The Book as Looking Glass: Death, Self-Improvement and Children's Reading in Early Modern England

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ABSTRACT

This text explores three developments pertaining to children and reading in seventeenth-century England. The author aims to show how profoundly death was implicated in the development of thought about children's reading as well as in the emergence of a literature for children in the early modern period.

The first chapter discusses the negative reaction to the growing phenomenon of children reading romances and adventures in chapbook form. Escapist literature was believed to make one forget one's mortal lot, which in turn decreased one's motivation for piety. Through a discussion of the threat chapbook romances posed to pious reading, the chapter establishes the historical context for a related development, the creation of a religious or moralizing literature that children would find compelling.

In their quest for gripping settings, authors latched on to the deathbed scene for its felicitous blend of inherent theatricality and religious resonance. By early seventeenth century, a few women writers even used the pretext of deathbed advice to pen their own conduct-of-life manuals in an otherwise male-dominated marketplace. The second chapter discusses the prefatory rhetoric used by the two most successful female writers in this genre. The remarkable success of maternal deathbed advice literature suggests that books in Protestant culture absorbed the near-superstitious value of Catholic icons and relics. The genre also implies a Protestant adaptation of the Catholic veneration of the mother. Comfort for the motherless child no longer came from prayer to Mary, but through the reading (and perhaps holding of) a book of advice by a model (and dead) Protestant mother. An analysis of the prefaces enables a close reading of the self-fashioning of model mother-authors.

The third and final chapter discusses the starring role of death in the first English-language children's book, *A Token for Children,* by James Janeway. The chapter explores the literary interest in the early deaths of ordinary children of extraordinary piety. By reference to the doctrine of predestination, the author speculates that these books had a comforting as well as a preparatory function, allowing parents and children to rehearse (through reading) a model death of a child undoubtedly bound for Heaven.

By no means a comprehensive treatment of the connections between death culture and children's reading in the early modern period, the thesis is intended to indicate how pious reading functioned as a reminder of one's mortality and a spur to self-scrutiny. The "looking glass" of the text displayed idealized and heaven-bound children and parents compared to whom the reader may have felt sorely in need of increased vigilance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..... 6

INTRODUCTION.....8

CHAPTER ONE: ADULT ANXIETIES OVER CHILDREN"S READING PRACTICES IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND. 16

CHAPTER TWO: MATERNAL DEATHBED ADVICE LITERATURE.....28

CHAPTER THREE: EXEMPLARY CHILDREN, TORTUOUS DEATHS AND HAPPY ENDINGS: PURITAN DEATH LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN.....49

CONCLUSION.....65

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....68

INTRODUCTION

In 1543, Henry the VIII finally and reluctantly consented to the printing of an English-language Bible, but he declared the following rules of access to it:

> "'Women or artificers, prentises, journeymen serving men of the degrees of yeomen or under, husbandmen (and) laborers' were completely forbidden to read the Bible in English.'[1]
>
> Noblewomen and men of middling rank 'maie reade to themselves alone and not to others any of the Byble or New Testament.[2]'
>
> "'Every nobleman and gentleman' could not only read the Bible in English, but could have it read aloud to them and to anyone under their roof. It took only one member of the nobility to authorize free access to Scripture[3]."

Henry the VIII's edict is a crystal-clear sign of the threat that growing literacy posed the social hierarchy. Although associated with a dramatic rise in literacy and a burgeoning print trade, the English Reformation did not always find an ally in these trends. The "religion of the book," placed Bible reading at the center of the individual's relationship to God. However, Protestant reformers quickly recognized that literacy, their religion's requisite skill, had applications beyond pious purposes. In a profit-driven publishing marketplace, controlling what and how people read was as near-impossible as it was highly desirable. Attempts to make books off-limits to certain segments of the population could dangerously backfire, making them yet more enticing and their potential for subversion even greater.

Henry the VIII's edict ignored children, but by the end of his daughter Elizabeth's reign, young readers were a subject of authorities' pronounced concern. The political and

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[1] Gilmont *Protestant Reformations and Reading* 1999, p.221 which quotes from The Statutes of the Realm, Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third, vol. 3 (London, 1817), p.896
[2] ibid
[3] ibid

religious instability of the seventeenth century, together with demographic shifts, brought a new importance to the conformity of the young generation. In this context, children's delight in violent and sensual chivalric romances was perceived as a crisis [4]. At the most fundamental level, the popularity of fiction threatened to displace pious reading of the Bible and other religious works.

In earlier periods, rote learning of the catechism and a child's physical presence in church was considered sufficient for religious education. Amid the turmoil of the Tudor-Stuart periods, the staying power of Protestantism rested on a child's profound and personal engagement with the tenets of the faith. The strategic importance of childhood conversion was also perceived by sects such as Puritans and Quakers. The result was a willingness to think creatively about capturing the attention of children.

Reformers realized that parents had greater impact on their children's reading habits than could ever be dictated by laws. Most parenting manuals took pains to explain the critical link between a child's reading and his salvation. A vigilant parental eye on children's reading was encouraged, and a discourse developed praising "good and godly books" and demonizing the violent and bawdy chapbooks that were so popular among young and old alike.

As the seventeenth century progressed, minister-authors and other writers, worked toward a religious or moral literature that children would actually want to read. The most popular of these godly books were in the *ars moriendi* tradition, delivering religious messages through familial deathbed scenes. Consciously or unconsciously, these authors incorporated the heroism and drama of chivalric romances into their moralizing works for children. For example, a dying girl in the Puritan death literature tradition might greet an early death with the same rapture that a maid in a chivalric romance felt toward her lover.

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[4] While this is a common theme in seventeenth-century parenting manuals, Roger Ascham (1515-1568), tutor to Elizabeth I, was one of the more high-profile alarmists about children's reading in his posthumously published, *The Scholemaster* (1570).

New Protestant-inflected versions of *ars moriendi* genres found a ready market, no doubt because of death's deathless fascination.

As I researched the history of early modern children's reading, from the surge of interest in children's reading in the late sixteenth century [5]to what is arguably the development of the first English-language children's book in the late seventeenth century[6], I was struck by the centrality of death in the discourse about what children should read-- as well as by death's starring role in the emerging literary forms for children.

My thesis argues that death, its theatricality, proximity, and dread, was profoundly implicated in the development of children's reading practices in early modern England. The cultural construct of death, in a period of high mortality and religious upheaval, was not only mobilized to shape seventeenth-century ideas about children and reading, but provided the frame for the first books for children in English. This text explores three developments for which reading, death and children are the lynchpin.

My first chapter discusses the negative adult reaction toward children's enjoyment of chivalric tales (usually in the cheap, chapbook form) in early modern England. As such, it highlights the interactive relationship between children, reformers, schoolmasters and literary culture.

The following two chapters explore works created at least partially in response to a need for books that could both move and edify the child toward greater piety. I examine the most successful books from two genres that appear in the seventeenth century. Both genres rely on the deathbed scene to transform a didactic message into a compelling read.

The first of these genres is maternal deathbed advice literature, written by women

[5] Charlton 1987, "False fonde bookes, ballades, and rimes" is the most concise account of this development I have found.

who left their children (and readers) a written legacy to serve posthumously as a surrogate for themselves. The second genre is Puritan death literature for children, which I discuss by reference to its first instantiation, the book, *A Token for Children,* by James Janeway. *A Token for Children*, contains accounts of the deaths of extraordinarily pious children, and is widely considered to be the first children's book in the English language. The book confers literary attention to children of ordinary backgrounds and abilities. What distinguishes these children is their meeting an early death with outstanding piety, a faith that made them fearless.

This elevation of ordinary children to literary subjects diverges from child heroes in earlier genres; for example, the violence suffered by child martyrs, or the gifted childhoods of saints, or the beautiful young maids and handsome heroes of chivalric romances. Puritan death literature emphasized a child's spiritual, internal development over their looks, intelligence or physical prowess. Glowing narratives about the early deaths of pious children declared a spiritual equality between children and adults hitherto unvoiced. It also may have incited child readers to invigorated efforts to mimic the heroically stoic deaths of the children in *A Token for Children.* Finally, works created specifically for children created a new channel of indirect communication to parents.

The idealized nature of the deathbed scene in literary form suggests the use of a book as a script for the act of dying, and its comfort value as a surrogate for lost loved ones (whether mothers in maternal deathbed advice books or children in Puritan death literature). This function of the books is of particular interest in a period in which both death culture and family structure were in transition. The mimetic function of the book, articulated through repeated references to the book as a looking glass, suggests how reading "good and godly books" was a spur to moral improvement and self-scrutiny, in other words, a preparation for death and judgment.

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[6] Darton 1932, *Children's Books in England,* one of the major histories of children's English literature claims that *A Token for Children* is the first book created for the

Thesis Parameters

A comprehensive treatment of the intersections between early modern death culture and seventeenth-century children's reading is clearly unfeasible in a master's thesis. Instead, I hope to illuminate aspects of this relationship by reference to a few carefully-chosen texts. My selection of texts is based on their popularity, relevance to my argument and the paucity of research on them, particularly with reference to death culture. Although I will refer to late sixteenth-century (as well as medieval) sources in the first chapter, my second and third chapters are limited to seventeenth-century England. In order to avoid repetition, the reader should assume I am referring to this period and country unless I indicate otherwise.

After my first chapter, my study focuses on texts and authors rather than on child readers. Therefore the rich issue of the sociology of child readers is limited to the first chapter. Given what we know about literacy education in this period and the sociology of sects, it is probably fair to assume that most young readers of the books discussed in this study were of middling rank.

There is considerable age slippage in the use of terms such as "youth" and "child" in the seventeenth century[7] and historians have perpetuated this lack of clarity. I have chosen to rely on a prevalent age distinction used by seventeenth-century writers[8]. Accordingly, my study is limited to "children" under the age of fifteen. This includes but is not limited to children in the early years of their apprenticeship. For the sake of variety, I may use terms such as "young people" or, occasionally, "youth" to refer to this age group.

Historiography

The book as a comforting, deathless speaking object ("something to hold on to")

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informal enjoyment of children.
[7] P. Griffiths 1996, *Youth and Authority*, 15
[8] ibid

and a catalyst to self-improvement is intriguing in a culture newly stripped of priests, purgatory, the iconography of Jesus and Mary and saints' relics. Protestantism denounced as superstitious every object imbued with religious value, except the book. As I.M. Green notes, the humble Englishman "regularly put such trust in the saving value of good works that it was barely orthodox by standards of clergy—combined older views with adherence to very Protestant practices such as use of vernacular rites of passage, psalms and hymns and revering the Bible as a symbol of the religion of the Protestants[9]." The shifts in death culture coincided with shifts in the Protestant restructuring of the family in which the father took over the many religious duties that had been the job description of a priest. Women, who had enjoyed broad professional avenues in the Medieval Age, found themselves operating increasingly and exclusively in the domestic sphere. Both cultural shifts affected the kind of books that were written and read and who wrote them. Parenting expertise, formerly passed down through conversation and oral story telling, was suddenly the publishing provenance of minister-father-authors.

A central debate in the historiography of the family is the nature of the early modern family and the impact of these shifts on individual family members. Did fathers actually rule? Were women oppressed? Were early modern families cold and cruel, as Edward Shorter and others has suggested? Or as Steven Ozment has argued, are families essentially no crueler or kinder today than they were centuries ago?

My small study cannot hope to take on such large questions, but through explorations of two instances of Protestant woman's authorship and Puritan death literature, I attempt to show the complexity of the works themselves and the culture in which these books were produced. Contradictions abound. By choosing to include rare examples of woman's authorship from this period, I acknowledge the resourcefulness of female writers and the relative flexibility of a culture that welcomed an authoritative if carefully-modulated woman's voice. The remarkable individual differences between the

[9] Green 2000, 113

two woman writers in this study will, I hope, emphasize to what extent age, marital status and above all, individual temperament, determined a female writer's voice and message.

Many modern readers find *A Token for Children* a sadistic book designed to frighten innocent children. A difficulty with historical analysis of such texts is that too often we "seem to assume that texts have always worked on the sensibilities of readers in the same way."[10] The earnestness of reformers and their sense of the urgency of their message can help to explain their rhetorical strategies.

Precisely because fear of death did not begin or end with the Reformation, death literature testifies to ways that cultural practices were modified by the interaction between an emerging print culture and the Protestantisms they helped to create. Given the abrogation of purgatory, and the extremely uncompromising, and often anxiety-inducing doctrine of predestination, death literature and deathbed advice served as guides to a "livable" mental framework in an age when most children lost one parent before their wedding day. The contradiction between predestination and the demand in the literary marketplace for deathbed advice and scenes of the "good death" reveal, as Watt noted of godly ballads, an intriguing "area of shared culture spanning the doctrinal rift between Catholic and Protestant." [11]

While the core of my investigation will consist of close analysis of primary texts, and will therefore not be structured by the approach of any specific thinker, my approach to this subject is influenced by the cultural historical approach of Robert Darnton and the readership studies of Roger Chartier. I am also indebted to the historians who have pioneered the study of pious books in early modern England, among them I.M. Green, Tessa Watt and Margaret Spufford. My aim is to bring to light two genres of pious literature that used the specter of death as a spur to maturation. This self-scrutinizing

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[10] Darnton 1989, 21

[11] Watt 1991, 113

function brought to children's reading an intensity that might be hard for us to imagine.

CHAPTER ONE:
ADULT ANXIETIES ABOUT CHILDREN'S READING IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

There was no shortage of young people in early modern England. At certain points in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, under-15 year olds constituted 40% of the population[12]. Given the period's religious upheaval and unprecedented increase in literacy and social mobility, Tudor and Stuart authorities recognized the political importance of child-rearing. The ideological and spiritual suggestibility of young men was uppermost in the minds of those in power. As the work of Ilana Ben Amos[13] and Paul Griffiths[14] has shown, children[15] came into heightened focus by cultural, religious and political authorities from the beginning of the sixteenth century. After all, it had been young men at Oxford and Cambridge who had read their way to becoming Protestant reformers and were now leading radical sects[16].

While most young readers were boys in grammar schools, rapid religious, economic and demographic change enabled unprecedented and increasing growth in educational resources and literacy. Even girls and boys of modest means were becoming literate. As such, early modern England saw the emergence of a child/youth market for pleasure reading. The practice of children reading a broad range of fiction was a new cultural phenomenon. The dangers perceived by contemporaries regarding that development is the concern of this essay.

The primary target of reformers' concern was the chivalric romance genre. In the Middle Ages, this aristocratic genre had been deemed suitable for children to read with their parents. Early modern printers now made it widely affordable to even the poorest

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[12] Griffiths 1996

[13] Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England,* 1994.

[14] Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640.* 1996.

[15] By "children", I refer to young people under the age of 15.

apprentice in condensed and often illustrated chapbook form. Not only had the genre become "degraded" because of its new working class readership, the sexual and violent content of chivalric tales were played up. Worse still for Reformers, chapbooks were so affordable that the young apprentice could afford to buy his or her own copy and read it over and over alone, without adult mediation or supervision.

At least a part of the backlash against the newly cross-class readership of chivalric romances must have been the middle-class biases of Protestant Reformers writing about this topic; with their drive for communal moral purgation, their convictions about self-discipline and the urgency of spiritual salvation and their old-fashioned class consciousness. Driven by the profit interests of the printers, cheap print was in itself a force for the growth of literacy, utterly out of the control of government or church authorities. Books formerly a high status item could now be afforded in some form by almost anyone. Chapbooks "were priced low enough to be afforded by ordinary peasants, laborers or even by servant girls[17]". The result was that cultural divisions that earlier may have reflected the hierarchical organization of society were now more associated with age and marital status than social rank.[18]

While suspicions of fiction had appeared in the early Christian Church[19] it is worth exploring how and why these concerns emerge during in the Humanist culture of the Reformation. Kenneth Charlton marks the critical concern over the popularity of romance chapbooks with Vives and Erasmus' declamations in the sixteenth century. Vives argued that , "Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hampton, Libyius and Arthur" kindle and styr up covetousness, inflame anger, and all beastly and filthy desire.[20]" Soon English Humanists elaborated on the topic. By the time Roger Ascham (1515-1568), tutor to Queen Elizabeth I, contributed his educational treatise, *The Scholemaster*

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[16] Stone 1969
[17] Spufford 1981
[18] Chartier, 1999
[19] Charlton 1987, 450.

(1570), the government had already made several decisive attempts to exercise control over the dissemination of print, particularly chapbooks.

In 1553, the government prescribed the licensing of chapmen and "forbade the printing of 'false fonde bookes, ballades and times and other lewd treatises in the English tongue." established by Royal Charter the Stationers Company whose purpose was to control the products of publishing (1557). The licensing of schoolmasters (simultaneous to priests and printers) in the same year suggests the interest in young people's access to inappropriate literature. Chapbooks were only one part of the problem; romances and adventure tales were considered equally dangerous in their longer, more expensive forms too.

The aristocratic origins of chivalric romances in the Middle Ages worked against the genre's respectability in the minds of reformers, for it was associated with a corrupt England attached to the Catholic Church. Roger Ascham wrote, "In our forefathers tyme, whan Papistrie, as a standyng poole, couered and ouerflowed all England, fewe bookes were read in our tong, sauyng certaine bookes of Cheualrie, as they sayd, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in Monasteries, by idle Monkes, or wanton Chanons: as one for example, Morte Arthure: the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open mans slaughter, and bold bawdrye:[21]" Such bad examples in stories will "cary yong willes to vanitie, and yong wittes to mischief."

Ascham's outrage is heightened by the misuse of the divine invention of the printing press. In the Protestant hierarchy of practices, reading was a form of worship. Good Protestants should not be reading about glamorized murder, but using a text to contemplate the state of their soul and by implication, their preparedness for death. *The Mothers Blessing*, a seventeenth-century conduct manual for children, indicates that

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[20] Juan Luis Vives, De officii mariti 1528 trans. Quotedin Charlton, 1987
[21] Roger Ascham 1570, The Scholemaster

reading was a form of prayer that took place in the home. The mother-author writes, "I pray reade the story of Job and not only reade, but gather some fruit out of it, and ever when you begin to read any part of the Scripture, lift up your hearts, souls and minds unto God and pray privately or publikely; but of private prayer never faile and desire God, for Christ's sake, to enlighten your understandings to sanctifie your hearts.[22]"

John Foxe in the *Book of Martyrs*, one of the best-selling works of the sixteenth century, wrote "The Lord began to work for His Church not with sword and target to subdue His exalted adversary, but with printing, writing and reading...either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing or printing must at length root him out.[23]" Reading and printing for sensual ends was therefore a betrayal of the divine and solemn purpose of the medium. Philip Stubbes likened the enjoyment of chapbooks on the Sabbath to "that bloodie and murtheryng practice...the playing of footeball.[24]"

Concerns over children's reading habits were of state interest because of the fragility of Protestantism in England. Ascham explains the necessity of such parental vigilance in terms of patriotism and piety. "We haue cause also in England to beware of vnkindnesse, who haue had, in so fewe yeares, the Candel of Goddes worde, so oft lightned, so oft put out, and yet will venture by our vnthankfulnesse in doctrine and sinfull life, to leese againe, lighte, Candle, Candlesticke and all.[25]"

The futility of laws to control the dissemination of bawdy and violent chapbooks was evident. In order to protect children from such reading habits, parenting manuals increasingly admonished parents to keep a vigilant eye on what their children read. In a conduct of life book for young noblewomen, Christopher Shutte (1578), addressing his audience as future mothers, wrote that chapbooks were "more mete for mearers shoppes to wrappe their spices in, then for a wel disposed family to be taught and nurtured by.[26]"

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[22] Leigh 1617, 57
[23] quoted in Eisenstein 1983, 151
[24] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583)
[25] Ascham 1570
[26] Shutte 1578

John Stockwood spelled out for his readers. "A flat commandment, not from man but from God himself...as first what is to be read: not Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, Robin Hood, nor any such vaine Bables, which passé the presse more easily than many verie profitable and godly writings, but the booke of the Lawe."[27]

Thus, Protestant reformers produced a discourse of "good and godly books" and their opposite, books that were dangerous for children on a number of grounds and must be "weeded out" by parents.

Adrian Johns argues that seventeenth-century beliefs about the physical and mental effects of impassioned reading resulted in pedagogic practices that were "perhaps instrumental in creating an entire British population notoriously ready to rein in its passions[28]." While Johns' claims for widespread contemporary beliefs about reading, (eg "Reading could blind, derange and even kill."[29]) are exaggerated, the anecdotes of his distinguished seventeenth-century witnesses, among them John Milton, Robert Boyle and Isaac Casaubon are telling. While Boyle blames his lifelong tendency to daydream on childhood novel reading and Milton and Casaubon regret the time lost in their formative years to a youthful penchant for novels and romances, their sentiments of misspent youth seem more the product of convention than of searing grief.

That idle reading practices should be the particular youthful folly lamented by these distinguished men suggests the conventionality of this childrearing issue by mid-seventeenth century. Johns makes the useful point that early modern people understood the act of reading differently and therefore understood the consequences of reading differently as well[30].

Protestant doctrine insisted on human depravity as the natural condition of mankind. Children were not innocent souls, but were naturally sinful and inclined to vice. It is unlikely that most parents really saw their children this way and many

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[27] Stockwood1595,
[28] Johns 1998, .408

parenting manuals are in the form of dialogues between ministers advocating sternness and parents inclined to treat their children with tenderness. The Protestant abrogation of purgatory, doctrine of predestination and discontinuation of the practice of assigning god parents a role in the religious education of children, together with the emphasis on the household as church placed a new authority and responsibility in parents. Death-bed appeals to god's mercy and prayers after a child's death would have no purchasing power with a Protestant god. A sober awareness of the suddenness and proximity of death informed the valuation of daily activities.

While enabled by economic, demographic and technological progress, as Ozment, has noted, the Reformation was primarily "a spiritual movement driving society and politics[31]." The Reformation's moral purgation of religious life made "injustice and bondage within the inner life as portentous as those which afflict people's physical lives. For people living then, the struggle against sin, death and the devil became as basic as that for bread, land and self-determination[32]."

Unusually high child mortality rates in the early modern period would have added further gravity to this mission. "More than 1/5 of all children born under Elizabeth I and about 1/4 of those born under the Stuarts died before age 10.[33]" As a result, a "now or never" philosophy to the use of time developed. Either one was actively performing a duty that would assist in his or her own salvation or one was collaborating with Satan. Idleness became the deadliest of sins. As one conduct manual exhorted the reader, "It is now that you must sow and hereafter that you must reap; it is now that you must work and then that you must receive your wages. O therefore poor soul...let me persuade you to be up and be doing.[34]"

The particular interest in children's reading of Puritan writers is driven by the

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[30] Johns 1998, 442
[31] Ozment 1992,3
[32] Ozment 1992, 3
[33] Houlbrooke 1998 , 7
[34] from the small godly book, *Now or Never* quoted in Spufford 1981,3

threat that escapist literature poses to a faith determined to look life's stark realities in the face. Predestination was intended to give comfort to parents and children who watched loved ones die or faced untimely deaths themselves; Protestantism provided a framework for facing death without indulging in the wishful thinking implied by the purchase of papal indulgences. Elizabeth Eisenstein has observed, "Possibly the most fundamental divergence between Catholic and Protestant cultures can be found closest to home."[35] The ideal of the Protestant household as a church with the father as king and priest created a demand for self-help works explaining how to effect such a transformation. Between 1590 and 1640, conduct of life and parenting manuals became extremely popular[36]. These manuals formed the major medium for the dissemination of concerns about children's reading.

The discourse about what children should *not* read was vital to the development of a literature that they *should.* Minister-authors, many of whom relied on writing for their main source of income, began producing a story-based literature designed to improve the child's moral development through a transformational reading experience. In order to provide an intense and dramatic story, the deathbed scene was often called into service.

The Civil War and Interregnum witnessed a lapse in censorship and a related rise in authorship of girls and young women, mostly as prophets from the more radical sects. Johns argues that their claim for authorship rested on their receptivity to transformation during the act of reading Scripture. "For once, the peculiar predicament in which contemporary representations of female nature placed them allowed which contemporary representations of female nature placed them allowed women to venture into print while averting conventional charges of immodesty and insubordination.[37]" Such tolerance to female authority and authorship was soon short-lived. Female prophets

[35] Eisenstein 1983, 167
[36] Green 2000, 374
[37] Johns 1998, 414

and authors came under the designation "enthusiast"; a term, which suggested a person whose passions, had overwhelmed their ability to use reason. After the Restoration, family manuals became yet more severe in their directions to parents about children's and especially girls' reading.

In *The true interest of families, or Directions how parents may be happy in their children* (1695)[38], the parent-reader is instructed, "Be careful lest they read any Books which tend to poison their minds, to fill them with false opinions, or to lend them to bad practices: Their tender minds are apt very quickly to be corrupted by such treatises.[39]"

Girls receive more strict attention, "Let her hear nothing, learn nothing, speak nothing, but what may inspire the fear of God into her...Let her not listen to prophane discourses, not be enamoured with love songs or amorous ditties...Use her to reading and to work and labour and promise her rewards and incite her to emulation.[40]" Although it is beyond the scope of this essay, it is remarkable that concerns about the impact of fiction on mental clarity which at the beginning of the Reformation had been discussed in terms of (mostly male) children, become increasingly directed toward girls. It may be that a lasting cultural response to the crisis of boy's fiction reading is the effeminization of the effect of being lost in fantasy literature. This characteristic is explained in terms of the exaggerated version females were said to exhibit of the internal battle between passions (materialized as animal spirits) and reason. Addiction to romance and adventure tales, then, demonstrated the weakness of a girl's command of reason and her gender's lack of control over her sensual appetite. All the more reason, then, for parents to exercise such control on her behalf.

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[38] Kirkwood 1692

[39] Cleaver 1595

[40] ibid

CONCLUSION

"Euery man sees, (as I sayd before) new wax is best for printing"

- Ascham, 1570

The metaphor of printing for the childhood development of habits and mentalities is one that increasingly crops up in seventeenth-century parenting and conduct manuals; a signal of the depth with which texts were understood to impact child development. The privatization of religious practices was intimately tied to the commercialization of print, as shrewd printers produced a broad range of texts, from psalters to household manuals, designed to help parents and children become better Protestants. Robert Cleaver writes, "It is not enough to bring thy children to bee catechised at the church, but thou must labour with them at home after a more plaine and easie maner of instruction, that so they may be the better profit by the publike teaching[41]."

We should not assume that the Bible or catechisms were necessarily more enjoyable reading to early modern children than they are today—or that it was particularly easier for early modern parents to force their children to read such works at home. Between the despair over children's love of chivalric tales in chapbook form and the failure of the catechism to deepen religious fervor, there arose a demand for religious or at least edifying works that children would want to read.

Printers and publishers had the strongest motivation to spot potential reading markets and identify the kinds of books that would appeal to it. Death, in various literary guises, sold and sold well. In response to the concern over "small merry books", "small godly books" became increasingly in evidence.[42]. These godly chapbooks were brief, often 8 to 16 pages in length and often as action packed as adventure tales.

They found a robust readership among children and adults and appear to borrow many conventions and features of the chivalric tale.

Godly chapbooks became the forerunner of the first literature produced for children exclusively, which as book historian Darton argues, emerges with the publication of the immensely successful *A Token for Children* by James Janeway. While the content of *A Token* and similar books strikes the modern reader as morbid, its combination of moral lessons with conventions of fictional narrative served the function of entertaining the reader, while also, in the words of Tessa Watt, fulfilling "the need for role models, for inspirational stories, for behavioral rules to give to their children, for guidance on the approach to death.[43]"

Originally authored by ministers, printers soon capitalized on the profit potential for such works and hired hack writers to produce them fast. The result is a broad array of the ratio of sermonizing to entertainment value. In one illustrated godly book, Death, personified as a skeleton, takes on such heavy weight humans as Julius Caesar and after many close and dramatic fights, wins. Clearly a moral message could be secondary in such godly works. The salient point, however, is that a literature emerged for children, framed by moral messages which made its entertainment value acceptable to the literal fundamentalism of religious and political authorities.

The demand for new reading materials opened the marketplace to new genres and voices. Within the tried and true deathbed scenario, a few women managed to negotiate their way to authorship of their own parenting manual. Their use of the death trope as a self-authorizing strategy is the subject of the next chapter.

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[41] Cleaver, 1598
[42] Spufford 1981, 196
[43] Watt 1991, 305

CHAPTER TWO:

MATERNAL DEATHBED ADVICE LITERATURE

"I will tell you what good writing of Bookes doth," wrote Dorothy Leigh in 1614. " It makes the way to Christ easie to those that desire to go in it[44]" In her irrepressible desire to "write" her sons and other readers "the right and ready way to Heaven, " Leigh helped to launch a subgenre of parental advice literature: maternal deathbed advice books. In this chapter, I will discuss the prefatory rhetoric used by Leigh and her fellow best-selling woman writer, Elizabeth Jocelin. I am focusing on their prefaces because they are the sites in which the writer's authorization is presented. Given that these works were written in order to be published posthumously, the preface should contain the writer's perspective on her own death and writing. Moreover, a focus on the prefaces is desirable because parenting manuals, whether written by men or women of this period, are remarkably similar in their advice.

The gendering of the parenting/conduct of life manual genre

In early modern England, the discourse about childrearing, marriage and family was a male one. Whereas in earlier times, such knowledge would have circulated in the form of folk lore or in the oral forms of ballads and sermons, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the systemization and popularization of family wisdom and roles by male "experts." Most of the expert authors were ministers, Protestant clergymen who could marry and have children. Their authority was based on their dual roles as father and man of the cloth. In addition to their role in the religious hierarchy, a minister's claim to wisdom was also supported by a University education. These were the uber vaters of Protestantism, the ultimate godly, learned man and wise father. Who better to pen the fictions of Protestant family roles?

[44] Leigh 1617, 91

Early seventeenth-century Englishwomen, blocked from religious careers as well as from the possibility of a University education, were at a distinct disadvantage in terms of entering the literary discourse about childrearing. Moreover, the household manuals of the period suggest the ideal characteristics of a Protestant mother as piety, silence, humility, and chastity. This selfless ideal would have made it extremely difficult, even for the few female beneficiaries of a scholarly education, to assume the role of author without social condemnation. The pride conveyed in authorship was a problem even for male Protestants, and negotiated by the conventional pose of the reluctant author in most "letters to readers". For a woman, the pride associated with authorship was fundamentally incompatible with feminine virtues. Therefore women of the seventeenth century faced formidable obstacles in becoming authors, even on a topic as close to home as child-rearing. Most women of middling rank or higher would be destined to be only on the receiving end of print-mediated advice.

In addition to her more passive virtues, the ideal Protestant mother had the active responsibility to instruct her children in religious education. Like any good Protestant, she readied herself spiritually for a death that, given the conditions of the period, could happen suddenly. It was in these nurturing and educational capacities that Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Jocelin drove a wedge between the cultural role of the author as necessarily male, and the cultural role of the mother as pious and selfless, creating a subgenre where women could exercise culturally sanctioned authorship through the performance of their maternal duties in the medium of print.

By writing a book in the form of a legacy to their children, most deathbed mother-authors portrayed themselves as writing within the intimate sphere of mother-child relations. Both Leigh and Jocelin frame the motivation (even the urgency) for their writing in terms of their approaching death and consequent impending separation from their children. Their literary works are designed to become surrogate mothers for their children, creating a permanent maternal presence beyond the grave. Predicated on the

author's death, female authorship in the deathbed genre becomes a pious act linked to female duty, silence and invisibility.

Maternal deathbed advice books from the seventeenth century provide us with examples of intriguingly successful early modern female authorship in England. Unlike the controversial Aphra Behn, maternal deathbed advice authors not only retained their respectability once published, but were memorialized by their works as paragons of piety[45] and Protestant motherhood. In a culture that equated female silence with feminine virtue and female loquacity with promiscuousness, this was a remarkable feat. However, authorship of a published deathbed advice book came at a high price; authorial death was part of the editorial process.

I will argue that the authorizing function of the preface, and the ways it is used by my chosen authors are critical to the commercial and critical success of these works. The books concerned are Dorothy Leigh's A Mothers Blessing (1616) and Elizabeth Jocelin's A Mothers Legacie to her Unborn Childe (1622).

Leigh and Jocelin's self-representation as a dying woman has led to provocative feminist analyses of their works. Teresa Feroli has suggested in her article Infelix Simulacrum, for example, that in writing to her unborn child, Jocelin writes to a lost self[46]. Without discrediting such analyses, I hope to complicate our understanding of Leigh and Jocelin's motivations for writing by attending to their fervent Protestant faith, its gendering of mourning and its foregrounding of death preparation in everyday piety. The mixed messages that Leigh and Jocelin offer in their prefatory remarks are suggestive not only of the conflicts within their gender, class and religious identities, but within larger cultural shifts, particularly those related to death rituals.

[45] Brown 1998, "Women's Writing in Stuart England",p.vi: "An anonymous text of 1627, A Mothers Teares over Hir Seduced Son, refers to both (Joceline and Leigh) as if they were well-known." (Brown, pvi)
[46] Feroli, 1994, 89-102

An obvious place to start is the utility of a permanent object containing maternal advice in seventeenth-century England. Low life expectancy [47] in this period guaranteed early parental loss for many children and early spousal death for many parents . While mortality rates in early seventeenth century were not dramatically different from earlier periods, the methods of coping with death were undergoing a significant change. Among the Catholic belief systems and practices that might have soothed motherless children (or dying mothers) are the practice of prayer for the dead, use of saints relics and the veneration of the Mother of God. The Protestant Reformation forbade these practices and denounced all objects imbued with religious or spiritual significance, except the book. The use of the book as a surrogate for a lost mother is a remarkably adaptive use of the medium's material and experiential features in a bibliocentric, Protestant culture[48].

A forerunner of the maternal deathbed advice genre was undoubtedly published funeral sermons that eulogized exemplary women in early Stuart England. In her article, "Eulogies for Women", Retha M. Warwicke suggests that these sermons replaced "the traditional Catholic commendations of the nobility, beauty and stewardship of the deceased.[49]" It is significant that, while Leigh is generally recognized as the genre's mother, it was a male author, Nicholas Breton[50], who first published an advice book in

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[47] Dubrow, 1994, 150 "In the early seventeenth century , the life expectancy in London was about 22.3 years in contrast to 36.4 years for the northeasterly provinces and 49 for the north midlands." And p. 150, "About one third to one half of the population had witnessed the death of one parent, or even both, by the time they themselves married."

[48] Gilmont 1999, 234: Gilmont briefly touches on the awareness of Calvin and his followers that "print could confer a degree of immortality."

[49] Warnicke 1994, 170: "Under pressure from the bereaved...some ministers, defining eulogies as "solaces of the living, no helpes to the dead" began to offer information about the deceased's spiritual pilgrimages, holding them up as models for all Christians to imitate, men being admonished to follow the examples of women as well as those of other men."

[50] Nicholas Breton (1545?-1626?) wrote *The Mothers Blessing,* which was published in 1601. In 1601 Nicholas Breton published an advice book to a young man named Thomas Rowe. While Breton's manual is not extraordinary in its content, echoing the Polonius-like counsel typical of advice books, it is highly unusual in its mode of presentation. In a genre dominated almost exclusively by fathers advising sons, men advising women, and (male) friends advising friends, Breton chose to assume the voice of Mr. Rowe's mother, Lady Bartley.

the voice of a mother on her deathbed. This suggests that at least some men (Breton, his publisher and readers) recognized a desire for an authentic female voice in print. Certainly, the success of maternal deathbed advice books suggests the identification of a gap in the marketplace. *The Mothers Blessing* by Dorothy Leigh was the most reprinted book by a woman in the seventeenth century[51]. Between 1616 and 1674, twenty-three editions of the book were published[52].*The Mothers Legacie to her Unborne Childe* by Elizabeth Jocelin was published in eight editions between 1624 and 1684[53].

The accomplishments of these authors are the more remarkable because their books challenged the contemporary gendering of childrearing expertise. During the Reformation, the importance of childrearing to political and religious stability was reflected in the popularity of parenting and conduct of life manuals. The confluence of religious upheaval and the rise of print and literacy enabled childrearing expertise to become the domain University-educated the highly literate, University-educated minister[54]. This effectively blocked out the participation of women. The pretexts upon which Leigh and Jocelin successfully entered the genre are therefore of particular interest. Through authorship, Leigh and Jocelin kept the child-rearing authority of women alive in print culture.

While widely disparate in age, maternal and marital status and temperament, Jocelin and Leigh shared the unusual feature of a Humanist education that set them apart from most women of their time and helps to explain their writing ability and authorship[55]. In addition to receiving grounding in classical literature and rhetoric, Leigh and Jocelin may well have internalized the goals of their Humanist education. Humanist training prepared the student for a career as an author on topics of public concern. This aspirational inheritance may partially explain Leigh's confidence in the public value of

[51] Brown, 1999, vi
[52] ibid
[53] ibid
[54] Green 2000

her writing and Jocelin's deep understanding of the rhetorical value of anti-rhetoric. Their familiarity with the world of books also set these writers apart from most women, even of their class, who were discouraged from reading books other than the Bible. Sensitive to readers' perceptions about authors and women, Leigh and Jocelin were unusually well-prepared to problematize the ancient view of the feminine virtues of humility, chastity and silence as mutually dependent.

While Leigh and Jocelin benefited educationally from their families' unusually progressive approach to girls' education, the gap between the theory of feminine silence and actual practice was also at work in the culture at large[56]. In one of the most popular household manuals of the age, the contradiction is hidden in plain sight. Dod and Cleaver write in *A Godlie Forme of Household Government,*

"A man or a woman's talking, is the mirrour and messenger of the minde, in the which it may commonly be seene without, in what case the man or woman is within. ...Now silence is the best ornament of a woman.[57]"

In 'A Moving Rhetoricke,' Luckyj argues that "silence" was a relative term in early modern England and the injunction for a woman's silence needs to be understood with more nuance than is usually the case . Even Vives is careful to qualify that females should hold their tongue "in company.[58]" The demand for female silence was usually justified by Eve's towardness with the serpent which resulted in human mortality and pain in childbirth. The real concern appeared to be that women use moderation and avoid upstaging or contradicting their men. To be sure, this was a repressive policy, but quite a different one than a demand for outright silence.

The appropriate "time and place" for a woman's speech therefore determined its acceptability. The successful reception of Jocelin and Leigh as deathbed advice writers

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[55] For biographies of Leigh and Joceline, see Travitsky, "Mothers Advice Books" and Brown, "Womens Writing in Stuart England"
[56] Luckyj, "A moving Rhetoricke: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England", p.42-72
[57] Cleaver1621 , 104

can be explained in part due to their favorable choice of a setting for their writing. The highly gendered nature of death and mourning in the early modern period enabled expressive opportunities in that context that would have been less welcome elsewhere. In addition to the religious instruction of small children, early modern Protestant women were largely responsible for caring and mourning for the sick and dying[59]. Since Eve was responsible for human death, so the logic went, her daughters should manage death's practical consequences[60]. Therefore the times and places of death and dying were gendered female both symbolically and practically.

When it came for a mother's turn to die, consoling maternal deathbed advice was not just an opportunity for female speech, it was a parental duty, an essential feature of a "good death." The deathbed scene allowed women to express themselves acceptably and fully through the consolation (which might take the form of admonition) of their relatives[61]. On the brink of leaving the gendered body of the female, the dying mother's newfound authority and freedom of speech, may be justified by her proximity to her genderless eternal spirit.

Having died, the mother would have both bereaved her family and taken from them the person who facilitated the family's mourning rituals and healing. Written maternal deathbed advice would have had obvious compensatory and consoling power. However, for a woman herself to take up her pen and commit to paper her "last words" without the mediation of a minister or husband (or both), she would have to negotiate her way around the immodesty and eccentricity associated with a writing woman. Most women of the early seventeenth century never had the option of facing this quandary due

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[58] Hannay, 1994, 36 provides the fuller quote from Vives, "If she be good, it were better to be at home within and unknown to other folkes, and in company to hold her tongue demurely, and let few see here and none at all heare her." From Vives, "Instruction of a Christian Woman."
[59] Phillipy 2002, 150-1
[60] Phillipy, 2002, 150 : "In the absence of professional undertakers, early modern women were the most frequent and immediate attendants on bodies in death, fulfilling not only emotive rites of mourning but also the more mundane tasks of caring for the dying, washing and winding the corpse...serving as mourners at funerals and donning mourning garments according to cultural roles of relation, sex and class."
[61] For a fuller discussion of the deathbed as "a recognized site of particularly volatile, powerful expression for women", see Phillipy 2002,.150-1.

to low productive literacy rates among women of every class.[62] For Leigh and Jocelin, who knew how to write and write well, the transgression required a skilful self-presentation in order to retain their virtuous reputations. Because Leigh and Jocelin were sincerely pious, their use of prefatory rhetoric, whether conscious or unconscious, is the more revealing of their internalizations of the contradictions within their culture.

The Prefaces

My study of the prefaces of Jocelin and Leigh is intended to illuminate how the authors use the threshold, liminal nature of the preface to deftly negotiate their way into a culturally sanctioned authorship through the symbolism of another threshold –that between life and death. Critical to this negotiation is the use of the medium of writing and print. The ability to reproduce a private document, such as a mother's letter to her child, and distribute multiple copies of it, allows the woman writer to represent herself as operating within a private sphere and appear innocent of the ambition of publication. It also affords the text the permanent theatricality of the "recent death" of its author. Dorothy Leigh's title page, in the first edition or in one issued fifty years later, describes her as "not long since deceased." Since the author is always recently dead, the conventional practice of speaking well of the dead may have contributed to its reception.

As beneficiaries of a Humanist education, Leigh and Jocelin would have been familiar with classical rhetoric and its techniques of establishing authority and attracting the good will of the reader/audience. The three sections of Leigh's prefatory materials reflect this understanding. The first is a letter to Lady Elizabeth, "the daughter of King James I and wife of the Elector Palatine: a powerful Protestant princess, and like Dorothy Leigh, a mother.[63]" The second is a letter to her sons, explaining her writing as a fulfillment of her duty to their father. The third is a poem to her children using the

[62] This may reframe Leigh's apparently forward suggestion on her title page that her "Mothers Blessing" can also function as a legacy for other parents to leave their children into a truly Christian act
[63] Brown 1999, .5

metaphor of the bee working hard to make honey to encourage them to labor at reading her words just as she labored to write them. Her concern with self-authorization extends into the body of the text itself, in which a much richer and bolder explanation for her authorship is offered. It is as though the preface functions as a formal threshold through which she must ritually pass, gaining permission from her superiors in order to finally claim her right to speak from her own experience as a godly woman and mother.

Dorothy Leigh

Dorothy Leigh, a widow with three school-aged sons, did not suffer from any imminent threat when she penned her deathbed advice. Her status as a widow might help to explain the confidence and dignity that is never submerged beneath her performance of modesty.

Leigh's forthright self-introduction to the King's daughter is not for patronage, but for protection. She presents this act of supplication as one of courage based on religious commitment and maternal duty. "Without feare and with much faith I adventured to make your Grace the protectresse of this my Booke.[64]" In the first three lines of her letter, Leigh hits every feature of classical prefatory rhetoric. She establishes her own ethical self-presentation, by showing her awareness of her subordination to the Princess and to all men. She equates her Herculean efforts on behalf of her sons as no more than what "every man will doe for his friend." She makes a personal appeal to her reader, establishing her vulnerability as a dying widow with young sons and no alternatives to writing. The strength of her case is undeniably compelling, "lest my children should not find the right way to heaven. " Leigh's self-portrayal as "wearied by fear" conceals the energy and agency implied by her act of authorship and its delivery into the Princess' hands. It is a fulfilment of Quintilian's formula that the greater the self-abnegation of the speaker, the greater the support from the audience[65].

[64] Leigh, 1616, (sigA2r)
[65] Dunn 1994,6

Leigh's letter to the Princess however also reveals the equalizing effects of religious fervor. Although she strategically understates the effort involved in her book, Leigh confidently presents her book as capable of illuminating her sons' path to salvation. Her knowledge of the "right and ready way to heaven" is the result of her deep knowledge of the Bible, apparent in her ability to quote much of it from memory. Her claims for authority are therefore modern and classical. Her wisdom is "warranted by the scriptures," her authority is based on the authority of the Book of God. However, her ability to anticipate the challenges her sons will face is rooted in her own personal experience-an entirely modern source of authority[66]. The implications of this confident self-appraisal are obscured in the Preface by her advocacy of herself not as herself but as a servant of the Lord.

Similarly, her appeal to Lady Elizabeth is enabled by a common ground in their shared piety. Leigh writes as one servant of the Lord to another, much better placed one. Her supplication as a mother for help in protecting her book and her sons treats Lady Elizabeth as a patron saint of Protestant mothers[67]. Leigh's account of the divine vision that prompted her approach to Lady Elizabeth recalls the Catholic iconography of Mary. "In great griefe I looked up to heaven, from whence I knew commeth al comfort, and looking up, I saw a most Angelicall throne of Princely Peeres and peereless Princes ...then I saw humility looking downe-ward...even then, Princely Lady, I beheld your mild and courteous countenance, which shewed, your heart was bent to do good to all." (sigA3v-sig A4r) This Mary-like portrait of Lady Elizabeth doubtless gave the princess her own incentive to see Leigh's work in print. Moreover, to deny Leigh her protection, the Princess would risk denying a much higher authority.

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[66] Dunn, 1994, 6 quotes Paul Veyne : "No ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself...To talk about oneself, to throw personal testimony into the balance, to profess that personal conviction must be taken into account provided only that it is sincere is a Christian, indeed an eminently Protestant idea that the ancients never dared to profess."

[67] Leigh's closing wish to the Princess emphasizes her value as a mother to the church and state: "The Lord multiply his graces more and more on you, and vouchsafe unto you a numerous posterity, in whom your Grave may receive much joy and comfort, and GODS Church, and true Religion continuall defence and propagation." (sig A5r.)

At the same time, there is something patently false about Leigh's justification for publication. Leigh explains that leaving the work in manuscript form would have been inadequate, for she could not trust her eldest child to pass the work on to her younger sons. There are several flaws in this "problem"- a) it suggests that she did not trust her sons to take good care of her work, created for them, and b) it should have been easy enough to have prepared three separate manuscripts for her three sons.

We know from the title page and the text itself that Leigh intended her work to be used by families at large, so the omission of this aim here suggests Leigh's judicious self-presentation before the royal. Leigh's self-portrait as a weary but virtuous Protestant mother supplicating the female icon of international Protestantism and borrowing the iconography of the mother of God to do so was a careful and obviously successful editing of her motives and personality.

If Leigh justified her authorship to the Princess through her maternal devotion and piety, this notion is abandoned in favor of wifely duty in the letter to her sons that follow. In the second letter of the preface, Leigh describes her writing self to her sons as the instrument of their father's dying wish. Leigh states, "I was duty bound to fulfil his will in all things...so that you might meet your Father in heaven." Leigh again describes herself as "setting aside all feare" to perform her "last duty" as a wife and mother. Describing her 260-page book as "these few lines, "Leigh characterizes the writing of her book as a common-sense response to her situation. "Seeing my selfe going out of the world and you but coming in, I know not how to performe this duty so well, as to leave you these few lines." Perhaps anticipating that conventional modesty might be inadequate, Leigh claims that her maternal and wifely devotion has led her to risk the painful exposure of publication, "I have adventured to shew my imperfections to the view of the World, not regarding what censure for this shall bee laid upon me, so that herein I may shew myself a loving Mother and a dutiful wife."(sig A7v). Her anticipation of inevitable censure for her "imperfections" performs the censure toward her on behalf of

"the World" and contains it within her text. Only a boorish male reader would have been unsatisfied by this.

After so much denial of ambition and self-advocacy, these qualities creep into the preface in its third part, an allegorical poem for her sons. The poem's emphasizes the equalizing nature of labor in salvation. Leigh uses it to invest worth in her book and leave little justification for her sons not to read it. Abandoning any claim to filial piety, Leigh addresses her sons as one Christian to another, "My paine's as great to write this book/ As it will be at any time/For you the same to read."(sig A8r). The allegory of the bee collecting honey as easily from flowers in poor soil allows Leigh to argue that the weakness of her female body (a flower in poor soil) does not diminish its ability to produce something of potentially life-saving value. The symbolism of the poem obscures this feminist message under the pretext of the encouraging the reader's pious preparations for death, "Take heed now you doe see/Lest you be unprovided found/As was the idle bee."(sig A8r) Leigh therefore presents the reception of her writing as a moral problem for her readers. Whatever her work's inherent weakness, only an idle soul will avoid the labor involved in reading a work whose advice is "warranted by the scriptures." Leigh's pious labor allows her to transcend the subordination of her gender and authoritatively advocate for the Lord.

Whereas her authorship is rationalized in the language of duty in the first two letters of her Preface, her tone changes dramatically in the body of the text as do her justifications. Leigh's authorship is no longer a duty and a labor, but a right, and a need, located in the pain she incurred in childbirth. While much bolder, Leigh is still careful to ask her more controversial questions in the voice of the Holy Ghost, instead of her own, eg,"Is it possible, that shee, which hath carried her child within her, so neere her hart and brought it forth into this world with so much paine, so many grones and cries, can forget it?" The wording of this question likens the mother's relationship to her children to God's relationship to his children.

Leigh's preface guides the reader from the palace of Lady Elizabeth to the domestic sphere of her sons to the world of nature, from which she ultimately finds her most authentic source of empowerment. Opening the preface as a weak woman seeking protection, Leigh ends her preface insisting, however cryptically, on her ability to offer protection and even her right to do so, on her own behalf. Having established an irreproachable social and religious persona in her preface, Leigh is able to write much more forcefully and expressively on behalf of herself in the body of her text[68].

Elizabeth Jocelin

Elizabeth Jocelin, a 27 year-old heiress pregnant for the first time in an apparently companionate seven-year marriage, did not live to complete her manuscript. As she had feared, she died from puerperal fever, days after delivering her child[69]. Her prefatory materials consist of two sections. The first is a letter to her husband, Taurell Jocelin, explaining her motivations for writing and asking him to oversee the delivery of the book into their child's hands. The second addresses her unborn child.

In the published work, these prefatory materials follow Approbation by the Reverend Goad. Reverend Goad knew Jocelin, possibly from childhood, though it is unclear by what method he attained the license of the manuscript[70]. Identifying Jocelin as an exemplary mother whose writing was the more remarkable for having been authored by a woman, Goad licensed Jocelin's work "for the registering this Will among the most publique Monuments.[71]"In addition to his approbation, Goad also edited the work, but mostly so indifferently, that Susan Young's description of it as "interference for the sake of interference[72]" is remarkably apt. The condescending presentation of Jocelin's work as

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[68] This is not to say that her text reflects a feminist agenda. On the contrary, both Joceline and Leigh are remarkably in line with Protestant doctrine.

[69] Brown, "Women's Writing in Stuart England"p.92
[70] Brown, "Women's Writing in Stuart England", p.97-100
[71] "Approbation", sig A4v.
[72]Brown 1999, 101

raw material perfected and sanctioned by a minister doubtless contributed to its welcome. Because there is no evidence that Jocelin intended Goad's role in the publication of her book, I will limit my attention to Jocelin's own prefatory remarks.

Jocelin had almost certainly read Leigh's book, which was issued in five editions from 1616-1621[73].Jocelin's manuscript, written in 1622, contains numerous phrasings that strongly indicate that Jocelin both read and admired Leigh's rhetoric. Just as Leigh describes the reader's potential scorn for her female imperfections as a measure of her altruistic heroism, Jocelin similarly writes "Neyther the true knowledge of mine own weakness nor the fear this may com to the world's ey and bring scorn upon my grave can stay my hand from expressing how much I covet thy salvation." (fol.11r)

While Leigh's widow status and advanced years gave her the authority and the excuse to seek the support of Lady Elizabeth, Jocelin could only respectably write on behalf of her manuscript to her husband. Because her husband was still alive, it would have been difficult for Jocelin to suggest a practical reason for the publication of her work. Clearly, acknowledging her own ambition for authorship was out of the question. We therefore have to read between the lines of her letter to her husband to discern whether she hoped for publication.

Echoing Leigh, Jocelin initially downplays the ambition implied by her writing, "I thought there was some good office I might do for my child." Building on the moral logic of Leigh's allegorical poem, Jocelin explains that it would have been a sin on her part to not have written for the labor involved was a corrective to idleness. Piously aware that she should be ever ready for death, Jocelin's writing shows her making use of what time she had. Because her letter to her husband was not designed to reach him until after her death, her discussion of her book's value in the event she survives childbirth implies a hoped-for audience beyond Taurell Jocelin. Jocelin explains that her work will serve as a

[73] ibid, p.v

"looking glasse" by which she can measure her mothering practices against her ideals. This suggests the use of the book as a parenting manual for other living parents, too.

Given the warmth demonstrated in her tone to her husband, the formality implied by her frequent and insistent references to her modesty and subservience to him are remarkable, "I wrote to a childe and though I weare but a woman yet to a childes judgement: what I understood might serve for a foundation to better learning. Agayn I considered it was to my own not to the world and my love to my own might excuse my errors." (fol.6r) A woman exceptionally well –educated, even by the standards of most men of her class, Jocelin's exaggerated modesty suggests her acute awareness of the threat her education poses. Kristen Poole has remarked on the duplicitousness of Jocelin's self-effacing strategy. "Through her emphatic insistence on privacy and denial of agency, she facilitates the entrance of her text into the public sphere.[74]" This is particularly the case because unlike Leigh, Jocelin uses an almost conversational tone in her preface and does not address a patron-like figure." This creates the illusion that Jocelin is transparent in her motivations and affect.

Jocelin's treatment of the topic of modesty, framed within an avowal of her own subservience to her husband's greater wisdom, is highly sophisticated. Although her book is principally concerned with preparing (and convincing) her son to become a minister, she presents the modesty of their unborn child as her most pressing concern in her letter to her husband. She explains that this is particularly important if their child is a daughter. Without referring to her own education, Jocelin requests her daughter's learning be limited to the Bible, housewifery, writing and good works. Echoing Vives, she writes "Other learning a girl needs not."(fol. 3r). Jocelin warns that a woman's education is typically so unwieldy that it can only sink her proverbial ship. Only the rarest combination of wisdom and discretion can allow a learned woman to resemble "a ship that may beare all her saile." (fol.3v) Jocelin's poetic language captures the beauty

and graceful power of such an ideal. Waxing lyrical about this feminine ideal, Jocelin stops herself, claiming that she might seem loquacious.

After such a forceful and yet contradictory discussion of education for women, Jocelin deferentially leaves the decision for their daughter's education in her husbands' hands. The reader is not convinced that "other learning" is undesirable in a girl. The case that Jocelin has made is not what type of education works best for girls, but that she herself is deeply concerned that her child be modest. Suffused as it is with expressions of modesty, Jocelin's letter to her husband establishes her concern for not speaking/writing out of turn even in an ostensibly private letter to her husband. The nearly obsessive concern with modesty in herself and her children renders herself above the reproach of her readers.

In her letter to her unborn child, Jocelin uses her death and suffering in childbirth to assert her claim on her child's future. Her desire that her son becomes a Minister is framed as a part of her legacy; both the legacy of her having borne him and the legacy of his having followed her written "legacy" to him. Writing in language that reveals the expressive potential of piety[75]she invokes the sacrifice of her own life in childbirth to manipulate his conscience, "Neither would I have begged of God so much payn as I know I must endure to have only possest thee with earthly riches."

Jocelin's use of the preface is more sophisticated rhetorically than Leigh's because, set entirely within private familial communication, it is seemingly transparent. Only the extravagant elaboration of the modesty topos in tension with the obvious warmth existent between Jocelin and her husband suggests a hoped-for public audience. Even if we believe her manuscript was intended for her husband alone, the prefatory power of her letter to her husband is of interest. In strategically using her female modesty and deference to open up arguments about a girl's education and leaving them in her

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[74] Poole 1995
Manuals, p. 71

husband's hands, Jocelin forcefully communicated her ideas without appearing to tell her husband what to do. This may well have been more effective than a more straightforward argument.

CONCLUSION

As a result of their unusually advanced education, Leigh and Jocelin were convinced that they could write well enough to guide their children to worthy futures. While this confidence is remarkable, Leigh and Jocelin had to rely largely on self-effacing rhetoric to initially gain the confidence of their readers. These authors' later reliance on piety and the suffering female body suggest that religious fervor provided early modern women with newfound rationales and opportunities to express themselves with impunity. Protestantism's emphasis on perpetual meditation on death enabled women in perfect health to write long manuals, reflecting their own opinions and authority. Eventually women writing in the maternal deathbed advice genre manipulated its rhetoric sufficiently to live to see its publication. One author lived long enough to write a dedication of her maternal deathbed book in her grandson's copy[76]. Perhaps most interestingly, the labor of piety provided a basis for a claim of equality between the female writer and male reader.

It has not been an aim of this essay to generalize on the larger messages of Leigh and Jocelin. While the admonishing tone of much of their writing strikes the contemporary reader as severe, it may well have had a consoling effect on a child. In a culture that advocated severity in this life to ensure a child's eternal salvation, Leigh and Jocelin's directives should be read as expressions of love and fulfilment of maternal duties.

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[75] Having been made an heiress in childhood twice by her mother and her grandparents, Leigh writes to her unborn child and heir, " I never aimed at so poore an inheritance for thee as the whole world." (fol. 7v)
[76] Brown, 1999 , 142. Elizabeth Richardson wrote *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters.* A copy of the edition with a handwritten dedication to her son is in Harvard University's Houghton Library.

Authorship of deathbed advice gave the mother a chance to guide the child from this life to the next, exercising an almost divine power. From the perspective of early modern readers, a mother about to die, and especially a mother about to die in childbirth, had tremendous symbolic power because she embodied both her ancestry in Eve's curse and, much more radically, Jesus' gift of life through death. With the disappearance of Saints, it is little wonder that Protestants held up these suffering and consoling mothers as cultural and religious models.

Toward the second half of the seventeenth century, the trope of the model child who dies before adulthood became prevalent. In the following and final chapter, I explore this development which results in the birth of a literature about model but otherwise ordinary children for ordinary children. Although less direct in providing advice than maternal deathbed advice literature, death literature for children similarly makes use of the good death to show child readers how to behave.

CHAPTER THREE:

EXEMPLARY CHILDREN, TORTUOUS DEATHS AND HAPPY ENDINGS:

PURITAN DEATH LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Because it is ten to one, nay an hundred to one,

If ever they are converted, if they be not converted when they are young.

-Apples to Gold

How are thou now affected, poor Child, in the Reading of this Book?

-James Janeway[77]

In Protestant pamphlet literature of the 1520s, the laity refuse to allow the Church to treat them "like children." Citing their age, the writers argue that they can teach themselves the word of God without the mediation of a priest [78]At the heart of the Reformation, there is a struggle for the recognition of the dignity of ordinary men and women and their right to their own individual relationships with God. An outcome of this struggle is what historian Philippe Aries has called "the invention of childhood," a new awareness of childhood as a discrete age with unique challenges and needs. This invention is indicated, Aries claimed, by the development of a flourishing literary trade for children. While historians generally regard the 18th century as the moment that children's books become a significant cultural presence, I.M. Green has recently pointed out that the market for works for children in England was rapidly expanding in the seventeenth century[79] A large portion of the works for children can be classified as

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[77] Janeway 1671, 8

[78] Ozment 1992, .51.

[79] Green 2000,. 588

"edifying entertainment", such as improving stories and simple verse targeted at both children who were in school and those who were not[80]. The need for edifying entertainment was probably recognized as a result of the crisis of children's reading interests described in Chapter One. Clearly, the catechism was not a page-turner and children naturally gravitated to exciting and dramatic stories. In the period following the Interregnum, Puritans became increasingly resourceful in their efforts to indoctrinate their children in the faith. A religion that had the support of the kingdom may have been successful at achieving large-scale conformity. Puritans could not risk a new generation only superficially engaged with the faith. Increasingly persecuted, Puritans had only their children to proselytize. On the strength of their children's faith rested the future of their confession. This prompted the development of improving stories that children would actually want to read. The book, which could be read in the privacy of one's home and easily hidden, was a perfect vehicle for a transformative religious experience. For those who could not read, parents or older children could read the story to them.

"A thing not to be forgotten about Puritanism," writes Darton, is "that faith was an argument as well as an emotion.[81]" Evangelical approaches to readers consisted largely of arguments. In order to maintain motivation for the unflinching self-discipline Puritanism required, an appeal to the emotions was called for. This imaginative appeal needed to address the demands the faith made on children by parents and on parents by children. It needed to bring the faith voluntarily into the domestic sphere instead of enabling families to relegate their religious practices to the sphere of the church. A book for children about children, with a preface to parents, served these purposes. What is particularly remarkable about *A Token for Children* is the way it turned every characteristic of reading that caused anxiety among religious and political authorities of

[80]Green 2000, 588
[81] Darton 1932

the seventeenth century into a heightened religious experience, designed to bring the reader more fully into the fold.

The Puritan erasure of purgatory created an enormous anxiety in many believers whose earthly lives were hard enough as it was without having to look forward to the likelihood of an eternity in hell. With the banishment of prayers for the dead, there was a new urgency to life. "The Devil knows your time is going apace, it will shortly be too late. O therefore what you do, do quickly and do it, I say, with all your might. O pray, pray and pray and live holily before them.[82]"

While Aries' claims for the invention of childhood ignor evidence of parental care and concern for children from earlier periods, it is clear that the seventeenth century witnessed the invention, if not of childhood, then of an idealized child. This was largely the result of Puritan propaganda for children, which borrowed some of the narrative features of adventure books. These improving stories also took up where saints' lives left off. They provided children with role models of everyday, ordinary children who were extraordinarily pious. *A Token for Children* (1671 and 1673) by James Janeway is a prime example of best-selling Puritan improving stories. After enjoying "a very great vogue between about 1670 and 1720[83]" the book (published in two parts) proved a literary staple of a Christian childhood until the mid-19th century[84]. *A Token for Children* offers thirteen nonfiction accounts of actual children who died triumphant deaths as a result of their precocious piety.

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[82] Janeway 1671, 4

[83] Darton, 1932

[84] The book's central role in Puritan religious education inspired Cotton Mather to compile an American edition, *A Token for the Children of New England Or Some Examples of Children to whom the Fear of God was Remarkably Budding, before they Dyed* (1700) which enjoyed enormous success in the colonies. The book is still used in children's education by fundamentalist Christian groups in the United States.

In this chapter, I explore the representation of model children and the "good death" or "happy ending" in what is arguably the first children's book in the English language. I will argue that this book, which to modern eyes, appears rather morbid and frightening, was designed principally to inspire children to piety, as well as to comfort both parent and child, establishing a mental framework for death's approach.

By providing a variety of examples of the ideal Puritan child, ordinary children had heroic characters to imitate. It was very much Janeway's intention, as he told parents, that children model themselves after the heaven-bound characters in his book. "Put them, I beseech you, upon imitating these sweet children; let them read this Book over an hundred times and observe how they are affected." Just as intensive reading of the Bible produced an internal Bible, so repeated readings of *A Token for Children* would allow children to internalize the behaviors consistent with those predestined for Heaven and even to memorize a script for the virtuous performance of an early death. Given Puritanism's impossible standards for self-conduct, the representation of exemplary children might have provided a much-needed vision of what children and parents should aspire to. Perhaps, in order to convince the reader that such angelic behavior was really possible, Janeway emphasized that the children and the stories of their deaths are real. Importantly, the reader is given thirteen examples of heaven-bound children, not just one. Both genders and ages ranging from 5 to 14 are represented. While this suggests the spiritual equality of girls and boys, the model behavior of girls featured in the text embody distinctly feminine virtues. One girl, for example, is lauded for saying very few words, but being exceptionally wise whenever she spoke.

The seventeenth century certainly wasn't the first era to offer children religious role models. Tales of child martyrs aside, *A Token for Children* may be the first published work that suggests a life that ends in childhood could still be a success, so long as the child displayed impeccable behavior during his/her brief life. This is doctrinally rooted in the Puritan belief that children (and adults) are predestined for heaven or hell. While

saints' lives included childhood stories from which children could draw good examples, they continued on to describe the flowering of childhood virtues in adult accomplishment. Janeway's young heroes and heroines turn the potential tragedy of their early deaths into triumphs through the certainty of their home in heaven. In a preface to parents, Janeway writes about children, "You see that they are not subjects incapable of the grace of God; whatever you think of them. Christ doth not slight them; they are not too little to dye, they are not too little to go to Hell, they are not too little to serve their great Master, not too little to go to heaven[85]." Ironically, this fatalism makes parents yet more responsible for ensuring their children's religious education and exemplary behavior.

While Janeway's preface stresses parental efforts in their child's religious education, the idealized children in the body of the text require no such parental prompting. Obviously predestined for heaven, they come by piety naturally and, even educate their own parents about living lives closer to God, often in rather disrespectful tones. The Puritan belief that a person's predestination was reflected in their outward behavior may have given the exemplary children in Janeway's book a hold on the imaginations of children and parents.

In order to contextualize Janeway's theme for the book, it is worth briefly discussing the popularity of death as a theme in godly books. In plain terms, death sold books. Seven out of the 46 godly chapbooks studied by Margaret Spufford purported to be written on a deathbed. One out of 5 godly chapbooks were specifically on death and judgment[86]. The emphasis on death can be explained with reference to high mortality, continued interest in the changing, but ancient art of dying well and as a result of scourges such as the Plague, and catastrophes such as the Great Fire, both of which resulted in enormous loss of life. Death scenes were highly emotionally rewarding and,

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[85] Janeway 1671, 4
[86] Spufford 1981, 196

given the Protestant admonition to keep one's mortality continually in mind, death literature offered guiltless pleasure. Because *A Token for Children* is also propaganda, a fourth reason presents itself. As Tessa Watt has suggested, the suddenness and frequency of childhood death may be exaggerated in death literature as a lever for religious conversion[87] In much the same way that there are political ends for the over-representation of violence on today's nightly news, death's over-representation and the fear it inspired was an effective tool for conversion. Although a quarter of children in the Stuart period would die before their tenth birthday, almost two-thirds of this number died in their first year and half of that group in the first month[88]. Childhood death, though far from uncommon, was by no means as prevalent as one might suspect after reading a collection of children's death scenes. Janeway, a dissenting minister who had bravely preached in London during the Plague was undoubtedly sincere in his convictions, but his shock tactics combined with his evident affection for children problematize any attempt to easily generalize his approach to children.

Because of the prelapsarian nature of man, Puritans believed that coddling children was an act of parental irresponsibility. The logic of "Spare the rod. Spoil the child" encouraged an energetic style of parenting, eager to stamp out bad behaviors the moment they appeared. Elizabeth Jocelin believed this weeding out of waywardness so important to the moral development of her child that she included it in her letter to her husband. Janeway writes to parents, "I am almost as much afraid of your laziness and unfaithfulness, as anything[89]" Corporal punishment was by no means an educational technique universally admired. A century earlier, Roger Ascham, former tutor to Queen Elizabeth I, had stressed the strategic importance and developmental appropriateness of gentleness toward children by schoolmasters (see Ascham, 1570 and others). A Puritan parenting guide of the mid-seventeenth century contains a dialogue between minister and

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[87] Watt 1991,.6

[88] Houlbrooke1998, 136

father in which the father vigorously argues against the minister's advice to beat and whip one's children. The publication of such a dialogue as an evangelical tool suggests how deeply corporal punishment went against the grain for certain parents and how resistant ordinary men (and presumably women) could be to doctrine that ran counter to their natural tenderness toward their young.

Is the book really for children? Eisenstein (1993) warns, "All too often, titles and prefaces are taken as evidence of the actual readership although they are nothing of the kind." The question of audience or multiple audiences might point to an ingenious use of parent-child dynamics to convert (or retain) the loyalties of both to Puritanism through manipulating the mutual love between the two. It might also use the "true stories" of highly idealized children to discreetly illustrate to parents the sort of children skilful parenting might produce, if one was willing to make the effort. In a few of the narratives, the child has been dedicated to God by its mother while still in utero. This amounts to a religious "head start" program, a parental push toward spiritual precociousness that might inspire the loving parent toward truly guiding the fate of their child. The book opens with a letter "to the Parents, Schoolmasters and School mistresses or that have any hand in the Education of Children," likening the child to a jewel and the caregiver to the Pharoah's daughter entrusted with Moses. By the third page, Janeway's soft sell is officially over: "I command you to be faithful in Instructing and Catechizing your young ones, Are you willing that they should be Brands of Hell? Incourage your children to read this Book." Janeway's harsh alternations between a kind and a cruel authorial voice, however, do not feel entirely inconsistent. They seem to invoke an emotional culture powered by both fear and love. Because time is scarce and the end of life is definitive, Janeway seems to feel he has little time to mince words.

Janeway wants parents to do more than encourage their children's reading, he wants them to help control what their children take from their reading of *A Token for*

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[89] Janeway 1671, 3

Children. While fears of quixotism or losing oneself to the dreamworld of literature were reasonably prevalent at the time[90] Janeway finds a religious use for such an effect. Janeway instructs parents to order children to imitate "these sweet Children." This might have multiple ends; aside from actually leading the child to salvation, such an imitation might comfort the child and the parent that the child is on the right path toward salvation.

Janeway assures skeptical parents of the narratives' authenticity, insisting that at least some of the storytellers of child deaths were in no way related to the children themselves. This distinction between authentic nonfiction and fiction is crucial to the religious power of *A Token for Children*. Like the Scripture itself, the book contains highly readable narratives that are nonfiction. A concern about extensive reading of fictional chapbooks was that the unsophisticated reader would not be able to distinguish between the narratives of fiction and the narratives of Scripture—and would judge the author of Scripture against fiction writers, obviously a blasphemous act.

Because the book is so specific about how saved children behave and speak, one might wonder if *A Token for Children* qualifies as a spiritual etiquette book. Etiquette books were common at the time and, according to Elizabeth Eisenstein "had wide-ranging psychological ramifications; their capacity to heighten the anxiety of parents should not go ignored.[91]". If there were recognizable behaviors for prodigiously religious children destined for salvation, then one could determine if one's own child was headed for heaven or hell...and so, presumably, could others. Since a parent's own chance at salvation was dependent upon his or her children's, more than altruistic interests were at stake in the formation of desirable behaviors in children.

The Preface is addressed to children in a text that seems to want to be interactive. The questions and invitations to speak do not feel rhetorical. "Come tell me truly, my dear Child, for I would fain do what I can possibly do to keep thee from falling into

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[90] Johns 1998, 405

[91] Eisenstein 1993, 33-34

everlasting Fire." Janeway holds out the idea of imitating the dead children who no longer suffer the real hardships probably facing the child reader. The dead children in heaven "shall never be beat any more, they shall never be sick; or in pain any more." This glimpse into the difficulties of everyday life sheds light on the meaning of salvation for the child reader. Given the extreme unpredictability of one's health and the health of family members, the effort to qualify for Heaven might represent the sole continuity in a child's life. The lever of fear used by Janeway, then, might be less cruel than it initially seems. The decision to emulate the idealized children is positioned as tantamount to answering the questions, "Would you not have your Fathers love; your Mothers commendation, your Masters good word?[92]" Parental love, like Gods love, is by no means assumed. The alternative is to go to Hell to meet the devil their father.

If the book is a gateway into another book, the Catechism, it is also a gateway into itself. The author tells the reader how to read *A Token for Children* as they read it. Like a self-graded IQ test, the book gives you the right responses so that you know how you match up, in this case against your fate. "Have you shed ever a tear since you begun reading? Or are you as you use to be, as careless, and foolish and disobedient, and wicked as ever?" The reaction of a reader who does not produce the requisite tears might be such that tears are produced after all. The book even attempts to control its longer term effects on the reader, "Will you read this book a little, because your good mother will make you do it but as soon as ever you have done, run away to play and never think of it?" Janeway insists the book is to be read again and again. Assuming the child does this, one can imagine him or her measuring the correctness of his or her responses against an earlier reading. The fact that the book tells the reader the correct responses at every turn makes the development of one's reading responses more rewarding.

Because the tales in *A Token for Children* are remarkably similar, I will simply recount one in order to discuss its likeness to other narrative forms. A young girl named

[92] Janeway 1671

Mrs. Sarah Hadley hears a sermon and is saved. She immediately gets on her knees at home and prays tearfully to God. Although she did this secretly (the non-showiness of religious virtue is a repeated theme of the book,) "her tearful piety might easily be perceived by her eyes and countenance." The awkwardness of the authorial explanation of why her familywere aware of such secret, virtuous practices is repeated in such excerpts as "she was very much in secret prayer, as might easily be perceived by those who listened at the Chamber Door.[93]" The identifiability of the signs of secret virtue perhaps set rails for the private worship encouraged by Puritanism. These signs are largely affective rather than expressive. Apparently, the appropriate mood for a conscientious Puritan was a state of overwrought anxiety. Janeway admiringly recounts how young Sarah cried and prayed "without cease."

Her religious fervor expressed itself in reading Scripture and other recommended religious books. These texts were "her companions." She also expressed her virtue in total submission to her parents. This is different from male children in *A Token* who tend to reform their less perfect parents. Sarah, like other girls in the volume, "speak admirably little but when she did, it was usually very spiritual.[94]" At the age of 14, she began to die from a lung ailment. When she begged her mother to pray for her salvation, her mother could not remember a single sin she might have committed. Sarah explained that she feared Gods wrath "for the sin of my nature." At her deathbed, her mother said, "How shall I bear parting with thee, when I have scarce dryed my eyes for thy Brother?" Sarah responds, "O if you had but one taste of his sweetness, you would rather go to him a thousand times, than stay in this wicked world[95]."

As she dies, Sarah suffers terribly and begs God for the salvation of her soul. The lesson recounts her long struggle to die with the assurance of God's love that God only delivers at the very end. In her last moments, she addressed the children of her family, "O

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[93] ibid
[94] ibid
[95] ibid

make use of time to get a Christ for your Souls; spend no time in running up and down in playing; I know by experience, the Devil will tell you it is time enough and ye are young, what need you to be in such haste?[96]"

Like the loyal maid in a romantic tale, Sarah has proved constant in spite of the greatest trials and suffering. Her loyalty and willingness to submit without questioning to the cavalier behavior of her master (God) are the source of her ultimate salvation. Her gratification is delayed until the very end, but in the meanwhile she has become something of a family celebrity for her religious ardor.

Physical positions while reading

Through Janeway's direct address to the child reader and through his description of the behavior of the child prodigies, we are given a clear view of the idealized relationship between a child and his or her book. Janeway apparently believes a young reader and a religious text should be in a passionate relationship. The texts, as they were for Sarah, should be "companions." Reading alone in a chamber is encouraged, on one's knees, and crying should happen.

The extremely emotional, perhaps even hysterical reactions to reading encouraged by Janeway, are particularly interesting given the debate over "enthusiasm" in mid-late seventeenth century England. Enthusiasts were those who did not control their own responses to the Bible and believed they had individual conversations with God (Johns, 1998). Unlike enthusiasts who used their passionate reading experiences as the source of authority for their status as prophets, the physical positioning of Janeway's ideal child reader encourages a feeling of submission and straightforward piety. The emphasis on secrecy and piety imply that true piety is the kind that is kept to itself and expressed only through signs of itself

[96] ibid

In Janeway's book, the histrionics typical of some enthusiasts are actually encouraged in the child reader. However, there are crucial borders for such experiences. Firstly, emotional responses to religious reading are "secret". One shows one's deep communion with the word of God through a tear-stained face, not through an original response to that interaction. Submission and paucity of speech are encouraged in all children on religious topics, but particularly so in girls which is of interest because so many women were enthusiasts.

The encouragement of the silent reading of *A Token for Children* and Scripture might be in order to induce a feeling of being alone and helpless in order to induce a more intense spiritual experience by means of the text. Deprivation of conversations about the meaning of texts helps to curtail heterodox interpretations.

One result of the discourse of the passions was the ideal of "Observing a mediocrity in their passion wherein consisteth tranquility of both mind and body.[97]" Relegating emotional outbursts to the sphere of the chamber might have provided a licensed space for release of stress which simultaneously encouraged the individual to cleave closer to God.

While the religious experience/performance that Janeway wishes for the child might seem contrived and hypocritical, it might actually have had a comforting effect. Firstly it may have been valuable simply for the space it provided for emotional release in a highly-controlled emotional culture. Secondly, the religious frame for the experience might have provided an in-built comfort; rather than experiencing a frightening lack of control in one's emotions, one is in fact following a script. The religious frame also protects the child from judgment of its family. Finally, this reading experience provides a good excuse for what could have only been a rare luxury: privacy.

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[97] Thomas Veneer quoted in Johns 1998

Desired Effects

"How do you know but that you may be the next Child that may die? Methinks I see that pretty Lamb begin to weep, and thinks of getting by himself and will as well as he can cry unto the Lord, to make him one of these little ones that go into the Kingdom of Heaven?[98]"

The intended culmination of Janeway's childhood death narratives is a renewed commitment to reading the catechism. For an author exploring the full possibilities of authorial control, Janeway shows a genuine concern for the thoughts of the young reader, instructing them "What you do not understand, be sure ask the meaning of." This speaks to the genuineness of the belief that a real engagement with the word of God, and not the mere appearance of it, would lead to salvation. For the child, the Parent or the Family?

By adapting the chapbook as a vehicle for religious dogma directed at families, the Puritans were finally attracting the willing attention of both adults and children. These highly readable stories may have been an ingenious way of attracting the entire family to religious ideas. The book's success also suggests that the book's message was one that had great resonance with several generations of parents and children.

To understand this resonance, we must return to the conditions of family life in the seventeenth century. As Margaret Spufford has written, "Death might visit at any time and lived nearby.[99]" If children faced the fearful prospect of an early death, parents were old enough to have suffered multiple deaths of family members. As Sarah's mother question shows, the loss of one child did not dull the pain of the loss of another, "How will I part with you when I have barely dried my eyes for your brother?" Narratives of horrid suffering that did not give way to the joys of heaven could provide courage for dying children and their parents, who might have read the book together throughout an illness.

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[98] Janeway, 1671
[99] Spufford, 1981

The "closure" provided by triumphant departures for heaven in Janeway's collection might have inspired parents to invest efforts in preparing their children for a similar end, as a preventative measure for the extent of parental heartbreak. Living with the death of a child who believed himself on his way to heaven would have been far easier than a frightened and uncertain death. In Loci Communes, the Protestant theologian Melanthon defines faith as the assurance of things to come[100]. Faith is the assurance of things to come. The happy ending of these deathbed "stories" gives life and death a story shape that makes death's inevitability predictable and possibly even comforting.

[100] Melanchton, 1555

CONCLUSION

Historical context sheds light on the role death played in the emerging early modern literature for children. In 1665, 100,000 people died in the Great Plague in London alone. One year later, two-thirds of the Metropolis was destroyed within four days by the Great Fire[101] . Given the conditions of the time, a series of accounts of children's deaths would have resonated differently with contemporary readers than it does with us.

An illustration added to the 1720 edition of the book underscores this point. In the picture, a child stands looking down at a tomb unemotionally. Rather than view the centrality of death in the books I have discussed as morbid, we might consider it adaptive in a period of high mortality. By keeping death uppermost in mind, one would be less likely to be thrown off guard by its frequent and sudden appearances.

Being prepared for death implies an absence of fear of death, or at least a manageable fear of death. *A Token for Children's* popularity might well have been due to its response to a felt need. Noting the persistence of superstition among the English Common People, J.E. C. Harrison observes, "It was perhaps from the awareness by laboring people that their world was both precarious and in large part unknown that many aspects of popular belief stemmed. From Christianity or folk custom they sought assurance, guidance, protection and some explanation of the world as they experienced it.[102]" These needs were now projected onto Puritanism. As literacy became more widespread, oral traditions of death stories were adapted into book form.

In book form, the tales of idealized, but real children's deaths tapped into the ancient belief of the power of the example in narratives. Books could act as mirrors in which one saw a better version of one's self, one's potential self. Degory Wheare wrote in 1685 of the moral value of history in these terms. "Good descriptions of persons are a

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[101] Harrison, 1984.
[102] ibid

kind of monitor and by being frequently imprinted upon our minds cause us to remember who we should like and who not. By reading frequently the titles of which we may as by a kind of wax-images (as a learned writer expresseth it) help excite and irritate our cold and languishing memories.[103]" Repeated readings of maternal deathbed advice literature and death literature such as *A Token* would have helped internalize a code of behavior and morality.

A Token for Children set in motion certain conventions of children's literature that persist. One convention is the idea of the children's book with two audiences; the child and the parents. Another is the tradition of the idealized precocious child who from Jo in *Little Women*, to *Alice in Wonderland*, to *Harry Potter* is still very much a feature of parentally-approved, popular children's literature. Children still enjoy imitating these child-heroes and, though the stakes are considerably lower, parents may still measure their own children against them.

The movement toward creating "good" books for children may have encouraged a more sympathetic view of human nature. Determined as the Puritans were to believe in original sin, the immortalization of these brave and impeccably behaved children through print might have suggested that young humans, and by extension humans in general come into the world with a good side as well as a depraved one. Death literature for children may also have introduced the idea of children's spiritual equality with their elders. The triumph of the early exemplary death is that one is rewarded as richly as an old person.

Janeway's obvious effort in the second edition to persuade his readers of the authenticity of the death stories suggests that both the author and his readers had a stake in such human grace being "real" and not a fantasy, as chivalric romances were. With flesh and blood "models" before them, the idea of imitating such exemplars must have been very appealing. The recurrent theme of the "imprinting" of a text on a child's consciousness is a telling metaphor for how books were believed to shape children. As

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[103] Degory Wheare (1685) in *Method and Order in Reading History*

we can note from today's debates about media effects, such ideas are still very much with us.

I hope that this thesis has presented the historical context in which a literature for children first appeared, showing the dangers attributed to children's pleasurable reading and the way writers creatively manipulated these to deliver a "desirable" message. We are far removed today from the specter of death that was so familiar to those living in seventeenth-century England. At that time, the need to be continually prepared for death was a catalyst to self-improvement. In today's children's media environment, , a great deal of children's entertainment, from Pokemon cards, to video games, to movies to Harry Potter books has death at the center of its plot. Death, fear of it or fear of not being ready for it, continues to be an unsurpassable motivator. Perhaps today's writers and designers understand as their English ancestors did, that the mixture of curiosity, dread and suspense that children feel toward death has no rival for attracting and compelling a child's attention.

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