify as French but as “Great Albion’s queen,” considering England great before her husband was so weak as to lose the crown. Both women are willing to take up arms and risk life and reputation for their political cause.

The Prefatory Letter to *Gorboduc*: Rape, Revenge, Paratext

Bailey Sincox

In John Day’s prefatory letter to the 1570 quarto of *Gorboduc* (perf. 1561), the printer imagines the play as a sexually assaulted woman who will “play Lucrece’s part,” authorizing her author-fathers Sackville and Norton to dispel textual tyranny, as it were, through Day’s reformed printing. I argue that this paratext’s emphasis on rape and revenge demands we give greater critical attention to Videna’s anger than has previously been given. Linked throughout the play to “Mother Britain,”

whom Gorboduc's counselors figure as violated by the king's division of the kingdom between his two sons, Videna, like Lucrece, subsumes the problem of tyranny (and the justification for tyrannicide) into her sexualized body. However, unlike Lucrece, who spurs male retribution and, by extension, revolution through her self-annihilation, Videna takes this action herself, making her—on the play's terms—both monstrous and absolutely necessary. The unfit monarch is removed not by any mechanism, but by Videna's revenge—after Gorboduc abdicates and Porrex assassinates Ferrex, she murders Porrex. For this reason, the counselors claim Videna breaks the “law of kind,” yet also acknowledge her as uniquely situated to respond “in kind.” Thus the power of female anger in *Gorboduc* lies in a two-part identification of Videna's act: it is both infanticide and tyrannicide, a crime against herself as woman and mother, and the single most pivotal action in the play's political project.

Reading *Gorboduc* through its prefatory paratext emphasizes that female revenge is crucial to the play's much-noted concerns with succession, as well as the concerns with good governance, justice, and legal participation that characterize plays more often thought of as “revenge tragedies.” As advertisement and as statement of editorial praxis, Day's letter shows that circumventing or even destroying the corrupt state depends on female revenge—indeed, in *Gorboduc* it is only possible because of it.

Intrusive Counsel and Women's Anger in *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*

Catherine E. Thomas

This essay explores the connections between the current student success model of intrusive advising and early modern ideals of good counsel in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*. More particularly, it analyzes moments where women take proactive approaches to correcting the overly passionate, even tyrannical, behavior of the monarch. When subtler means break down, they resort to angry counsel, thus inverting the patriarchal gender stereotype of the quiet and obedient woman and deploying a “fight fire with fire” tactic. Ultimately, their failure or success relies on their ability to effectively advise their king through comprehending what most motivates him. Looking at these moments of female counsel helps us further understand the power of female speech and behavior in the service of the family and commonwealth. Examining Lear and Leontes as “at-risk” governors in need of correction and proper motivation sheds light on the ways early modern and modern conceptions of intrusive advising operate.

Walter Earl's hallmark article “Intrusive Advising of Freshmen in Academic Difficulty” (1988) advocates “deliberate structured student intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate a student to seek help” (28). This model of advising focuses on motivating students to persist, access appropriate resources, and take evidence-based action to promote their own success. Jennifer Varney adds that intrusive advising's success is based in large part on students' connections with their advisor. Strong, trusting relationships promote positive action, and advisors should “proactively make the initial contact with students...a pre-emptive strike, of sorts.” These concepts resonate with early modern discourse about the counsel of magistrates. Good advisors should intervene to temper the monarch's emotional volatility and political divergence in the service of successful national governance.

In *King Lear*, Goneril and Regan serve as intrusive advisors to Lear. After witnessing his rash decisions to disinherit Cordelia and banish Kent, they actively step in to counsel their father. While

they may act in part in self-interest, it is also clear that they are concerned he is not acting his age and making judgments that benefit the kingdom as a whole. When Lear persists in his line of argument and devolves to dehumanizing name-calling, their ire awakens. Rather than understand and work through Lear's desires, they remain—similar to him—stubborn in their stance. Ultimately, they fail as advisors to connect Lear with the resources he needs and to provide the emotional support he craves in order to be successful. However, their anger also stands as an important marker of corrective resistance to Lear's chaotic decision-making.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina steps in after Camillo and Antigonus fail to sway Leontes from his misguided thinking about Hermione's chastity and his children's paternity. Her advisement begins from a beneficent, "medicinal" stance, but once she realizes Leontes is no longer receptive to logic, she turns to impassioned and fierce rhetoric. Paulina holds her ground from a sense of duty to her queen and a need for justice to be served. Unlike Goneril and Regan, however, Paulina's angry and later, steadfast counsel is ultimately successful. Through her pointed words and her staging partnership with Hermione she effectively conveys the consequences of Leontes' actions, taps into his motivations, and coaches him back to a path of good governance in spite of the other courtier's doubts.

Reframing Anger Against the Sovereign(ty) in Hester Pulter's *The Unfortunate Florinda*

Mary H. Truglia

Generic mixing is an authorial strategy that emphasizes gendered frictions. In *Time Binds*, Elizabeth Freeman introduces the concept of "temporal drag," which serves as "a productive obstacle to progress, a usefully distorting pull backward, a necessary pressure on the present tense". Temporal drag opens a space in the formalist studies of genre - suggesting that moments of overlap and intermingling between genres and gendered norms can be understood not simply in terms of closure, but also potentiality. Hester Pulter treats her prose romance *The Unfortunate Florinda* as a medium where the drag caused by shifts between frames opens space for the influential agency of the righteous anger of her female characters. Unlike many texts that enact tropes of revenge tragedies, here the women are the masterminds. Where readers of revenge tragedies often question the ethics of the revenger, readers of romance instead focus on the achievement of revenge as the removal of obstacles placed in lovers' way. The protagonists, Fidelia and Florinda, through their unusual narration, anger regarding, and response to sexual violence, force readers to reevaluate the boundaries between feminine subjection and female agency. Transgressing the erotics of private space and moving them into the public realm, Pulter thus offers female public space and narrative space as socially acceptable and literarily valid.

A character who is never 'on stage' nonetheless gives us a central argument and caution: "Let me conjure you to fly as much as possible the love of princes and those that are much your superiors, for perhaps it may be [your] irreparable ruin" (Pulter 287). Considering the complex interplay of sovereignty, emotions (including anger), and gender in early modern romances, this paper reads *Florinda* as not only a romance, but a romance in which the angry rhetoric of her female characters has an effect on the workings of power and understandings of sovereignty. Through the use of political and feminist arguments, we may begin to understand romance tropes as a method for trying out various types of female agency, and the problematics therein, and how Pulter's utilization of certain romance tropes allows her to comment on issues of sovereignty.

Reading Anger in Mary Carey’s “Upon the Sight of My Abortive Birth”

Amanda Zoch

Many literate, early modern women wrote elegies to memorialize and grieve their deceased children, and such poems understandably convey a mother’s sorrow, often alongside a more pious and consolatory turn to God. In this paper, however, I focus on an emotion less commonly discussed in relation to maternal elegies: anger. While early modern culture blamed a mother’s sinfulness for her child’s death and urged acceptance of God’s will, a recently bereaved mother might not come to the same conclusion, at least not initially. As Raymond A. Anselment has argued, seventeenth-century prose and poetry “suggest that bereaved mothers and fathers did not always find it easy to resign themselves to the fate of nature and the will of God” (Anselment, “The Teares of Nature” 28). Indeed, anger is widely accepted as a stage in the grieving process, and Stephen D. White has also shown how anger and grief could easily emerge in tandem in his study of medieval literature (White 139-40). Although anger has many incarnations, in this paper I concern myself with a form of anger adjacent to grief, an insistent frustration with the harsh reality of child loss and with God’s inscrutable plan. By examining Mary Carey’s maternal elegies, I show how the accumulation of grief for Carey’s deceased children culminates in a moderated, yet palpable anger at God in her longest and final elegy, “Upon the Sight of My Abortive Birth.” I argue that this anger—though moderated by elegiac conventions—surfaces in Carey’s insistent repetitions of loss and her persistent requests to be quickened by God.

EARLY MODERN WOMEN’S ANGER PART TWO

Female Scorn in the *Amoretti* and Book VI of the *Faerie Queene*

Caralyn Bialo

In this paper, I examine the representation of female scorn in two works by Edmund Spenser, the *Amoretti* and Book VI of the *Faerie Queene*. I argue that while the lyric mode of the sonnet form works to contain female antagonism in the *Amoretti*, the narrativization of that antagonism in the form of Mirabella in Book VI of the *Faerie Queene* stages female anger in such a way that complicates its representation. Spenser’s use of Petrarchan sonnet conventions to define female courtesy in Book VI of the *Faerie Queene* ultimately offers a multi-faceted and nuanced perspective that both justifies and condemns female anger.

“The Excrement of Lust:” Tragedy’s Erotic Discharges

Heather Frazier

Early modern drama frequently represents women’s anger in humoral and excremental terms. As critics such as Gail Kern Paster have shown, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medical texts and plays often describe women’s bodies as “leaky.” While Renaissance comedy contains women’s resistance to male authority through marriage, tragedy often renders women’s anger (and other emotions) superfluous.

This paper will focus upon Thomas Middleton’s *The Changeling* in light of Beatrice-Joanna’s anger, especially as it appears in excretive language. As I will argue, Middleton frequently locates Beatrice-Joanna’s anger and erotic desire within her “blood,” a bodily fluid that often requires purging within

early modern medical theory. Indeed, before her death, she describes herself as her father's excrement, tainted blood to be purged and disposed of in the sewer (5.3.150-54). Her downfall renders her extraneous to her marriage's ultimate purpose: to cement a union between two regions; after all, it allows Vermandero and Alsemero to re-affirm their bond as father and son. In this way, her anger facilitates the men's expressions of filial love at the end of the play.

Submission and Defiance: Female Anger in Two Writings by Lady Margaret Cuninghame Nely Keinanen

A member of the Scottish gentry, Margaret Cuninghame married her first husband, James Hamilton, the Master of Evandale, on the 24th of January, 1598. From the first pages of her little-known autobiography, she outlines a series of abuses received at the hands of her husband, including being thrown out of the house naked while pregnant. Unlike many women, who seem to have born such indignities in comparative silence, Cuninghame writes back forcefully against her husband and culture, also revealing a strong (mainly female) network supporting her. My essay examines the ways that Cuninghame constructs herself as a passive victim as a way of expressing her anger. She often refers to herself in the passive voice and attributes more suasive verbs (implying an intention to bring about a change in the future) to her husband, while using simpler descriptive verbs for herself. It's impossible to know whether she actively adopts these linguistic techniques as a way of strengthening her agency, or whether they reveal a paradox between her forceful call for justice and internalized subjection.

Killing Grief, Grieving Outrage: (Un)survivable Subjects in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik

Women who comply to the norm set for feminized grieving behave according to an emotional script set for the tearful performance of femininity in patriarchal societies. Their lachrymal reaction can be tied to a violent reaction from the empathising onlookers, who, by the virtue of witnessing their pain, may become more than passive bystanders, turning into witnesses acting upon what they come to see, hear and feel. As Gail Horst-Warhaft notes, grief may indeed be used politically, as "it is a fine line between channelling grief for the benefit of the oppressed and the unleashing of violent anger of suffering" (18). This communal or relational function of vengeful lamentation is an aspect that is hard to overlook in the stories of grieving women in drama, and provides a point of departure for a discussion of the continuum between private, subdued sorrow and public expressions of outraged grief that may escalate and become transformed into grieving rage. This paper offers a reading of an angered, grieving mother who directs her violent passion towards the only objects she can act against: her husband's orchard and her own body. Thomas Kyd's Isabella is a character that complicates the clear-cut distinction between anger and grief, and allows one to read *The Spanish Tragedy* as a study in isolation and despair that leads to female anger and violence.

"If She be Curst, it is for Policy": Critiquing Early Modern Marriage through Comedic Anger Jess Landis

Women's anger is a pervasive and driving force in early modern drama. Characters from Shakespeare's tragedies and histories like Lady Macbeth, Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, and Margaret

D'Anjou in the first tetralogy shape key moments in their respective plays using their anger. The emotion seems fitting in these generic contexts and blood-soaked plots. However, women's anger also plays a central role in the playwright's comedies. In particular, Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* (c. 1590) is portrayed as a fiery young woman whose angry disposition hinders her marriage prospects. She is part of a long literary tradition of the shrewish wife that casts women's anger as undesirable and even dangerous. Yet her "redeeming" speech that closes the play suggests a cultural turning point in the perception of strong-willed women and their roles as wives. In fact, Katherine's legacy can be seen in *Much Ado About Nothing* (c. 1598) in the headstrong Beatrice, who is beloved despite her somewhat angry defiance of love. Just as Katherine's anger can be read as a product of her resistance to traditional marriage, Beatrice's acerbic nature can be read as a fierce independence. While Shakespeare's earlier play presents Katherine as a problem to be tamed, the later play and other playwrights of the period take pleasure in representing women's anger as a positive, progressive force that challenges and even overcomes restrictive views of marriage. The Niece in Middleton and Rowley's *Wit at Several Weapons* and Jonson's cross-dressed eponymous *Epicoene*, for example, manufacture anger to expose the serious drawbacks of marriages that give little consideration to women's needs and preferences. If we read Katherine up against these later representations of women's anger and wit, she becomes a subtle source of inspiration for empowerment and an early representative of an emerging view of marriage that shifted, if even slightly, women's role in their own marital destiny.

"Eyes of Pity, Not Revenge": The Erasure of Women's Anger in *The Winter's Tale*

Erin K. Minear

There are a number of competing "hinge" moments in *The Winter's Tale*, moments when the play shifts from tragedy to comedy: the segue from bear attack to clown recounting the attack, the move from Sicilia to Bohemia, the sixteen-year time-shift. One less prominent but no less crucial moment hailing and in fact enabling the shift from tragedy to romance is the sudden expiration of Paulina's anger in the face of Leontes's grief. For Shakespeare's vision to work, Leontes must be redeemable. Paulina's shift from fury to pity provides the first indicator that he is, or may be. In the process, she has to accept the Lords' insistence that Leontes's feelings take precedence over hers. She may be angry, but he's really sad! He may have killed his wife and his children, but to keep harping on it is just mean. Ultimately, her anger is impossible within the structure of a romance—and also within the early modern family, society, and political system. A repentant and reformed Leontes is necessary, but so are the love and forgiveness of the women in his life. It is remarkable, though, that the play implies that the women could scuttle the entire project if they were to stay angry (or if they were allowed to experience anger in the first place). And this ultimate lack of anger is perhaps not fully believable, judging by the insistent appearance of angry ghosts. At the very least, the play shows the incredible amount of work that goes into establishing that criminal men may be redeemed by forgiving women, and that this forgiveness is both possible and earned.

"Poor Margaret was a prophetess": The Language of Witchcraft as Female Empowerment in Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

Melissa Pullara

In their famed chronicles of the history of England's monarchs, both Hall and Holinshed comment on the overall admirable character of Margaret of Anjou. Holinshed describes her as "a ldie of great

wit, and no lesse courage, desirous of honour and furnished with the gifts of reason, policie, and wisdom” (625); Hall similarly notes that she “man excelled all other, aswell in beautie and fauor, as in wit and pollicie, and was of stomack and corage, more like to a man, then a woman” (cxlvi). However, both accounts emphasize that while these traits might be valuable in a man, in a woman they are ultimately dangerous, as she, “according to her kind”, was likely to be “mutable and turning” (625). Margaret’s manly reason, wisdom and courage, thus, morphs into malice and power mania because of her inferior, unstable female nature; both Hall and Holinshed cite her resultant determination to rule over her husband and his kingdom, and banish his otherwise loyal governors (Hall CI, Holinshed 626). In both chronicles, her behavior angers even God, who punishes her with defeat, loss, and grief, left “languishyng and mornyng in continuall sorowe” (Hall CCXXII). In Richard III, however, Shakespeare amends Margaret’s unfortunate historical conclusion. In this paper, I will analyze how in Shakespeare’s play, Margaret is able to redirect her anger and grief at the loss of her son towards revenge, which she accomplishes by employing the language of witchcraft. By embracing the role of the “wither’d hag” (RIII I.iii.279) through the use of curse and prophecy, Margaret is free to act on her otherwise unnatural masculine tendencies, which allows her to become an active force of feminine agency and power. By playing the role of the “demon queen” (Clay 184), Shakespeare’s Margaret of Anjou, symbolically at least, achieves the revenge which Hall, Holinshed, and history itself, deny her.

Teaching *Titus Andronicus*, 1987, 2015.

Karen Robertson

My experience teaching *Titus Andronicus* in two classes thirty years apart has shifted my understanding of anger from an emotion seizing an individual to an energy that can be a creative force for positive change. My understanding of anger was shaped by 20th century psychology—a hydraulic notion of repression loosely adapted from Freud—as modified by second wave feminist understandings of silence. Breaking the silence, speak outs, and take back the night, including shouting in the street during feminist marches, all enjoined victims of patriarchal violence, most specifically victims of sexual violence, to speak out. While anger against an enemy is used by the state as a mechanism of group solidarity to ensure violence, I am thinking about the anger of subordinates whose access to the energy of judgment has frequently been blocked.

Turning Fury

Benedict S. Robinson

This essay takes a phrase that surfaces twice in Webster’s *The White Devil*—in which two different angry women are dismissed by men as having “turned Fury”—as an invitation to think about women’s anger on the early modern stage, above all in its relationship to a debate about anger and gender that is written deep into the history of ethical thought. That debate, which appears in one way or another in thinkers as different from one another as Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and Cicero, threads a question about the ethics of anger through a discussion of anger’s relationship to norms of gender. The debate, briefly, is between anger understood as the conscription of the soul’s affective resources for the defense of justice, and associated with powerful masculine figures like Achilles as well as the more generically male figures like kings, fathers, and the heads of households (Plato, Aristotle); and anger understood as a form of weakness associated with ulcerated bodies as well as with a series of marginalized social agents like women, children, and the old (Seneca, Cicero). Across both sides of this debate, the anger of women is paradigmatically delegitimized: “paradigmatically,”

because in these texts the very act of thinking about women's anger is itself integral to the act of submitting anger to moral, social, and political critique. That ancient debate surfaces in the early modern period not only in editions and translations of the ancient texts themselves but also in adaptations or echoes of them, in Bacon's *Essays*, Pierre Charron's neo-Stoic *Of Wisdom*, tragedies by Chapman, Jonson, and William Alexander, and elsewhere. But when Webster stages elements of this discourse, he does not simply emplot a received matrix of ideas. To stage the delegitimation of women's anger as Webster does is also to make visible the violence of the gesture. In that, Webster invites serious thinking about the relationship of anger, gender, and justice, as well as a searching exploration of the problem of women's anger in a patriarchal world.

Angry Confederates: The Whisper Network in *All's Well that Ends Well*

Marsha S. Robinson

Bernard Capp has documented the ways in which early modern female alliances sustained women in a world ordered by men. Angered by sexual betrayal, for example, empathetic women communally engaged in efforts to discipline an adulterous husband. While such anger rarely succeeded in amending a patriarchal order, in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, female anger is directed at both the miscreant and the system of female oppression that enables his misconduct. Helena joins a conspiracy of women who silently target a male ethos of entitlement that robs women of their autonomy and assigns them the role of victim in a world of complicit males. Scripted by women, the ending of the play turns early modern patriarchal narratives on end, revealing the depth of female rage generated by a system designed to betray women. In this new narrative a man, not a woman, falls prey to seduction; a man not a woman is publicly arraigned for sexual misconduct and, despite the man's effort to reinstate a commonplace narrative by casting his accuser as a manipulative whore, he is exposed as a sexual predator and liar and made subject to the kind of communal shaming and humiliation most often experienced by early modern women in ecclesiastical court proceedings.

"Her advocate to th' loud'st": Anger, Silence, and Female Solidarity in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

Lisa Templin

Courtesy manuals like Stefano Guazzo's *The Civile Conversation* (1574, trans. 1581-1586), prescribed an impossible ideal for the early modern court lady that compounded the usual connection between female speech and sexuality. Required to entertain at court, the court lady must be both alluring and chaste, sociable but also quiet—in effect, to speak without speaking. To preserve her appearance of chastity, the ideal court lady must, in effect, speak without speaking. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, King Leontes' jealousy stems from the impossibility of a woman ever truly living up to this ideal. When Leontes publicly accuses her of adultery, however, Hermione recognizes that she is caught in a double bind: to defend herself she must use her already-suspected voice while simultaneously performing a chastity that is, almost by definition, "tongue-tied" (1.2.27). Left with no room to express her anger, she looks to Paulina for help. She stakes seriously her vow to be Hermione's "advocate to th' loud'st" (2.2.38) and berates Leontes when he refuses to recognize Hermione's innocence. Speaking where, when, and how Hermione cannot, Paulina's angry voice amplifies Hermione's and, in a sense, allows Hermione to speak without speaking. This paper argues that *The Winter's Tale* points to the need for female solidarity at court: Hermione may not be able to

express her anger to defend herself, but Paulina can. Her angry, unruly, and shrewish voice operates in concert with, and in contrast to Hermione's to support and emphasize Hermione's individual performance of chastity, making it possible to do what Hermione alone cannot: convince a jealous husband of his wife's faithfulness.