

"I am not Oedipus": Riddling the Body Politic in *The Broken Heart*

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In 1988 Verna Ann Foster and Stephen Foster published an extremely incisive article in *English Literary Renaissance* in which they argued that close parallels between the situation in John Ford's play *The Broken Heart*, and the political history of the later years of Elizabeth I, made Ford's Sparta a clear analogue for Elizabethan England.¹ In particular, they pointed, as others have done before, to similarities between the tragic love-stories of Ithocles and Calantha and Orgilus and Penthea, and the real-life histories of the Earl of Essex, his sister Penelope Devereux, and the Queen herself. This, they suggested, is essentially the "truth" to which Ford refers in his prologue to the play.² They also perform the very unusual critical manoeuvre of reading *The Broken Heart* partially in relation to Ford's later play *Perkin Warbeck*, which dramatises the negotiations for the marriage of Margaret Tudor to James IV of Scotland;³ this enables them to argue that the two works together represent both the beginning and the end of the dynastic path which eventually took the Stuart dynasty to the English throne.⁴

While agreeing substantially with every point of the Fosters' very telling analysis, I should like to take it one step further, by arguing that a concern about the relationships between different nations is not confined to *The Broken Heart*, or even to *Perkin Warbeck*, but is a recurrent element of Ford's dramatic work as a whole. I hope to develop their rare attempt at a syncretic reading of the apparently highly diverse Fordian canon to argue that, marginalised though it may occasionally appear, there is in fact a central focus in his work. What Ford seems to find of compelling interest is the nature of title and transmission of land, and the disputes which are likely to arise from conflicting territorial

For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <http://www.connotations.de/dehopkins00603.htm>.

interests. Intersecting centrally with Ford's own training as a lawyer, these concerns, and the related questions of colonisation, inheritance practice, and the admissibility of female rule, structure his repeated representations of land rights in the process of being claimed, willed or inherited, whether at home or abroad. This leads to a sustained focus not only on the *moment* of the change of dynasty but also on the *mechanics* of it, viewed within a far wider perspective on the underlying logic and structural particularities of the whole process of land inheritance.

I shall begin by examining Ford's own personal connections both with people interested in colonisation and with people interested in domestic land title, and then move on to a consideration of how such concerns are manifested and reflected in his plays, particularly in his use of the figure of Oedipus, who in contemporary thought was often associated with the question of land ownership and the true identity of the ruler. Finally, I shall attempt to develop a reading of *The Broken Heart* as a play which stages a variety of issues associated with land ownership and transfer, especially by will, in ways which recall and invite reflection on the processes involved in the accession of James I—although the political delicacy of the topic naturally prevents these from being fully worked through.

I. Ford and the Colonists

"What may be here thought fiction, when time's youth / Wanted some riper years, was known a TRUTH."⁵ If *The Broken Heart* alludes to the story of Penelope Devereux and Philip Sidney, it is worth remembering that Sidney—son of Sir Henry Sidney, a prominent member of the Muscovy company—had strong colonialist interests.⁶ The primary story of the play thus has its origins, essentially, at the outset of the English colonial enterprise; moreover, Ford throughout his life was associated with a wide variety of people who were intimately involved in colonial ventures.

One of the most important links between Ford's circle and the New World was Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. Ford co-dedicated the

early *Honour Triumphant* (1606) to him, and members of Arundel's household or clientage, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, recur again and again in Ford's literary career in ways that suggest a connection between the two men more substantial than that which often seems to be indicated by the conferral and receipt of a dedication.⁷ Arundel had a strongly developed interest in the colonial enterprise. His most recent biographer has spoken of

his passion for the colonization of exotic lands. When he was young, Sir Walter Raleigh had been one of his heroes. Arundel had taken his eldest son to the castle at Winchester to witness Raleigh's execution in 1617 After the death of Raleigh he had kept his silver watch as one of his most precious relics It was Arundel's last venture into colonization which Van Dyck commemorated in a painting of 1639.⁸

The idea of leading colonists to Madagascar recurred from time to time in Arundel's life, almost always in connection with the ups and downs of his rather tumultuous political career. Gordon McMullan remarks that "the correlation between radical preference in politics and interest in colonial venture is striking,"⁹ and this is certainly true in Arundel's case: his preference for aristocratic rule, his entrenched discontent at the failure by first James and then Charles to restore him to his hereditary dukedom of Norfolk, and his perilous financial situation all led him to look wistfully overseas.¹⁰ Madagascar was also one of the destinations of the eleven exploratory expeditions equipped by George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, whose only child Anne was later to become the second wife of Ford's dedicatee Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery and Pembroke.¹¹ (The longstanding connections between the Herbert family and Ford's maternal relatives the Stradlings, who were South Welsh neighbours, bolster the link provided by the dedication).

Others who were politically associated with Arundel developed similar interests. The Earls of Newcastle (by his earlier title of Lord Cavendish) and Pembroke, dedicatees of *Perkin Warbeck* and *Christ's Bloody Sweat* respectively (Pembroke was also, with Arundel, one of the sharers of the dedication of *Honour Triumphant*) are listed among "the chief Adventurers" of the Virginia Company.¹² Pembroke's circle included

Sir Thomas Roe, who had visited the Great Mogul in India,¹³ and Newcastle was one of the supporters of Sir Edwin Sandys in his bid for the position of Treasurer of the Company, a move which in itself had radical implications, given James I's dislike of Sandys' politics and his furious injunction, "Choose the devil, if you like, but not Sir Edwin Sandys."¹⁴ Ford himself contributed commendatory verses to Captain Charles Saltonstall's *The Navigator* (1636), "a work explaining both the theoretical and practical aspects of "the famous Art of Navigation."¹⁵ Additionally, Ford was connected, through his grandmother's family the Stradlings of St Donat's, with Sir Thomas Button, the explorer of Hudson Bay, a Glamorganshire man whose wife, Mary, was the sister of Henry Rice, an historian in whom both Pembroke and Arundel took an interest,¹⁶ and it was Ford's great-uncle on his mother's side, Lord Chief Justice Sir John Popham, who had presided over Raleigh's trial. A Captain George Popham, who may well have been another relative, gave details of the Guiana coastline to Robert Dudley's expedition, and brought back news about El Dorado.¹⁷

Ford's Welsh connections, too, could well have led him to awareness of the Elizabethan *magus* John Dee. Dee made a solitary, bizarre attempt to ground the entire colonial enterprise in Welsh legend and tradition by invoking the mythical figure of Prince Madoc, popularly supposed to be the original discoverer of America, to legitimate Elizabethan claims to empire.¹⁸ The Stradlings themselves were also personally associated with travel; Sir Edward Stradling in his account of the *Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan* includes the story of his ancestor Sir Harry, who died at Famagusta on his way back from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (something undertaken also by others of the family).¹⁹ A Stradling daughter resided at Louvain with Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria, who was both the wife of a Spanish grandee and the niece of Sir Henry Sidney,²⁰ and Sir Edward Stradling's heir, Sir John, wrote complimentary epigrams to such major figures in the history of exploration as Drake, Hawkins, and the two Welsh captains Thomas Morgan and Roger Williams,²¹ as well as interesting himself in the relative seagoing capabilities of the Dutch and the Spanish, and the question which of the two posed the greater threat to English dominion over the oceans.²² Sir John also wrote a treatise, "The Storie of the Lower Borowes of

Merthyr Mawr," centring on a local property dispute, which precisely concerned the rights and wrongs of land ownership and the means by which these could be established.²³

Gordon McMullan has recently argued that Jacobean theatre as a whole was particularly interested in representing the encounters of the Old World and the New, almost always in a largely negative light. He comments that "several apologists for colonization cite "plaiers" as specific enemies of Virginia. Ralph Hamor's *True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia* (1615) rails at "Papists and Plaires, Ammonites and Hororites, the Scumme and dregges of the people, [who] mocke at this holy Businesse."²⁴ The reference to Ammonites and Hororites here makes it sufficiently clear that "Papists" and "Plaires" are effectively being used as similarly demonising terms, but it can also serve to remind us that Ford was associated not only with the theatre but possibly, as I have argued elsewhere, with Catholicism as well.²⁵ Though some Catholics might, according to the account quoted by McMullan, disapprove of exploration, others saw in it a promising opportunity for the militant evangelism of the Spanish to win new converts to the faith: there were, for instance, alarmed Protestant complaints "that the natives of the Congo are converted with Catholic pomp that "is able to allure any simple Man or Woman, even with the very sight thereof."²⁶ For this reason amongst others, perhaps, one would expect Ford to have been acutely alive to the issue of colonisation.

II. The New World in Ford's Plays

At first sight, Ford's personal connections with people involved in the English colonial enterprise may seem to have left little mark on his work. There are traces, however, throughout his plays of an informed interest in exploration. Cyrus Hoy sees one such allusion in '*Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Ford's play about the love between an incestuous brother and sister, Giovanni and Annabella:

O, the glory
Of two united hearts like hers and mine!

Let poring book-men dream of other worlds;
 My world and all of happiness is here ...
 [‘Tis Pity V.iii., p. 151]

This of his love for Annabella; and one is reminded of the famous lines in Donne's "The good-morrow":

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
 Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne,
 Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one.²⁷

What is explicitly referred to in the Donne is surely implicitly present in the Ford also; the "other worlds" are not merely those which may be dreamed of, but those which have actually been discovered. Donne's son George supplied commendatory verses for *Perkin Warbeck*, and other links between the families may serve to strengthen the probability that Ford here does not merely remind us of Donne but is, in his typically magpie way, deliberately alluding to him.²⁸

A more obvious reference to discovery comes in Ford's last play, *The Lady's Trial*. The braggart Spanish soldier Guzman (like Perkin Warbeck, a pretender to splendid ancestry) refers to:

Our cloak, whose cape is
 Larded with pearls, which the Indian cacique
 Presented to our countryman De Cortez
 For ransom of his life . . .²⁹

The play turns again to the language of exploration, when the deceitful Adurni says to the virtuous heroine Spinella, whom he is trying to seduce:

Now could I read a lecture of my griefs,
 Unearth a mine of jewels at your foot,
 Command a golden shower to rain down,
 Impoverish every kingdom of the East
 Which traffics richest clothes and silks . . .
 (II.iv., p. 41)³⁰

Less visibly, it may also be possible to discern the pressure of new ideas concerning race and identity elsewhere in Ford. In his recent book on the historical Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be the younger of the

Princes in the Tower, Ian Arthurson offers the striking thesis that "Exploration and Africa are the connecting factors common to all who knew Perkin."³¹ It is immediately after his description of the death of Perkin that Ford's source Bacon, with only the briefest of intervening paragraphs, goes on to discuss the New World explorations of Cabot and Columbus.³² While there is little enough trace of this in Ford's play, it would nevertheless be possible to argue that its careful depictions of English, Scots, Irish, Welsh, French, Burgundians and Spaniards, in complex counterpoint with each other, register a concern with issues of national identity.³³

Perkin Warbeck's combination of innate dignity and dubious legitimacy also offers close parallels with one of the thorniest questions thrown open by the English colonial venture, that of the proper position of native rulers, in whom the claims of class and of race came into direct conflict. Gordon McMullan sees this as one of the major concerns of Fletcher's play *The Island Princess*, which, he argues, allows Fletcher to explore "the peculiarly complex question of the psychological payoff that the colonists had to make between their contempt for natives who seemed to them to be less than human and their reverence for royalty of any nationality and creed."³⁴ It is an issue similar to that raised in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, where the good king Euarchus argues for a relativity of royalty that reduces princes to the status of commoners if they once leave the land of those who naturally owe them allegiance,³⁵ and it seems to be encoded within the text of *Perkin Warbeck* itself in the play's teasing reference to the case of the Earl of Menteith and Strathearn. In a controversy which came to a head just as Ford was writing his play, the Earl, through the marriage of one of his ancestresses, laid claim to the *de jure* monarchy of Scotland, despite the *de facto* possession of the Stuarts. Ford, as Peter Ure has shown, briefly but unmistakably alludes to the affair.³⁶ The Menteith / Strathearn case offered a particularly vivid illustration of the fact that the question of ownership of territory was not confined to the colonial enterprise; it was also very much a live issue nearer home, in the prolonged struggle over Ireland and, in particular, in the political manoeuvrings surrounding King James' beloved Union, which the Fosters see as so directly imaged in *The Broken Heart*.³⁷ Both at home and abroad, therefore, Ford and his audience

would have been aware of numerous debates about the complexities of ownership, rule, and right—issues so knotty that they could, famously, be resolved by only one man: Oedipus, who will prove to be a crucial point of reference in the complex plot of *The Broken Heart*.

III. Cujus est terre?

When Tecnicus in *The Broken Heart* prophesies disaster to both Ithocles and Orgilus, his former pupil claims not to understand him. The play will prove Tecnicus' warning to have been abundantly justified: Orgilus' lust for revenge, after Ithocles thwarted his marriage to Penthea, will bring about the deaths not only of himself, Ithocles, and Penthea, but of the Princess Calantha, heir to the throne, who was in love with Ithocles and dies of a broken heart, leading the rule of Sparta to pass to her cousin Nearchus, Prince of Argos. Orgilus, however, dismisses the caution with the curt "Dark sentences are for Apollo's priests. / I am not Oedipus" (IV.ii.140-41). T. J. B. Spencer's note on the line comments, "the proverbial expression derived from Terence, *Andria* 194 (I.2.23): *Davus sum, non Oedipus* (who solved the riddle of the Theban sphinx)." The riddle which Oedipus solved was a complex one; famously, it concerned human identity, with situational undertones, like the riddle in *Pericles* (and like the plots of both *'Tis Pity* and *The Broken Heart*) of incest; but it also contained within itself the answer to a problem about *national* identity, and the proper ownership of land. The rule of Thebes had been a matter of fierce dispute since Cadmus sowed the dragon's teeth; it was to continue to be so when Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices fought each other to death for the right to the succession. When Oedipus breaks the Sphinx's power over the land he apparently achieves a brief interlude in this history of disputed ownership; in fact, however, he can equally be seen as merely redefining the same debate in more complex terms. The very title of *Oedipus Tyrannus* forces us to make certain assumptions about the nature of Oedipus' claim to the throne which the unfolding narrative proves to be utterly false. Oedipus is revealed by the end of the play as not the *tyrannus* of Thebes—the *de facto* ruler—but the *basileus*, the hereditary, *de jure* monarch who can

claim through his legitimate descent from the last male ruler. He is, moreover, a monarch whose identity is, in appropriately Renaissance style, literally inscribed on his body, in the deformity of the feet which clinches his identification with the lost child of Laius and Jocasta.³⁸ Ironically, of course, this does not in itself ensure the succession; Eteocles and Polynices both proceed to claim the throne on precisely these grounds and thus, *Gorboduc*-like, plunge the state into civil war. (Their story is, suggestively, alluded to in the very first paragraph of Thomas Gainsford's *History of Perkin Warbeck*, one of the principal sources for Ford's own *Perkin Warbeck*).³⁹ Oedipus' ostensible moment of triumph in disempowering the Sphinx and asserting his own rule instead proves merely to have laid bare the problematics of rule and of land ownership itself, just as the accession of James VI to the throne of England similarly brought such questions to the fore, since "as a foreigner he faced a common law prohibition about alien land inheritance in England."⁴⁰

There is clear evidence that it was precisely in these terms that at least some Renaissance authors viewed the story of Oedipus. Such a context is certainly applicable to Thomas More's famous remark to his daughter Margaret, "*Non sum Oedipus, sed Morus*," with the clever pun on the similarity between his own surname, More, and the Greek word for folly, Moria, which had already been exploited in Erasmus' *Moriae Encomium*. More's play on words was made precisely at a time when he had explicitly refused to intervene in questions of sovereignty by neither subscribing to the Act of Succession nor overtly condemning it. Moreover, he develops the Oedipus reference by his resonant comparison of Henry VIII with a lion—the Sphinx had the body of a lion joined to a human head.⁴¹ Riddles in general, though not that of Oedipus in particular, featured again in the 1549 rebellion of Robert Kett, as Steven Mullaney points out: "the rebellion . . . was guided from beginning to end by 'fayned prophecies' that seemed to promise success to the rebels' cause but were in fact 'as ambiguous as those uttered by older and more famous soothsayers'."⁴² There is also an interesting reference to the myth of Oedipus to be found in the writings of Elizabeth I herself, translating Plutarch:

Edipus busy serche did wrap him in most harmes.
 For whan of himself he axed, as he no Corinte wez
 But guest, he met with Laius, who after kild he had,
 And mother his own in marriage tok, with whom he got kingdom
 With dowary hers; whan than happy he thought he was,
 Againe he questioned who he was, wiche whan his w[ife] wold let,
 More earnest he, the old man as guilty he wer rebuked,
 Omitting no good menes to make bewrayd al that was hid.⁴³

Of course this is a translation rather than an original interpretation; but it would be hard to believe that the Renaissance queen, whose own right to the throne had been a matter of so much dispute, did not note with interest the statement that the kingdom came to Oedipus by right of his wife's dowry.

A similar undercurrent attaches to Ben Jonson's use of the motif, when he has Arruntius in *Sejanus* say "By Jove, I am not Oedipus enough / To understand this Sphinx" at precisely the moment when the succession to Tiberius, in the immediate aftermath of the death of his son Drusus, is to be discussed.⁴⁴ Far more explicit, though, is a comment found in the seventeenth-century life of Sir Rhys ap Thomas written by Henry Rice, protégé of the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke, where he refers to "the russling days of Henrie the Sixt and Edward the Fourth, when we weare at our *Cujus est terre?* Abner's question: and noe Aedipus then living to resolve the same."⁴⁵ This work, written by a man with intimate connections both with the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke and with Ford's Stradling relatives, touches on the period treated by Ford in *Perkin Warbeck*. Unlike Bacon, but like Ford, it uses the correct version of Sir Rhys ap Thomas' name, which may suggest that Ford was borrowing from it; so its specific equation of Oedipus with solving questions of land ownership is particularly noteworthy.

Questions of land ownership and of rightful rule recur throughout the Ford canon. Both *'Tis Pity* and *The Lady's Trial* are set in Italian cities which are pointedly represented as non-autonomous: the Genoa of *The Lady's Trial* is subject to Florence, the Parma of *'Tis Pity* to the nepotistic power of the Papal Legate. In *Perkin Warbeck*, not only the crown of England but the ownership of the Scottish border towns are at stake, after James IV opportunistically seizes the presence of Perkin Warbeck

at his court as an opportunity to harry the north of England. In *The Broken Heart*, the events of the central love stories are tellingly framed by an alternative narrative of land acquisition, first by warlike means, as figured first in the Spartan general Ithocles' conquest of Messene, and ultimately by the peaceful inheritance of the throne of Sparta by Argos. No sooner can King Amyclas announce that "Laconia is a monarchy at length" (I.ii.13) than its royalty must give way to effective annexation by Argos.

Orgilus disclaims an Oedipal identity (just as the relation between the brother and sister Ithocles and Penthea, despite her husband Bassanes' suspicions and the potential parallel with *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, is not, in this play, incestuous). The Fosters argue that this is a play which, while repeatedly evoking similarities between dramatic characters and historical personages, always defies definitive identifications and equations by jumbling up and redistributing the salient features and characteristics; this is, perhaps, true also of mythical personages, and the issues at stake are in any case too delicate to admit of blatant topical equivalences of any sort. Orgilus is, though, significantly associated with riddling. At his sister Euphranea's wedding, he remarks that she looks

As if her chaster fancy could already
Expound the riddle of her gain in losing
A trifle maids know only that they know not. (IV.iii.61-63)

But whereas Oedipus, in his representation by Sophocles, is centrally concerned with identifying himself with the good of the state, Orgilus consistently ignores the political dimension of his actions and sees them entirely in terms of private revenge, resolutely pursuing his own agenda of punishing Penthea's brother Ithocles for preventing their marriage and forcibly bestowing Penthea on the middle-aged, jealous Bassanes. Orgilus is not indifferent to the lure of a wider arena, but his intersection with it is, notably, confined by his consistent, hypocritical encouragement of Ithocles to see himself as a public being. His own world is the very different one of cloaks, scholars' retreats, private gardens, and trick chairs in secluded places—pointedly contrasted with the public, civic nature

of the deaths which the bereaved Princess Calantha eventually engineers for him and for herself.

Defining himself purely in terms of personal identity, Orgilus also disclaims a national identity. Refusing to identify himself with his country of origin, he becomes the only character in *The Broken Heart* for whom a change of social environ is not fraught with significance. He opens the play by proposing to go to Athens. To his father Crotolon, the very name of Athens immediately invokes a whole series of customs and agendas:

Athens? Pray why to Athens? You intend not
To kick against the world, turn Cynic, Stoic,
Or read the logic lecture, or become
An Areopagite, and judge in causes
Touching the commonwealth? (I.i.5-9)

The reputation of Athens will be confirmed for us later, too, when Amyclas refers to “those inventions / Which flow in Athens” (III.iii.58-59). To Orgilus, however, Athens means precisely not participation in public life, but escape from it: he represents himself as wishing to cease functioning as an irritant in the relationship of Bassanes and Penthea, and Athens is merely the place which he names as an interim asylum. Indeed we soon learn that for Orgilus, the idea of place has become irrelevant, as he concludes the scene with:

Souls sunk in sorrows never are without 'em;
They change fresh airs, but bear their griefs about 'em.
(I.i.117-18)

For Orgilus, place, like public life, is immaterial; only the personal dimension exists.

In notable contrast, in the first conversation we see between Bassanes and Penthea themselves, place of residence does become an issue: This house, methinks, stands somewhat too much inward.

It is too melancholy. We'll remove
Nearer the court. Or what thinks my Penthea
Of the delightful island we command?
Rule me as thou canst wish. (II.i.103-07)

This speech, ostensibly concerned merely with the affective relationship between Bassanes and Penthea, touches on some more public issues, with its potent blending of “the court,” the command of an island, and the final injunction to “rule me as thou canst wish.” Spencer’s notes compare this with Bianca’s discontent in *Women Beware Women*, and additionally comment that “there is a certain geographical aptness in Ford’s making a Greek nobleman own an island”; there is also a certain thematic appropriateness in the speech’s negotiations of rule. Bassanes has inaugurated the exchange with conventional Petrarchan praise of Penthea; she demystifies the situation by referring to herself unambiguously as his “handmaid” (II.i.91). By offering her the rule over him, Bassanes attempts to re-interpelate her in the language of the erotic relationship he would wish to exist between them. This is, though, ironically undercut by the fact that the word “Rule” is in itself imperative, a command from him to her—as she makes clear when she immediately ripostes, “I am no mistress. / Whither you please, I must attend” (II.i.107-08). Equally, the mention of “rule” in connection with “islands” can be seen as an extension of the play’s obvious concern with territorial rights, concern present even in its rudimentary comic relief: the returned soldier Hemophil promises, “I’ll make thee mistress of a city; ‘tis / Mine own by conquest” (I.ii.130-31), only to be rebuffed by Christalla with “By petition; sue for’t / *In forma pauperis*. City? Kennel” (I.ii.131-32). Here, too, the association between women and land ownership echoes both the frequent figuring of colonies as feminine, and the use of maps and globes in the iconography of Elizabeth I.

Bassanes’ strategies in attempting to represent Penthea as his mistress rather than his possession can be seen as paralleled by Penthea herself, in an apparently very different situation. Twice in this play Ford (himself, in whatever way, connected with the law)⁴⁶ represents women making their wills. On the first occasion, Penthea uses the device of the will as a deliberate obfuscation of her true intent; making her first legacies her youth and her fame enables a reading (albeit only temporarily) of her final donation of her brother Ithocles to the Princess Calantha as something similarly abstract. This, as in the similarly ornate language of Orgilus on the subject, obscures the potential political dynamite of the non-dynastic marriage which she here seems to advocate (III.v.35-78).

The conceit of Penthea's will both prefigures, and conditions our reception of, Calantha's testament. Again, her intentions are disguised; while Penthea concealed the arrangement of a marriage as a will, Calantha, with neat irony, presents her testament to her cousin Nearchus as the "articles I would propose to treat on / Before our marriage" (V.iii.40-41). Her speech brings us back to where the Fosters began:

I would presume you would retain the royalty
Of Sparta, in her own bounds: then in Argos
Armestes might be viceroy; in Messene
Might Crotolon bear sway . . . (V.iii.42-45)

As the Fosters point out, these arrangements echo the political dispositions attending the proposed union of the English and Scottish crowns, and the government of Ireland. Perhaps, though, we should read the speech not only as referring to the Stuart succession and the union, but also within the context of the precise ways in which that succession took place.

James VI and I's claim to the throne stemmed from a marriage—that between James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor which is alluded to at the end of Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*⁴⁷—but it was also confirmed, in many accounts of the event, by a verbal will—precisely the same sort of verbal will as Penthea and Calantha both make. (Penthea even draws attention to the aural nature of hers, pointing to a paper which she has in her hand but will not read [III.v.45-46]). Elizabeth I's alleged verbal nomination of James on her deathbed has been seen by Leonard Tennenhouse as doubly significant: on one level, she "acted in accordance with a view of the crown as an object of property, which was therefore dispensed according to the will of its owner. By naming James rather than an English claimant, however, she also acted according to the law of primogeniture."⁴⁸ Whatever the truth of the various stories that Elizabeth made verbal or physical signs confirming James as her successor,⁴⁹ there was a widespread expectation that his right would be disputed, and considerable relief when he assumed the throne without even the threat of civil war or of an alternative candidature. Both Mary I and Elizabeth I had, after all, been plagued with recurrent alleged sightings of their dead brother Edward VI; Mary had found her right

to the throne contested by the supporters of Lady Jane Grey; Elizabeth had been haunted by the rival claims of Mary, Queen of Scots and even of the Spanish Infanta; and the first Tudor king had been plagued by impostors, one of whom Ford himself had dramatised in *Perkin Warbeck*. Indeed, as Henry Rice's comments about "the russling days of Henrie the Sixt and Edward the Fourth" reminds us, it had been quite some considerable time since there had been such a thing as an undisputed right to the throne (Henry VIII's accession might have been peaceful enough, but his relentless purges of his Plantagenet relatives clearly demonstrate his lack of security). In this respect, James I's peaceful progress through his new kingdom was not only welcome but positively novel.

There had, however, been other potential candidates for James's throne, and the story of one of them in particular may well be pertinent to Ford's concerns in *The Broken Heart*. Lady Arbella Stuart, of whom Elizabeth I is reported to have said that she would "one day be even as I am,"⁵⁰ was the cousin of two of Ford's dedicatees, the Earl of Newcastle and the Duke of Lennox, and had been rumoured to be romantically involved in her youth with the Earl of Essex,⁵¹ whom the Fosters propose as the original model of Ford's Ithocles. In many respects, Lady Arbella's story seems to come at least as close to Penthea's as that of Essex's sister Penelope, with a forbidden marriage driving her, it seems, to madness and self-starvation;⁵² and there was an interesting link between her and Penelope in that both received dedications from the Catholic sonneteer Henry Constable.⁵³ Lady Arbella's story certainly caught the public imagination, and has been suggested as a likely source for plays as diverse as *The Duchess of Malfi*,⁵⁴ *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*,⁵⁵ *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*,⁵⁶ Fletcher's *The Noble Gentleman* and *Cymbeline*.⁵⁷ For anyone involved in the law, its twists and turns would have been especially intriguing: at one point she actually applied for a writ of habeas corpus,⁵⁸ while her elopement provoked much discussion about what precisely she could be considered to be guilty of.⁵⁹ Moreover, Arbella's entire history was intimately bound up with the complexities of Renaissance testamentary law and practice, especially as they related to issues of land transmission and of succession.

Arbella's grandmother, Elizabeth Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, better known as Bess of Hardwick, had experienced great childhood poverty due to the illegal will of her father: "Wills were solely for the disposal of worldly goods and chattels; land, which in principle belonged to the Crown, could not be willed. And yet, indirectly, this is what John Hardwick attempted to do."⁶⁰ Bess herself was very friendly with the Grey family, and was to suffer intermittently from the repercussions of the disaster incurred by its members when the dying king Edward VI was persuaded to make a will naming Jane Grey as his successor, in direct contradiction of his own father Henry VIII's earlier testamentary dispositions: Bess was at one time imprisoned for having been made the unwilling confidante of a pregnant Lady Catherine Grey. Much later, when Bess wished to establish the right of Arbella to the inheritance of her father, Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox, after his premature death, the will was again the instrument of choice: Arbella's paternal aunt Mary, Queen of Scots, 'believing that she had the divine right and authority of a reigning Queen, made a will putting Charles Stuart in the succession and admitting the right of Elizabeth Lennox [his widow] to the earldom.'⁶¹ Bess's own will was eventually used in a similarly instrumental way, offering the Queen a legacy which was coupled with a request to receive Arbella at court again, after she had been previously sent away for arrogance: "Bess was using her will to help Arbella."⁶² In fact later disagreements between the two women led Bess to alter her will, but title and succession were to recur as bargaining counters between them when Arbella secured from her cousin James I a blank patent to a peerage which she used to make her uncle, Bess's favourite son William, a baron, in exchange for a nominal forgiveness and an expensive present from her grandmother. When Bess died soon after this, her last thoughts were of her will, but they were not altogether happy ones: she was very anxious that her son William should make sure that no-one interfered with it⁶³—a concern which indicates both the cultural centrality of the will and a fear that its operations may be uncertain ones, that even this final attempt to encode one's desires in binding form may prove mutable and malleable.

The story of Arbella Stuart parallels that of *The Broken Heart* not only in the motifs of madness and self-starvation and in its intersections with

the Essex affair but also in the crucial importance to both of the figure of the will-making woman. The testamentary dispositions of Mary, Queen of Scots, of Bess of Hardwick and of Elizabeth I herself are echoed in the pointed coupling of the bequests of Penthea and Calantha, the latter determining a kingdom (just as Mary, Queen of Scots had tried to do when she willed her right to the English crown to Philip II). A similar concern was also to be found in the historical sources used by Ford in the writing of *Perkin Warbeck*, though here the testator was Perkin himself, who found that the price for aid from the Emperor Maximilian I was the requirement for him to draw up a will leaving Maximilian heir to the throne of England if he himself died childless. Whether or not Arbella's story was indeed the "known... truth" of *The Broken Heart*, it certainly parallels the "strange truth" of *Perkin Warbeck*, although in each case that truth is riddled: instead of Macbeth's "fiend that lies like truth,"⁶⁴ we have, it seems, a dramatist who tells truth like lies.

Undoubtedly, then, Ford is indeed reworking in this play the accession of James I, which the Fosters term "the most important political event of his youth,"⁶⁵ and which had, moreover, been actively manoeuvred for by Essex himself.⁶⁶ The parallels between *The Broken Heart* and the events of the earliest years of the seventeenth century are clinched by the fact that the play's major literary source also derives from that period. Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* has not previously been identified as an influence on *The Broken Heart* (though Hardin Craig comments on general similarities between the two playwrights),⁶⁷ but the similarities are striking. A Spartan wooer who is strongly associated with Scotland,⁶⁸ and who is cousin to his Altitude the Viceroy, finds himself outmanoeuvred by a native low-born upstart, but forbears to take offence because "the place, thou know'st, protects thee" (I.ii.97); all these things have close echoes in Ford's play. Centrally concerned with the remarriage of widows, which it takes as a sign of women's inherent fallibility, *The Widow's Tears* also offers an interesting perspective on Penthea's insistence that she would never marry Orgilus under any circumstances; it has two waiting-maids, Ianthe and Sthenia, whose situation loosely parallels that of Christalla and Philema, and its ultimately malleable female ruler and the Viceroy also offer telling parallels to *The Broken Heart's* episodes of female succession and creation of viceregal power.

Most strikingly, there is an extraordinary lacuna in the play's narrative action when Tharsalio's conquest of Eudora's affections, which we have been led to believe will be the climax of the action, takes place entirely offstage and can only be deduced by later conversations, with exactly the same obliqueness and silence that will later characterise Ford's dramatisation of the relationship between Calantha and Ithocles. Instead, attention is deflected to the Cynthia-Lysander plot, which features Cynthia following her apparently dead husband into the tomb and threatening to starve herself there. This leads the disguised Lysander to adjure her, "Die not for hunger, like a Spartan lady" (IV.ii.106)—like, indeed, Ford's Penthea, who starves herself to death.⁶⁹ The story of the presumed widow thus offers motifs found in both Penthea and Calantha. Chapman's play is confidently dated to 1605 (introduction, p. xi), and pokes obvious fun at James, as with barbed comments such as "there's a number of strange knights abroad" (IV.i.27-28), so Ford's use of plot motifs from it explicitly underlines *The Broken Heart*'s concern with the earliest years of the Stuart succession.

Ford, then, not only offers a revisioning of what actually took place but also evokes the artistic milieu of the period and, most crucially, explores the mechanics of how and why.⁷⁰ As in others of his plays—most of all *Perkin Warbeck*, whose setting in "The Continent of Great Britain" clearly announces its concerns with empire—he raises the crucial questions of both the Stuart succession and the English colonial enterprise: the nature of the right to land. Nearchus' claim to the throne of Sparta is, as that of James himself was generally thought to be, a double one, resting both on heredity and on a verbal nomination by his predecessor. As such, it proves enforceable, unlike that of Perkin Warbeck, whom Ford may perhaps have believed to be inherently royal,⁷¹ but who was unable to assert any authority. Nevertheless, one might perhaps be tempted to think that the doubleness of the claim might well make it not stronger, but, paradoxically, weaker, since it raises the troubling possibility that neither heredity nor inheritance might be sufficient alone. The suggestion is certainly not developed in the play—to do so would have been far too risky—but in both *Perkin Warbeck* and *The Broken Heart* there are sharp reminders about the problematics of inheritance. Dalyell in *Perkin Warbeck*, grieved that despite his distant

ancestral connection with the royal family, he is not thought fit to court the king's cousin Lady Katherine Gordon, laments:

But kindreds are not ours, when once the date
Of many years have swallowed up the memory
Of their originals.⁷²

And Orgilus in *The Broken Heart* suggests the possibility of Ithocles' succession with the reminder that "The sovereignty of kingdoms in their nonage / Stoop'd to desert, not birth" (IV.iii.106-07). Orgilus also dismisses "puddle / Of generation" (IV.iii.108-09), while Calantha in her death scene further adds to the complexities by raising the old chestnut of women's right to rule (a question also implicitly addressed at the end of Ford's play *Love's Sacrifice*, where the succession passes to the husband of the heiress Fiormonda rather than to her). This was an issue that had been particularly important in the case of Arbella Stuart: a recent biographer of her grandmother claims that "had Arbella been a boy then Elizabeth would have had to accept the child as her heir."⁷³

Here, too, one could adopt the Fosters' strategy of reading *The Broken Heart* and *Perkin Warbeck* in conjunction with each other to produce a searching exploration of the problematics of the right to rule. Here, and in his plays as a whole, Ford represents a variety of means of acquiring and enforcing power—through political domination, through marriage, through annexation, through conquest, through inheritance, through hereditary succession; and the twin presences in his texts of sustained reference to colonisation and to the New World and of representations of the making of Stuart Britain may well invite us to subject both processes to the same sorts of analysis. Such a strategy was not unknown in Ford's circle; Joseph Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem* (1605), dedicated to the Earl of Pembroke, represents a dystopia in which fickleness is criticised. As Gordon McMullan comments, "the marginal notes suggest that this is a satire of courtly behaviour, but the immediate context of criticism is obviously the many accounts of colonists' relations with the Indians."⁷⁴ The problem for a contemporary reader, of course, is that without such helpful marginal comments, we may well feel less sure of our ground in offering so politicised an interpretation; but Ford's

development throughout his work of the parallel themes of royalty and land acquisition may well encourage us to read him as deliberately riddling the body politic—following, indeed, Sir Philip Sidney's cue to prefer fiction to history—to encourage us to perceive such connotations, and to be ourselves the Oedipus who must decide the answer to the question “cujus est terre?” The model for such a reading process is provided by the text itself: it is the epistemological mechanism of Nearchus' line at IV.ii.212,

And though they shall not know, yet they shall find it.

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NOTES

¹Verna Ann Foster and Stephen Foster, “Structure and History in *The Broken Heart*: Sparta, England, and the ‘Truth,’” *ELR* 18 (1988): 305-28.

²For discussion of what Ford means by “truth” here and of the likelihood of an allusion to Penelope Rich, see especially Frederick M. Burelbach jr., “‘The Truth’ in John Ford’s *The Broken Heart* revisited,” *N&Q* 212 (1967): 11-12; Giovanni M. Carsaniga, “The truth’ in John Ford’s *The Broken Heart*,” *CL* 10 (1958): 344-48; Katherine Duncan-Jones, “Ford and the Earl of Devonshire,” *RES* 29 (1978): 447-52; Cyril Falls, “Penelope Rich and the poets: Philip Sidney to John Ford,” *Essays by Divers Hands*, ns 28 (1956): 123-37; R. Jordan, “Calantha’s Dance in *The Broken Heart*,” *N&Q* 214 (1969): 294-95; Michael Neill, “New light on ‘The Truth’ in *The Broken Heart*,” *N&Q* 220 (1975): 249-50; Shanti Padhi, “*The Broken Heart* and *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*: Ford’s Main Source for the Corpse’s Coronation,” *N&Q* 229 (1984): 230-31; and Stuart P. Sherman, “Stella and *The Broken Heart*,” *PMLA* 24 (1909): 274-85.

³Ford’s works have tended to be treated in isolation from each other, though a notable exception to this is provided by G. D. Monsarrat in “The Unity of John Ford: ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore and Christ’s Bloody Sweat,” *SP* 77 (1980): 247-70.

⁴See Foster and Foster 306.

⁵John Ford, *The Broken Heart*, ed. T. J. B. Spencer (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1980), Prologue, ll. 15-16. All further quotations from the play will be taken from this edition and reference will be given in the text.

⁶For comment on these and how they inform the “Astrophil and Stella” sequence, see Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995) 80.

⁷See my “A Source for John Ford’s *Love’s Sacrifice*: The Story of Carlo Gesualdo” (published under my maiden name of Lisa Cronin), *N&Q* 233 (1988): 66-67; Lisa

Hopkins, "'Speaking Sweat': Emblems in the Plays of John Ford," *Comparative Drama* (Spring, 1995): 133-46; and Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* 19.

⁸David Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his Circle* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985) 167. However, Raleigh was in fact executed in London.

⁹Gordon McMullan, *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994) 193.

¹⁰Howarth, *Lord Arundel* 167-68.

¹¹D. J. H. Clifford, ed., *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Far Thrupp: Alan Sutton, 1990) 2. Lady Anne's diary contains several references to her intimacy with people associated with Ford's circle: New Year's Day 1617 saw her in company with Lady Arundel and Lady Northumberland, both wives of Ford dedicatees, and Lady Rich, daughter-in-law of another; Twelfth Night she was with Lady Arundel and Lady Pembroke at the lodgings of the Duke of Lennox, another dedicatee (*Diaries* 44); she records the marriage of Ford's dedicatee Lord Hay (*Diaries* 64); and in 1619 she mentions a visit from the brother and sister-in-law of the Earl of Newcastle, to whom *Perkin Warbeck* was dedicated (*Diaries* 66). She also visited Lady Raleigh (*Diaries* 72), and in extreme old age was still able to identify the room in which the Earl of Arundel's mother had been born (*Diaries* 266-67). Lady Anne took an interest in her father's sea voyages and expressed her wish of having them all written up (*Diaries* 65).

¹²McMullan, *The Politics of Unease* 205.

¹³Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994) 155.

¹⁴McMullan, *The Politics of Unease* 202-03.

¹⁵See L. E. Stock, Gilles D. Monsarrat, Judith M. Kennedy and Dennis Danielson, eds., *The Nondramatic Works of John Ford* (Binghamton, N.Y.: MRTS, 1991) 355.

¹⁶See Ralph A. Griffiths, *Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his Family* (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1993) 130.

¹⁷Charles Nicholl, *The Creature in the Map* (1995; London: Vintage, 1996) 60 and 274-75.

¹⁸See Gwyn A. Williams, *Madoc: The Making of a Myth* (1979; Oxford: OUP, 1987).

¹⁹Graham C. G. Thomas, "The Stradling Library at St Donat's, Glamorgan," *National Library of Wales Journal* 24.4 (Winter 1986): 402-19, 411. See also Glanmor Williams, "The Stradling Family," in *The Story of St Donat's Castle and Atlantic College*, ed. Roy Denning (Cowbridge: D. Brown & Sons, 1983) 17-53, who notes (31) that Sir Edward's "close friendship with Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, and Richard Grenville suggests a lively interest in sea-borne trade and, possibly, exploring enterprises."

²⁰G.T. Clark, *Thirteen Views of the Castle of St Donat's, Glamorganshire* (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, 1871) 20.

²¹Glanmor Williams, "Sir John Stradling of St Donat's," *Glamorgan Historian* 9 (1973): 11-28, 20.

²²Williams, "Sir John Stradling" 24.

²³Williams, "Sir John Stradling" 18-19. For discussion of the general antiquarian interest in land ownership, see Melanie Hansen, "Identity and Ownership: Narratives

of Land in the English Renaissance", *Writing and the English Renaissance*, ed. William Zunder and Suzanne Trill (Harlow: Longman, 1996) 87-105, 91.

²⁴McMullan 207. Jeremy Maule's recent discovery of a poem by Ford on the death of Fletcher argues for a closer connection than has been previously realised between the two men. (See Jeremy Maule's forthcoming essay, "To the memory of the late excellent poet John Fletcher: A New Ford Poem?" I am very grateful to Jeremy Maule for the chance to have seen this before publication.) Fletcher's New World interests, therefore, may also have been an influence on Ford.

²⁵See Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994), especially ch. 1.

²⁶Hall, *Things of Darkness* 61.

²⁷Cyrus Hoy, "'Ignorance in Knowledge': Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni," *MP* 57.3 (1960): 145-54, 151.

²⁸See Martin Butler, "The Connection between Donne, Clarendon and Ford," *N&Q* 232 (1987): 309-10. I am indebted for this reference to Jeremy Maule. Lady Anne Clifford records a visit from Donne (*Diaries* 60).

²⁹William Gifford and Alexander Dyce, eds, *The Works of John Ford*, 3 vols. (London, 1895; rpt. New York, 1965), 2: II.i., p. 28. All further quotations from the play will be taken from this edition and reference will be given in the text.

³⁰This and other references to colonialism in *The Lady's Trial* are discussed at greater length in Lisa Hopkins, "Italy Revisited: John Ford's Last Plays," *The Italian World of English Renaissance Drama*, ed. Michele Marrapodi and Ton Hoenselaars, forthcoming from University of Delaware Press.

³¹Ian Arthurson, *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy 1491-1499* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994) 38.

³²*The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, vol. 6 (London: Longman et al., 1890) 196.

³³For discussion of this aspect of the play, see Willy Maley, "The Common Stage of Novelty: Ireland in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries," forthcoming in *Shakespeare and Ireland: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray (Macmillan, 1997).

³⁴McMullan, *The Politics of Unease* 225.

³⁵Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 834.

³⁶Peter Ure, "A pointer to the date of Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*," *N&Q* 215 (1970): 215-17.

³⁷Foster and Foster 306.

³⁸For marks on royal bodies, see for instance Lisa Hopkins, "The Disguised Royalty Motif in the *Arcadia*," *Narrative Strategies in Early Prose Fiction*, ed. Wolfgang Gortschacher and Holger Klein (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen P, 1995) 187-94.

³⁹Thomas Gainsford, *The true and wonderful history of Perkin Warbeck . . .* [1618], Harleian Miscellany, vol. 6 (1745) 499. There is also a "letter from Oedipus' son Eteocles to his brother Polyneices" in H. C.'s *The Forrest of Fancy*, 1579 (see Pamela Benson, ed., *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare* [London: J. M. Dent, 1996], introduction ix).

⁴⁰Stuart M. Kurland, "Hamlet and the Scottish Succession," *SEL* 34 (1994): 279-300, 281.

⁴¹See Maria-Claude Rousseau, "Thomas More, Enigme et Paradoxe: Non Sum Oedipus, Sed Morus," *Le Paradoxe au Temps de la Renaissance*, ed. M. T. Jones-Davies (Paris: Jean Touzot, 1982) 87-103, 90-91.

⁴²Steven Mullaney, "Lying Like Truth: Riddle, Representation and Treason in Renaissance England," *ELH* 47 (1980): 32-47, 36. See also Paola Pugliatti, *Shakespeare the Historian* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996) 47.

⁴³*The Poems of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. Leicester Bradner (Providence: Brown UP, 1964) 66-67.

⁴⁴Ben Jonson, *Sejanus His Fall*, ed. Philip Ayres (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990) III.64-65.

⁴⁵Griffiths, *Sir Rhys ap Thomas* 157.

⁴⁶The nature of this connection is best explored in M. Joan Sargeaunt, *John Ford* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935) 14-16.

⁴⁷The fact that James's claim derived from this marriage was not an obscure piece of information, but something widely known: for the ceremonies attending his accession, Dekker and Jonson's *The Magnificent Entertainment* featured an image of Henry VII handing James a sceptre, and Anthony Munday's *The Triumphs of Re-United Britannia* refers to "the blessed marriage of Margaret, eldest daughter to King Henry the Seventh, to James the Fourth, King of Scotland, of whom our second Brute (Royal King James) is truly and rightfully descended" (both printed in Richard Dutton, ed., *Jacobean Civic Pageants* [Keele: Keele UP, 1995] 53 and 126).

⁴⁸Leonard Tennenhouse, "Strategies of State and political plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VIII*," *Political Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985) 109-28, 114. Pugliatti (*Shakespeare the Historian* 84-85) points out the analogous importance of a will in *King John*.

⁴⁹See for instance Neville Williams, *Elizabeth I, Queen of England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967) 352, for a discussion of the evidence. A further small link between Calantha and Elizabeth might be discerned in the similarity which Michael Neill proposes between the former's death and that of the Queen's maid of honour Margaret Ratcliffe; it might also be arguable that the use of Penthea's body for purposes of vengeance recalls that of the suggestively-named Gloriana in *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

⁵⁰*The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, ed. Sara Jayne Steen (Oxford: OUP, 1994) 20.

⁵¹Steen (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart* 21, and David N. Durant, *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast* [1977] (Cromwell: The Newark P, 1988) 211.

⁵²For Lady Arbella's intermittent refusals to eat, see Steen (ed.), *Letters* 34-35; for discussion of her alleged madness, see Steen (ed.), *Letters* 82 and 97.

⁵³See Steen (ed.), *Letters* 56; for the relationship between Constable and Penelope Rich, see Cyril Falls, "Penelope Rich and the Poets: Philip Sidney to John Ford," *Essays by Divers Hands*, ns 28 (1956): 125-37, 130.

⁵⁴See J. W. Lever, *The Tragedy of State* (London: Methuen, 1971, rpt. 1987) 87, and Sara Jayne Steen, "The Crime of Marriage: Arbella Stuart and *The Duchess of Malfi*," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991): 61-76.

⁵⁵Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991) 201.

⁵⁶Marion A. Taylor, "Lady Arabella Stuart and Beaumont and Fletcher," *PLL* 8 (1972): 252-60.

⁵⁷See Steen (ed.), *Letters* 96.

⁵⁸Steen (ed.), *Letters* 67. The letter in which Lady Arbella makes this request is reproduced on p. 256.

⁵⁹Steen (ed.), *Letters* 70-71.

⁶⁰Durant, *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast* 4.

⁶¹Durant, *Bess of Hardwick* 93.

⁶²Durant, *Bess of Hardwick* 222. For an incisive and consistently fascinating exploration of Renaissance thoughts on will making, see the final chapter, "A constant will to publish: Shakespeare's dead hand," in Richard Wilson, *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

⁶³Durant, *Bess of Hardwick* 200.

⁶⁴See Mullaney, "Lying Like Truth" 38-44, for the role of riddles in *Macbeth*.

⁶⁵Foster and Foster 31.

⁶⁶See for instance Eric S. Mallin, *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995) 141.

⁶⁷George Chapman, *The Widow's Tears*, ed. Ethel M. Smeak (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1966) introduction xiii. Rowland Wymer, in *Webster and Ford* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995) 119 also suggests that the death of Orgilus may be deliberately reminiscent of Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois.

⁶⁸*Widow's Tears*, II.iv.191 note. All further references to the play will be to this edition.

⁶⁹Elizabeth I was also popularly believed to have starved herself to death for love of Essex. In *The Devil's Law-Case*, a play by Ford's early collaborator Webster, Leonora prays, "let me die / In the distraction of that worthy princess / Who loathed food, and sleep, and ceremony, / For thought of losing that brave gentleman / She would fain have saved, had not a false conveyance / Expressed him stubborn-hearted" (John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays*, ed. René Weis [Oxford: OUP, 1996], 3.3.270-75).

⁷⁰Ford's earlier play *The Lover's Melancholy* seems to perform a similar remembering and riddling, this time of the end of James's reign and the transition to that of his son Charles, which is, arguably, loosely imaged in the play's dramatisation of the new rule of the uxorious Palador after that of his father, with its sexual scandals.

⁷¹For this possibility, see Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre*, chapter 2.

⁷²Perkin Warbeck, *John Ford: Three Plays*, ed. Keith Sturgess (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970) I.ii.34-35.

⁷³Durant, *Bess of Hardwick* 90.

⁷⁴McMullan, *The Politics of Unease* 237.