‘Poore England, Wrong’de by Contraries’

CROWN POLICY AND PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO THE SPANISH MATCH

1618-1623

An honors thesis submitted to the History Department of Rutgers University, written under the supervision of Professor Alastair Bellany

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Introduction

From 1618 to 1623, concerned Englishmen fretfully watched as confessional conflict in Germany escalated and the Protestant position took successive turns for the worse. In 1619, the Protestant nobility of Bohemia refused to accept the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II as their king, and instead offered the crown to Frederick of the Palatinate, as he was both a Calvinist and also one of the rare princes in Germany bold enough to oppose the Emperor. Frederick received many warnings from other Protestant princes, including from his own father-in-law James I of England, that accepting such an offer might needlessly provoke the Emperor’s wrath and thereby risk religious war. Still, Frederick had high hopes for advancing the Protestant cause in the region, so he accepted, and was coronated King Frederick I of Bohemia that year. Of course, James’ forewarnings proved accurate, and indeed Frederick did not remain Frederick I of Bohemia for long. The Emperor mobilized the combined forces of the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburg empires, crushing the rebellion in Bohemia in 1621, and then proceeding against Frederick’s hereditary lands in the Palatinate in 1622 as well. Frederick and his family, including his wife and James I’s daughter Elizabeth Stuart, were forced into exile.

Meanwhile in England, these beginnings of the Thirty Years War significantly complicated King James’ efforts to continue a diplomatic entente with Spain. Despite the historical and religious enmity that had existed between the two countries for nearly a century, James had successfully maintained peaceful relations since his accession. Part of his efforts had long since involved seeking a marriage between his son, Prince Charles, and the Infanta Maria Anna, daughter of Spain’s King Philip III. Through such a union, James hoped that the Stuart family would bridge the religious divide, being wedded to the Catholic Hapsburgs as well as the Protestant Frederick of the Palatinate, and thereby prevent the outbreak of war along confessional lines. When the outbreak of war actually occurred, James bolstered his commitment to a diplomatic solution and his determination to avoid potentially suicidal military engagements against two powerful empires. James
therefore looked to the Spanish Match negotiations with renewed dedication. Through those negotiations, he hoped to convince Spain to pull its forces out of Germany, relieve his son-in-law and restore the inheritance of his progeny in the Palatinate.

The foreign conflicts also generated significant domestic contentions. As James displayed increasing commitment to the match, he simultaneously faced a rising tide of dissent from many of his subjects, who were not sympathetic to his desire for a peaceable solution or his willingness to consort with a traditional enemy. Instead, much of the English populace publicly and privately expressed serious apprehensions about royal policy concerning this issue, and lobbied for fighting confessional battles on the Continent. According to orthodoxy and James’ own insistence, foreign policy was officially supposed to remain in the hands of the King and the King alone, with subjects playing a silent, trusting, and consenting role. This was far from the reality. Instead, during the period from 1618 to 1623, public discourse reached a perhaps unprecedented volume as many anxious Protestants could not restrain themselves from vocalizing their concerns for the fate of England and for ‘true religion’ in Europe, which they perceived as being truly imperiled by the ambitions of Catholic empires and James’ supposedly misguided policies. Those policies would only turn around after negotiations combusted in 1623, upon the secret embassy of Prince Charles and the Duke (then Marquis) of Buckingham to Madrid. Only after that flamboyant suit to the Infanta failed utterly did England turn to the more martial recourse.

The Spanish match and Palatinate crises agitated some of the most potent religious and political sensitivities in post-Reformation English society. For example, the proposed marriage raised the specter of insidious popery and ‘Romish tyranny,’ which was an essential component of mainstream anti-Catholic English ideology, and the King’s insistence on pursuing deals with the enemy inspired familiar rhetoric on evil advisors and corrupt courtiers.¹ These concerns were not new in 1619, but have longer histories and earlier precedents. However, the Spanish match crisis is significant in that it compounded so many of those concerns, which acquired remarkable potency within an increasingly broad and influential public sphere. In addition, the explosion of public discourse that occurred in response to the Spanish match both revealed and contributed to significant changes in the English political landscape. Sir Balthasar Gerbier noticed that, on subjects’ part, the controversy led to “the cooling of theire affections towards theire Souveraigne.”² Certainly, public discourse in this period highlighted a perceived disjoint between the interests of England’s crown and those of its country.

The Spanish match crisis has been the focus of much study, and accordingly has undergone changing treatments both in the approaches to historical research and in styles of analysis. As Conrad Russell describes it, the “hunt for the origins of the Civil War” is the “traditional blood-sport of English historians,” adding that “Rarely, if ever, has this period [the 1620s] been studied in its own right, and not as a dress rehearsal for something apparently of more long-term significance.” He and other revisionist historians worked to shake scholarly studies of the era out of their historiographical rut. They problematized the older Whiggish narrative, which tended to draft pre-war English history in anachronistic terms, as a struggle between fledgling Roundheads and Royalists marching towards inevitable Parliamentary sovereignty. The main arena of English politics moved from Westminster to Whitehall as revisionists instead focused on the royal court as the main generator of policy conflict and on individual courtiers and favorites as wielding the major political muscle. They argue that grand oppositions between King and Parliament were less pronounced than non-conflictual cultural forces, that there was actually a general ideological unity, conservatism, localism, and mutual hope for cooperation between social and political groups.

The pendulum has since swung back in the opposite direction, as post-revisionists have problematized revisionist arguments in turn. There has been a renewed interest in popular political and print sources, as in the idea that popular, public, and Parliamentary forces were invigorated during the early decades of the seventeenth century and did contribute to longer-term developments leading up to the Civil War. Post-revisionists have also shown that structural oppositions did exist in Jacobean ideology, and while they may not have been the norm, those conflicts were very politically significant. Thomas Cogswell, for example, has demonstrated the force of public opinion and policy makers’ complicated relationships with ‘popularity’. Others, such as Peter Lake, Alastair Bellany, and Richard Cust, have shown how the spread of news, opinion, and polemic within an emergent public sphere encouraged ideological oppositions, and contributed to

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4 See the work of Conrad Russell and Mark Kishlansky for examples of revisionist perspectives on early modern Britain.
changing attitudes towards the court, country, and monarchy. I hope to expand on this body of research by examining political discourse in reaction to the Spanish match specifically. Such a narrow, case-study focus provided a manageable chronological and topical limit for this project, affording a more intimate familiarity with a wider variety of source media.

Herein, I hope to discover how Spanish Match sources both reflected and encouraged ongoing changes in England’s political culture, especially in perceptions of the Crown, the public, and the relationship between the two. Indeed, many of the changes cited by scholars as immediate causes of the Civil War are also demonstrable within the public outcry between 1619 and 1623—including the alienation of subject from sovereign, fear of a Catholic conversion of government, financial struggles between King and Parliament, and an explosion of public discourse. Taking that further, I hope to identify critical ideological contradictions that had developed in England’s social and political fabric, and how those contradictions demanded an eventual resolution, whether through a literal political recalibration or a significant change in political culture.

It is important to avoid anachronistic interpretations of materials, to instead parse the words of Jacobians by placing them firmly within an appropriate framework of historical memory and meaning, as best as my understanding and imagination will allow. Yet it is not irresponsible to admit that historical events do not occur in historical isolation; their significance is framed by preceding ideas and events, and also by what scholars, in hindsight, know will follow. It would be inappropriate and short-sighted to locate the origins of the Civil War in any one event or decade; it is not my intention to do so. However, I do hope to reaffirm the place of the Spanish Match and Palatinate crisis in a longer historical narrative of public politics in early modern England. Indeed, as the sources discussed herein reveal, the public’s reaction to those crises not only manifested ongoing social and political change but also drove those changes further.

In order to do so, I will first discuss how developing channels of discourse created opportunities for public communication and conversational exchange. The expansion and commercialization of various forms of politicized media responded to and encouraged an emerging news culture and a growing interest in political information in general. Although this public sphere was neither completely public nor completely popular, it was nevertheless increasingly capable


of sustaining a body of discourse that was beyond government control. It therefore became capable of criticism, as it was independent of (if not unaffected by) royal propaganda, and supplied various platforms for opinion and polemic. This will be the subject of my first chapter.

The second chapter will then focus on what was said in response to the Spanish match in the public sphere, and also what was so objectionable about James’ pro-Spanish policy. The first half focuses on contemporary anti-Catholicism, and the anatomy of contemporary fears about Spain, popery, and the threats they posed to English religion and independence. The second half then turns to the image of the corrupt court as supposed aiders and abettors to popery and a source of moral degeneration in England. The combination of these two factors, anti-Catholicism and a general distrust of court, served not only to amplify the perceived danger of James’ royal policy, but to frame those closest to the crown as enemies to the national interest.

The third chapter will then discuss the new attitudes about politics and the public realm that the controversy encouraged. These will especially include the raising up of ‘the Country’ as the virtuous antidote to a corruptive court, an increasing valuation of Parliament as a representative of that virtuous Country, and a growing appreciation for civic duty and engagement on the part of private countrymen. The chapter will also describe how these new attitudes very often coexisted in conflict with the prevailing orthodox ideologies.
Chapter One

The “political” comes home for many people in the early sixteenth century. By the late Jacobean period, it was still largely taken for granted that matters of the public good and of the commonwealth fell under the exclusive jurisdiction of a ruling elite. Parliament and government proceedings were closed off from the public at large, while the release and discussion of such information transgressed proper convention.

Such sentiments were genuinely and widely expressed, yet their increasing urgency indicates a contradiction: they were not practiced with as much vehemence as they were asserted. Quite the opposite: political conversation not only leaked through the walls of government, but rather flowed and flourished amongst an interested populace, becoming increasingly established as a feature of public life. Social and economic forces creating new networks of exchange and new distributions of wealth, swiftly-paced urbanization, and increasing interest in and access to information about national affairs all led to a political stirring amongst England’s greater public. A public sphere was developing, along with forms of media and markets for communication, in which authorities were often pressured to participate but had less and less of the capacity to control. Especially as the controversial issues surrounding the Spanish Match unfolded, politics became a public preoccupation. Indeed, Charles I’s attempts to rein in public discourse, after the crises of the 1620s brought it to a heightened pitch, had significant consequences for the politics of his reign, and eventually for the nature of political authority in England.¹⁰

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ECONOMIC EXPANSION, INTEGRATION, & NETWORKS OF EXCHANGE

Through the end of the 16th century and the next, England experienced profound social and economic transformations. New and vigorous mercantile and capitalistic energies spurred rapid growth in trade and industry. English shipping doubled between the middles of the 16th and 17th centuries, while iron production increased by a factor of five. By the time of the Civil War, English coal production was three times that of the entire European continent. Overseas trade exploded, as did companies’ assets and dividends; after the East India Company gained its foothold in South Asia, their assets multiplied from about £60,000 in 1599 to £370,000 in 1660. Much of this new wealth was invested in industry, including in the manufacturing of soap, brick, glass, salt, and beer, resulting in significant profits for both investors and entrepreneurs.11 Here we see seeds of the economic growth and innovation that later placed England first amongst the economic powers of Europe, providing the necessary capital for colonial ventures, infrastructural development, industrial investment, and so on.

Certainly, the entire country was involved in this growth, from the shipyards at Portsmouth to the coalmines in Newcastle, but different regions and social groups felt it unequally. London, as the center stage for political, economic, and social activity, experienced much more growth than its share, with the most dramatic and immediate consequences. While the national population grew from about 3.5 million in 1580 to 5 million in 1680, the number of London residents more than doubled in only fifty years, from 200,000 in 1600 to 400,000 in 1650.12 The swelling metropolis, and to a lesser but significant extent other towns and burgeoning manufacturing centers, was fed by a continuing flow of wage-seeking immigrants from the countryside who spilled into suburbs under hastily built thatched roofs.13 Contemporaries found these demographic increases and redistributions to be both exciting and alarming. Even aside from the repugnancies usually associated with overcrowding, including the filth and pestilence so beloved of modern imaginations of Tudor-Stuart cities, certain political and economic concerns lurked in the capital’s tumultuousness. By the 1620s, food prices were near the height of a century-long inflationary trend as population pressures contributed to increasing demand. This increased the value of arable land, and subsequently the rents of poorer tenants. Meanwhile, those same population pressures also crowded the labor market, to devastating effect for England’s poor, who now had to pay six times as much for food, and in many cases higher rents, on only half of the real wages they might have earned a century earlier.14 The combination of impoverished suburbs, high food prices, and urban

crowding tormented officials in constant fear of riots and unrest. The forebodings of magistrates and ministers, all histrionics aside, were not unwarranted as food riots did occur in early modern England (even if they were not particularly disruptive during the period) and the state lacked strong forces for enforcing order should large disturbances occur.\textsuperscript{15} Also, the incidence of court trials for serious crimes did increase in the decades preceding and during James I’s reign, reaching a peak from 1590 to 1625.\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps such an increase is testament to the desperate state of poor wage laborers, or otherwise to increased persecution due to a heightened concern for order, which would be significant in itself. Nevertheless, the widely feared large-scale popular uprisings in London proper never materialized.

So, economic growth created both nouveaux riches and nouveaux pauvres, and stretched the difference between the two.\textsuperscript{17} Between them, however, significant opportunities were created for the ‘middling sort’. In the country, the land values and food prices that created such hardship for England’s poor wage laborers were a boon to England’s substantial yeomanry. Whether tenants or landholders themselves, landed farmers were sellers in a sellers’ market, as the prices and demand for their goods were up and the costs of labor were down. Many became small capitalists as land shifted more and more towards private control. In fact, young men from prosperous yeoman families often possessed the resources to seek and achieve admission to the ranks of the gentry. Back in London, educated individuals found opportunities in commerce, trade, and other lucrative professions. Many merchants accrued enough wealth to rival the high nobility, or even to buy titles among them. Economic change thus created avenues for social mobility. It also encouraged other sorts of movement around the nation, for both people and goods. Internal trade increased in order to facilitate the delivery of diversified goods to a growing population and new markets, conducted along main routes by carriers and peddlers throughout the country. Commercialism may have also created new connections between geographical areas and between social sectors, as regional production specialized and focused around specific markets. This fostered in many cases a unity of economic interest and integration.\textsuperscript{18} For example, textile production was considered “of very high consequence, and concerneth both the sovereign and the subject, noble and ignoble, even all sorts and callings and conditions of men in the commonwealth...This is a bound to fortifie, and a bond to knit the subjects

\textsuperscript{17} Stone, \textit{Causes of the English Revolution}, 15.
\textsuperscript{18} Wrightson, \textit{English Society}, 48-52, 137, 142-144; Stone, \textit{Causes of the English Revolution}, 67-69
Slumps in the cloth trade during the late 1610s and early 1620s could, and did, affect the entire country. 90% of that cloth trade, England’s largest export, passed through London ports. As networks of movement and exchange extended and bound England together, London was the intersection of them all.

So, despite the misery of its slums, high mortality rate, and the potentially unruly mob, many residents and visitors delighted in the bustle, activity, and cosmopolitan atmosphere of London. As the epicenter of virtually all sorts of political and cultural productivity—national government, commerce, industry, art, literature, theater, etc.—anyone interested in any such pursuit either needed to be in London or to be connected to London. The concentration of people, trades, and wealth in the capital therefore facilitated the exchange not only of material goods but also of information. The atmosphere in London and increasing national connectedness created the means, the method, and the market for developing the media of the public sphere.

LITERACY & READERSHIP

Of course, illiteracy could significantly restrict access to literary media. Literacy in the seventeenth century defies exact measurement; the ability to read in itself leaves no historical trace and the definition of what constitutes literacy is extremely variable. Therefore, in order to make some headway on the issue, scholars have relied primarily on surviving signatures, which indicate at least the ability to sign one’s name and are quantitatively measurable. Those rates reveal, as might be expected, that literacy rates varied widely between genders, levels in the socioeconomic hierarchy, and between regions. The gentry and clergy were small but literate groups, between 98 and 100%. Out of the other 95% of the population, yeomen and tradesmen, the most privileged of common country folk, 65% and 56% respectively, could sign their names, compared with 21% of husbandmen, 15% of laborers, and 11% of women nationwide. Towns in general had a greater proportion of literate persons than rural areas, but London’s 78% stands out amongst national statistics. An estimated literacy rate of 30% would be appropriate for the country as a whole.

In the strictest terms, illiteracy prevailed in most areas of England, to the great distress of many anxious Protestants. According to Puritan proponents of education, reading lessons not only warded off the degenerative effects of idleness in children, they also provided the essential means for accessing scripture, thereby

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9 Edward Misselden, *Free Trade, or, the means to make trade florish*, (London: 1622), 40.
aiding in the pursuit of godliness and the avoidance of sin. Several contemporary
guides to domestic life give such instructions to parents that “once their child
entreteth into the eighth yeare of his age, they should assuredly provide (if it bee
possible) that they may bee furnished with the knowledge of reading and writing,
and that they have the knowledge of Christ in some good measure.” Such
intellectual furnishing was particularly important for children of poor (largely
illiterate) parents, “that they may have the principall, the meate, drinke, and
apparel of the soule; which is Christian education in the feare of God, and in the
faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.”23 By reading scripture, children will “sucke in
religion with learning: for there is a secret vertue lurking in the holy Scripture.”24
The effect of the Reformation in encouraging literacy is generally established in
scholarly literature. Still, despite passionate Protestants’ insistence that the
“preservation of true religion” hung in the balance of a proper education, for most
English people illiteracy was no significant handicap to everyday life, so they had
little incentive, let alone the means, to become readers and writers.25

Nevertheless, a rural laborer in Lincolnshire had more literary prospects
than signature-based statistics suggest. Records of signatories most likely
underestimate the real number of potential readers, counting instead only
individuals whose families could afford to keep them in school long enough to also
learn how to write. A rural household required a certain amount of fiscal slack in
order to postpone a child’s entry into the workforce. Therefore, children from
poorer families most often abandoned lessons early, before writing lessons had
begun but possibly after one or two years of reading.26

Even then, true illiteracy did not immutably bar individuals from
participating with literary culture. Rather, England’s rising literary culture
intersected with older medieval oral traditions that were still very much alive and
well in the early modern period. Modern readers’ assume that reading is a private
and quiet practice, while for most Jacobean, encounters with literature often
involved a kind of performance. Reading aloud to groups was common practice
for literate persons in largely illiterate families or communities.27 Many relied very
often on memorization and then recitation, whereby shorter texts were passed
along by word of mouth. Musicians and performers often added popular print
ballads and poems to their repertories, set them to familiar tunes, thereby bringing
them to audiences all over England. Apparently, ‘ballad-mongers’ were so effective
at selling and spreading their rhymes, that after saturating an urban market they

24 William Gouge, Of domesticall duties (London, i622), 539-540.
25 Ibid, 539.
26 Margaret Spufford, “First steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the
humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers,” Social History 3:3 (1979), 410-
414.

27 Ibid, 421-425; Barry Reay, introduction to Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century
would do the same in the country, until their songs “grow so common there too, as every poore Milk maid can change and chirpe it under her Cow.”

The very cheapest print material made extensive use of woodcuts and printed illustrations in order to better reach semi-literate audiences. In this way, the written word transcended the barriers of literacy, ensuring that the majority of English people were participants in a common culture, despite their limited access. And, even the most ‘common’ products of popular culture, such as cheap broadsides, ballads, and libels, could be significantly politicized media. Therefore, it can be demonstrated that the significance of political discourse and political media not only affected the literate elite, but also had cultural ramifications for the country at large.

“QUID NOVI?” ENGLAND’S EMERGING NEWS CULTURE

Political conversation also appears to have become something of a fashionable pastime. Indeed, news of political events circulated wildly by mouth, pen, and often print, eagerly compared, appended, and hand-copied by their creators and recipients. Sermons included plenty of political commentary and notes on current affairs. Courtiers and city dwellers sent letters to satisfy the keen curiosities of their friends and relatives in the country. People of all walks of life memorized and exchanged libelous verses about political events and personalities, and talked amongst themselves about the latest issues abroad and at home at the local ordinary or tavern—a “broacher of more news then hogs heads.” The emergence of this news culture signaled the development of a very public political culture, which fostered an atmosphere of personal interest and engagement with politics on a national level.

In terms of spreading this political culture, casual conversation had the potential to affect the widest audience, especially in the mixed social spots of London where literacy or economic factors pose few barriers to verbal communication. Yet talk is fleeting. The frenzied chatter of the 1620s no longer resounds in London’s streets, and therefore is impossible to observe historically. On the other hand, contemporaries observed it quite easily. Indeed, judging from its frequency as a topic for written commentary, it appears to have been impossible

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30 As has been shown by several scholars of the period, for example by Peter Lake, “Deeds against Nature: Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth Century England,” in Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
31 John Earle, Microcosmographie, or A peece of the world discovered in essayes and characters (London, 1628), sig. C10v-C11r; a ‘hogs head’ is a casket used to store wine, liquor, etc.
for any clued-in city-dweller not to have noticed. There was a general eagerness to exchange political information, to inquire about the newest developments abroad or rumors about events at home. According to one Samuel Rowlands,

As oftentimes as friend his friend doth meet,
And with salute each other kindly greet,
The second speech that commonly they use
Is to enquire straight, Pary what Good newes?22

What news?’ or for more sophisticated crowds, the Latin ‘Quid novi?’ became a standard greeting in the early seventeenth century. Rowlands goes on to joke that determined citizens stay so politically informed that they know what happens in Court even before the Prince does.33

The informational hub was St. Paul’s cathedral, where habitués—dubbed ‘Paul’s Walkers’—gathered to discuss recent events. John Earle relates that the noise in the old cathedral was “like that of Bees, a strange humming or buzz-mixt of walking, tongues and feet...It is the great Exchange of all discourse...all turne Merchants here and traffick for Newes.”34 Indeed there was a literal market for information at St. Paul’s. In describing the characters of a ‘curranto-coiner’, or a professional news compiler, Richard Braithwaite remarks, “Paules is his Walke...Where the whole discipline, designes, projects, and exploits of the States, Netherlands, Poland, Switzer, Crimehan and all, are within the Compasse of one Quadrangle walke most judiciously and punctually discovered.”35 Another poem describes how the young men who “walke the Middle-Ile” litter St. Paul’s churchyard and surrounding streets with copies of notes and newsletters.36 So the eager conversational buzz did not completely defy written record. Although historians cannot experience it first hand, the enthusiasm of the early modern English for conversation, rumor, and verbal debate comes through loud and clear in contemporary sources.37

London’s enthusiasm for political conversation is also loudly expressed by how frequently contemporaries felt the need to complain about it. Ironically, these complaints often come through the same public channels used by the supposedly guilty conversationalists—for example, pamphleteers complain about cheap pamphleteering, or libel verses accuse others of libel. Many felt that the informational exchange that occurred in the aisles of St. Paul’s was overzealous, sometimes more closely resembling gossip. One poem tells Prince Charles that if he were to sneak into St. Paul’s disguised, he would hear outrageous and baseless

33 Ibid, sig. A3v.
34 Earle, Micro-cosmographie, sig. J5r-J6v.
35 Brathwaite, Whimzies, 16.
37 For more on the flourishing news culture at the end of James I’s reign, look especially to the prologue in Cogswell, The Blessed Revolution.
stories—“the Legends on each day, the perils of your June, and of your May”—told about the Prince himself.\(^{38}\) In this view, a news-mongerer was likened to a type of “busie-bodie”, intent on poking his nose where he should not, “His estate is too narrow for his minde, and therefore hee is faine to make himselfe roome in others affaires...What everie man ventures in Guiana voyage, & what they gained he knowes to a haire.”\(^{39}\) Others felt that haunting the aisles of St. Paul’s and consuming political media distracted England’s population from their proper duties, like “Bees from their hony-combes.”\(^{40}\) The fact that contemporaries widely considered public discourse to be increasingly problematic suggests the overall conservativeness of society, which was very concerned about the threat to traditional social orders and the infringement by ordinary subjects of the arcana imperii, or what should be the secrets of the state. More importantly though, their concern also confirms the fact that public interest and engagement in matters of the state was a significant new trend to be reckoned with, and that significant change was indeed occurring, even if those changes had not yet been accepted as normal or legitimate.\(^{41}\)

COMMERCIALISM IN THE BOOK TRADE

Producers of political media of course sought to capitalize on increasing public interest. Printing and bookselling, especially as they expanded, were first and foremost commercial operations. Booksellers, writers, and printers had an interest in broadening their potential market of buyers, with significant consequences for the dimensions and depth of the market for political materials. So, sellers often catered to popular audiences, producing cheaper, lighter, more accessible material aimed at casual readers looking for entertainment. This not only encouraged wider readership and perhaps literacy in general, but it also made producing print a more profitable business and spurred its continuing growth. It also meant that much broader swaths of the population now had access to and could participate with a changing political culture.

Ways in which the print business commercialized therefore reflect ways in which print culture became increasingly popular. For one, the industry itself became increasingly specialized along various stages of production, so that by the early seventeenth century, separate companies of stationers, printers, partners (or booksellers), and carriers could be involved in the production of a single broadside or pamphlet. In contrast to the earliest years of print, where much fewer people had a hand in the production of a single print item, this type of specialization

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\(^{39}\) Brathwaite, *Whimzies*, 81-82.

\(^{40}\) Thomas Nash, *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell* (London, 1592), sig. A2r.

\(^{41}\) More on this in Chapter 3.
meant that public print media had become an increasingly entrenched, efficient, and profitable industry. It also meant that book making was a more fundamentally public process, with more people implicated in the production of a book.\footnote{Joad Raymond, \textit{Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 55-56.} One other indication of print's popularization is that, unlike in the sixteenth century, by the seventeenth century most printed broadside ballads included illustrations, suggesting an appeal to, or perhaps demand from, less literate audiences.\footnote{Watt, \textit{Cheap Print and Popular Piety}, 78.} More people, and more socially varied people, not only subscribed to popular political culture, but also had the power to influence it through their selective consumption.\footnote{Ibid, 4-5.}

Far from celebrating this growth, many contemporaries, like connoisseurs of various forms of media today, saw the popularization of print as pandering. Even further, they considered pulp print a threat to social order. In the minds of many Jacobians, “the invention of the printing press was no less traumatic and morally ambiguous than the invention of gunpowder, the pen was mightier than the sword, but the press outdid both.”\footnote{Raymond, \textit{Pamphlets and Pamphleteering}, 54.} In their view, the common folk (or popular audiences) constituted not only the largest, but also the most impressionable and potentially the most dangerous sector of Jacobean society. Sensational, bawdy, irreligious, or libelous print might then incite particularly frightening upheaval, especially in crowded and literate London, where the specter of popular violence continually haunted governing officials. It was an old fear; Elizabeth shared the Jacobean concern that troublesome books, “seditiously dispersed into sundry corners of the Realme,” threatened to “moove a general murmuring and mislyking in...the simplier sorte and multitude.”\footnote{By the Queene, \textit{Although her Maiestie hath had so good proofe of Gods singular goodnes} (London, 1579), 1.} But by James’ reign, the multitude had grown greater, as had the book trade, and the problem would seem to have grown more acute. In this view, writers and publishers were therefore doing much more than selling-out; they were reckless opportunists peddling risky fare, regardless of the social ramifications of their work. In fact, books could be as malicious as thieves,

\begin{quote}
\textit{Bad Bookes through eyes and eares doe break \\& enter,}  \\
\textit{And takes possession of the hearts fraile Center.}  \\
\textit{Inflicting all the little Kingdome Man,}  \\
\textit{With all the poyso’rous mischiefe that they can,}  \\
\textit{Till they have Rob’d and ransack’d him of all}  \\
\textit{Those thinges which men may justly goodness call.} \footnote{John Taylor, \textit{An Arrant thiefe} (London, 1622), sig. C1v-C2r.}
\end{quote}
Therefore, as good as some books may be, bad ones had the potential to violate pure minds, posing a threat to Christian and civil virtues and replacing good thoughts with harmful ones. The poem employs the familiar analogy between a corporeal body and the body of a state: when all constituent parts function harmoniously, there is health and peace; when the balance of humors is upset, a state will suffer disruptions just as a body suffers physical ailments. The use of that metaphor asserts that the ability of unhealthy books to corrupt individuals may corrupt the nation.

To be clear, the market for ‘bad books’ included the gentry as well. There was not a completely isolated ‘high culture’ in opposition to ‘low culture’—the ‘middling sort’ shared the same tastes as the educated and privileged. In fact, members of privileged classes were the primary producers of popular material, both sympathizing and responding to popular demands. The danger of crude books was in their proliferation; they became a particularly potent threat in the hands of oblivious common folk, with supposedly weaker moral constitutions. Another poem by the same author goes on to point out that books can be treacherous, and that it takes a particularly discerning person to tell whether a book is wholesome or debauched:

_A Booke with gawdy Coate, and silken stringes,_
_Whose inside's full of Obsceane beastly thinges,_
_Is like a Whore, Comparison'd and trap'd,_
_Full of Infection, to all mischiefe apt._

Despite the potentially corrupting power of books, more and more of England’s less ‘discerning’ sorts of readers had access to them. In general, the tastes of the masses were highly suspect, with writers bemoaning the success of trash print, “every grosse braind Idiot is suffered to come into print, who if he set forth a Pamphlet of the praise of Pudding-pricks, or write a Treatise Tom Thumme...it is bought up thicke and threefold, when better things lie dead.” Vulgar print therefore profaned the written word, which should be used judiciously and wisely for the express purpose of serving goodness and truth. Otherwise, irreverent words could be immeasurably dangerous.

But intellectualized and pedantic prose didn’t have the same commercial edge as titillating and accessible print. While some associated political reading with a sense of responsibility to stay informed, most bought broadsides and books because they were fashionably entertaining. The general consumer base for cheap print wanted emotionalism and passion, far removed from sober and rational criticism. Even pamphleteers with serious political messages therefore hoped to

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48 Raymond, _Pamphlets and Pamphleteering_, 90-91; Watt, _Cheap Print and Popular Piety_, 4-6
49 John Taylor, _A Common Whore with all these graces grac’d_ (London, 1622), sig. B6v-B7r.
50 Nash, _Pierce Penilesse_, sig. A2r-A2v.
51 Raymond, _Pamphlets and Pamphleteering_, 93-94.
stimulate audiences. For example, John Gee’s exposé of Catholic conspirators and corruptions, a sincere warning of insidious Popery and pervasive Jesuit influence, is not without humor. It is filled with accounts of ridiculous Catholic superstitions, jabs at credulous Papists, and plenty of shameless wordplay. He laughs at stories of successful exorcisms, joking that it was not the holiness of the Priest that drove the demons out, but rather because “the Devill, who can well enough endure the lothsome odors and evaporations of Hel, is not able to endure the vapor issuing from the mouth of a Priest, but had rather go to Hel than abide his smell.” Such works, especially those shorter (and therefore cheaper) pamphlets, were accessible and enjoyable for readers of modest means as well as London’s wealthiest literary patrons, and therefore constitute a suitable gauge for “popular” opinions, interests, and tastes. This commercial aspect of the print and book trade ensured that the expansion of political media was not confined to an educated and elite demographic. The fact that political media (and therefore popular political culture) was becoming so unconfined posed a problem to a state that relied on its monopoly on politics and political information.

THE STATE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The long-standing fear of common discourse was that it created a critical public. In 1579, Elizabeth I issued a proclamation declaring that recklessly published political books could turn people’s “mindes to sedition, offerre to every most meanest person of judgment, by these kindes of popular Libels, authoritie to argue and determine, in every blinde corner, at their severall willes, of the affaires of publique estate: A thing most pernicious in any estate.” James I agreed. In the 1620s, the discussion and execution of ‘public’ matters were still very much intended to remain privy to ‘public men’—members of parliament, the Royal Council, the Court, and the Royals themselves.

James’ state had a rigorous and generally effective infrastructure for policing literary publications. Any published work, including pamphlets, plays, and sermons, had to pass the “Pikes of the press,” or gain the stamp of approval from the Stationer’s Office before it could be printed. By circumventing this process, or circulating any form of media that spoke too critically of public personages or policies, the offending party might end up having to defending himself against the unsympathetic officials in the Star Chamber or Privy Council. English subjects took this threat of persecution very seriously, “The Counsell table, and the star-Chamber do so teriffie them, as they dare not riot, but run at the stirrop in...

53 Watt, Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 5-6.
54 By the Queene, 2.
55 [John Reynolds,] S.R.N.I., Vox Coeli, or Newes from Heaven (1624), sig. A4r.
excellend command, and come in at the least rebuke.”

John Reynolds laments his difficulties pushing his works past state censors, and that he and other “honest”, “loyall”, and “zealous” authors (he lists many by name) face silencing and suppression. The pamphleteer Thomas Scott, whose sensationally popular works were covertly smuggled throughout the country, “scarcely escaped the hands of the pursuivants, who had they taken him, he had certainly tasted of a sharp censure.”

Not surprisingly, legally published works featured a disproportionate number of arguments for obedience, acceptance of the *arcana imperii*, and the continuance of peaceful negotiations with Spain.

However, the success of writers like Thomas Scott proves that criticism of royal policy was not all effectively censored. Even if the notionally private proceedings of parliament and Council did not typically make the presses, they inevitably leaked into the public through various alternative channels and were increasingly available to interested individuals. Despite the strength of the Stationers Office, James found the public murmuring so deafening that he issued several proclamations in an attempt to quiet it. In 1622, he resorted to banishing the nobles currently mingling in London to their country estates, in hopes of removing the main sources, subjects, and brokers of news from the busy capital.

Yet still political business made it into the national conversation in significant detail. Sermons and plays, while they could not discuss such issues openly, often alluded to political issues quite strongly, and frequently offered strong criticism of royal policy. Like Scott, some published abroad and then secreted copies to interested buyers back home. Anonymity provided a measure of safety for those intent on producing arguments against the Spanish match and for war, especially in the realm of poems and libels in underground circulation, which often features more daring language. And of course, private exchanges by pen or by mouth persistently defied James’ demands for silence on political matters.

Yet, politicians and the public were not always locked in a tug-of-war over information; officials occasionally brought politics to the public on purpose. English politicians had been making public appeals long before James Stuart

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56 [Thomas Scott,] *Vox Populi, or Newes from Spayne, translated according to the Spanish coppie* (1620), sig. C3v.
57 Reynolds, *Vox Coeli*, sig. A3v-A4r, G4v-H1r.
60 *By the King: A Proclamation against excess of Lavish and Licentious Speech of matters of State* (London, 1622); *By the King, A Proclamation against the disorderly Printing, uttering, and dispersing of Bookes, Pamphlets, &c.* (London, 1623); *By the King: A Proclamation against Seditious, Popish, and Puritanicall Bookes and Pamphlets* (London, 1624).
61 *By the King, A Proclamation commanding Noblemen, Knights, and Gentlemen of quality, to repayre to their Mansion houses in the Country* (London, 1622); Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, 34.
became their king. It has even been argued that early appeals originating in high ranks of government served to establish the forms and channels of discourse that became the public sphere—in terms of familiar media, language, and dialectics. King James himself, despite his vehement injunctions against the multitude’s meddling in state affairs, often communicated in ways that implicitly acknowledged the existence of a judicious and politically-conversant public. Even conservative statesmen, while railing against public politics as violating the sensitive *arcana imperii*, sometimes employed methods of communication that were as public as any other; they used media directed at a general audience, spoke professedly in the public interest, and invoked commonly understood motifs.

Although he would never argue against the King’s literary issuances, Francis Bacon did recognize the somewhat hypocritical nature of public appeals by establishment figures, especially when those appeals answered to a specific polemic. In reference to Puritan preachers railing against the episcopacy, he points out that “a fool [is] to be answered, but not by becoming like unto him.” He hoped instead that his “lords of the clergy have non intelligence with this interlibelling, but do altogether disallow that their credit should be thus defended.” With characteristic acuity, Bacon understood that in this way, even attempts to controvert the legitimacy of the public sphere could serve the opposite effect.

Despite the obvious irony, propagandistic arguments against public politicking became another side of a polemic, and enriched public discourse as much as the ‘seditious multitude’, especially in reaction to the outcry against the Spanish match. Opposite popular libels, Court poets put out verses that ridiculed detractors of Court personalities and Royal policies, painting the pursuit of a Spanish marriage in a positive light. Royal printers’ pamphlets and some preachers’ sermons did the same. One author insists that he did not publish his defense of Courtiers on his own accord, but rather was “urgently solicited thereunto, by the vehement perswasions of some worthy personages,” implying some high powered patrons who were concerned to learn about the “divers Pamphlets, touching the Court...which seemed rather to have been composed, in the disgrace of Princes, and derision of their followers.” Thus, instead of working towards the impossible task of ignoring public discourse, or fruitlessly trying to

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65 A.D.B., *The Court of the most Illustrious and most Magnificent James the First* (London, 1620), sig. B2r.
keep it quiet, statesmen sometimes attempted to mobilize it to their advantage. Perhaps, some realized that the ‘politics of popularity’ had become a necessary game for government officials to play. At the least, they recognized that popular opinion could be a great tool, empowering when it was favorable, and threatening when it was not. And, in the latter years of James’ reign, from about 1618 to 1623, popular opinion of royal policy drooped into a particularly deep trough.

However terrifying the Star Chamber might have seemed, the efforts of the Crown during that period did little to curb subjects’ curiosity, bar private communication, or turn popular opinion around. John Chamberlain, a well-known regular at Paul’s, notes that even after the King forbade the discussion of political issues, the common people “continue to take no notice of yt, but print every weeke (at least) corantas with all manner of newes.” When the Crown did find printers and preachers to penalize, the legal cases inspired a significant amount of public conversation themselves. Chamberlain kept his friends abroad up to date on recent prosecutions, such as that of Samuel Ward, “a special preacher of Ipswich,” who just completed a long prison sentence for “having a picture of the Spanish fleet in ’88 with the gun-powder treason,” as well a minister “clapt up” for exchanging information about Hapsburg marriages, and a doctor jailed for writing about Spaniards’ cruelty in the West Indies. When the King took measures against public discourse, the public responded, almost mockingly, by talking about it.

CONCLUSION

In 1618, the escalation of the situation in Germany and the continued negotiations for the Spanish match only served to impassion English subjects. The crises in this period offered Paul’s Walkers real fodder for conversation, drove pamphleteers to publish with even greater fervor, and provided meaty material for verse libels. As the public outcry in this period makes clear, the notion that state matters could be kept from an eager and interested public, although often wished for, was a delusion. Whether the emerging news culture was a form of selfish impropriety (as the King may have called it) or of natural concern for King and country, it seemed indomitable. Francis Bacon noted that there was little difference between the discourse produced by dissenting opinions and that of the regime—while “the one sort flieth in the dark, and the other is uttered openly,” they find their audience in seemingly equal footing. The conduits for discourse were established—public media had nestedled into an increasingly influential and ingrained place in the political landscape. The establishment of those

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68 Ibid, 350. Thanks to Professor Bellany for identifying Samuel Ward here.
69 Works of Francis Bacon, 488.
conversational channels made it possible for popular opinion to accumulate a particularly propulsive force, as well as forms of forceful expression. The nature of the issues surrounding the Spanish match put this vehicle into feverish motion, as the King’s foreign policy seemed all the more critical, engrossing, and inflammatory. Those crises and the public reaction to them would prove to have significant ramifications for England’s political culture and the relationship between the Crown and its politically concerned and conversant subjects.
Chapter Two

Amongst the diverse chorus of voices heard during the later Jacobean years, Thomas Scott’s was and still is particularly conspicuous. Between 1618 and 1626, his controversial sermons and pamphlets attained an uncommon level of popularity, even though many were published in Utrecht, beyond the reaches of state censors and prosecutors, and smuggled to eager English readers. Despite receiving the enmity of the state, Scott received the sympathy and support of fellow countrymen for his work, as the broad underground circulation of his publications attests. In all the most salient ways, his ideology typified that of the more Puritanical opponents of England’s appeasement of Spain. Indeed, his exceptionality resides somewhat ironically in this representativeness, and his broad appeal. Not only did the messages of Scott’s pamphlets resonate with the commonly shared fears of the Protestant populace, they were also eminently accessible. Unlike many of his fellow pamphleteers, Scott wrote relatively easy and entertaining prose, at once creative and unmuddied by Latin phraseology, classical references, or dense theology, ensuring that he could reach a wide and popular audience.  

His Vox Populi reached the farthest. It seems to have captured the entire nation’s attention after its release in 1620—becoming “the subject of many men’s discourses”—warranting a significant mention in diaries, autobiographies and contemporary histories of the period. Its full title reveals its clever scheme: Vox Populi, or Newes from Spayne, translated according to the Spanish coppie. Scott’s undertaking involved no translation; it is a fictional work disguised as secret proceedings of a meeting between the actual Spanish ambassador to England, Count Gondomar, and representatives of the Spanish states and Catholic powers—

71 Simonds D’Ewes, 158-159, 161-162.
a confederation of all popish evils assembled in one room. Scott uses this pretence to uncover in turn the supposed pretences of the villainized Gondomar, who goes on in *Vox Populi* to delineate his connivances and devious plans to envelop England in the fold of a Spanish world empire, to the pleasure and satisfaction of eager Catholic lords. Clearly, commentators such as Simonds D'Ewes understood the political and historical significance of such a “notable” phenomenon like *Vox Populi*. He takes the time to mention its contemporary significance and appeal, that it “contained...particulars of singular notion and of moment, which made it to be generally approved of, not only by the meaner sort that were zealous for the cause of religion, but also by all men of judgment that were loyally affected to the truth of the Gospel, and the crown and throne.”

According to D'Ewes, the themes of Scott’s book resonated not only with radicals, but also with all ‘loyal subjects’ who had a care for their country. The pamphlet taps the political and religious anxieties of the Protestant populace, and strikes at certain ideological contentions, most of which had been afflicting England’s collective conscience for decades. More importantly, it demonstrates just how many of those common anxieties coalesced and amplified at the prospect of a royal marriage with Spain. The magnitude and complexity of the perceived threats—from Spain, Gondomar, and Papists in general—clearly indicate that many of James’ subjects anticipated the issues surrounding the Spanish match as having severe, or potentially cataclysmic, ramifications. In order to understand how this crisis may have affected the relationship between the English public and their government, it is necessary to examine specific concerns of the public in more detail, for which *Vox Populi* should serve as an excellent guide.

By using his work to explore popular anti-Catholicism and other issues related to the Spanish Match, I don’t mean to suggest that Thomas Scott’s opinions were universal. On the contrary, there were proportions of the population that supported the policies Scott opposed. Other than Catholics and recusants, some did believe that James I had the right idea by continuing negotiations with Spain. However, the Crown’s supporters more often took issue only with Scott’s activism, arguing that subjects should unquestioningly trust the actions of their King and government. In this view, royal policy originates from a higher authority, *ex divine afflatu*, and a subject’s duty is to do no more than wait for it to take effect, in “compleat content and comfort.”

However, the Spanish match was deeply unpopular, making a large proportion of English subjects discontented and uncomfortable. The ideas expressed in *Vox Populi* were by no means on the fringe. As a work directed at a wide audience, its brand of anti-Catholicism and concerns about government and constitution were actually pointedly moderate. Indeed, within Elizabethan and Jacobean ecclesiology, which generally sought conformity among moderate Protestants (with Catholics and Puritans being outliers), anti-

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*72 Simonds D'Ewes, 159.*

popery was an essential unifying element.\textsuperscript{74} Because of this entrenched tradition of anti-popery, the Spanish match and peace with the Most Catholic Monarchy seemed incompatible even with moderate English Protestantism.\textsuperscript{75} When their sovereign pursued such a policy, English Protestants were therefore, to put it mildly, disquieted.

**PART I: Fear of Spanish ambitions & popular anti-Catholicism**

**IMPERIUM CATHOLICISSIMUM**

Thomas Scott’s famous pamphlet is a remarkably coherent outline of conspiracy theories, a map of Protestant anxieties involving Spanish and Catholic subversions of England’s religion, state, and society. It conveys an image of England on the brink of disaster, told through the eyes of Count Gondomar, the powerful Spanish agent who commands the King’s trust, as he seemed to do in reality, and who is eerily confident that Spain would obtain command of England as well. In *Vox Populi*, the Spanish Match is a means to achieving this end, as Gondomar describes it, “a cover for much intelligence and a means to obtain whatsoever I desired.”\textsuperscript{76} Indeed, Spain at the time appeared to be a particularly ravenous beast, gradually swallowing up European territories into its extensive dominion, and practically elided with the Hapsburg-controlled territories of the Holy Roman Empire. Anti-Spanish voices enumerate the conquests of these conjoined empires, even aside from those in the Netherlands, the “many intrusions upon Savoy, Navarre, France, Italy? How upon the East and West Indies? How upon Ireland, and how upon England also...?” Although the recent take-over of the Palatinate by the Hapsburg Ferdinand II struck particularly close to home, being the hereditary possession of King James’ son in law; “Most sad and doleful were these tidings to all true Protestant hearts in England, each able judgment fearing that it would, in the end, draw with it the utter and general subversion of God’s true Church.”\textsuperscript{77} The English at home considered it a wholly unlawful and dishonorable usurpation, proof of Catholic kings’ treacherous intents.

They shared the suspicion that, in the fictional Gondomar’s words, “all our peace, our warre, our treatises, mariages & whatsoever intendements els of ours, aimes at this principal end, to get the whole possession of the world.”\textsuperscript{79} In poetry as well as in pamphlets, Spain was “that Catholique Monarchie that would grasp all

\textsuperscript{74} Lake, “Constitutional Consensus,” 806-809.
\textsuperscript{76} Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. Bv.
\textsuperscript{77} [Thomas Scott,] *A Tongue-Combat, lately happening betweene two English Souldiers in the Tilt-boat of Gravesend* (London, 1623), 91.
\textsuperscript{78} *Simonds D’Ewes*, 153-154.
\textsuperscript{79} Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. A4r.
within his empiry.” Therefore, efforts on Spain’s part to maintain peace were dubious, if not devious—“for some feare the match in Parlee’s not the match in care. To seeme, & not to be is Spanish art.” One poet describes Gondomar’s false face, “His face is England, that’s without a scarre. Spaine is his heart, treating of peace, for warre closely providing.” Pamphleteers find precedents for Spaniards’ duplicitous diplomacy, such as when an ancestor of Spanish kings violated sworn agreements with the humble Duchy of Brabant, purposefully pressuring the people “to discontent them, and force the people to rebell, whereby hee might have occasion of that generall Conquest, which those high-minded Spaniards supposed to be easie to their daring and slave-subduing spirits.” Diplomatic agreements are inadequate for “Tyrants, who finde no pleasure in commanding, except they may be absolute.” Examples such as these were intended to illustrate how the ‘Universal Monarchie’ would neither be satisfied with nor honor any peaceful treaty or agreement.

The Spaniards in *Vox Populi* are determined, therefore, to break up the strength that Protestant states could mount against them should they remain united. Scott warns that they have already had some success in doing so, for example by blocking aid to the Low Countries: “the Dependacy they had before of the English seemed now to be cut off, and the interest the English had in them and their cause to be taken away.” He maintains that it is not too late to salvage English relations with the United Provinces, but the situation is dire. Several of his pamphlets clamour for England to send military support quickly, before the potential allies are ultimately estranged or the Netherlands completely lost, “for the farther England goes from Holland, I am sure the nearer Spaine comes to England.” Meanwhile, Gondomar continues to isolate the Low Countries, a task that must be fulfilled before Spain “can hope eyther to conquer them or England, who holding togither are too strong for the world at sea, & therefore must be disunited, before they can be overcome.” Conveniently, Gondomar also blames problems engineered by papists on England’s would-be allies; although Spaniards slowly leech English finances, “it is an easie matter to lay all upon the Hollander, and say, he carries the coyne out of the land...and so ours shall not onely be excused, but a flawe made betwixt them to weaken their amities.” Many feared that the Catholic Monarchy could easily take advantage of England’s rivalry with the Dutch, which was based on competition for eastern trade:

*The Belgick Frogge, out of the bogge, with Brittish mouse doth strive:*

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84 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. B4v.  
85 Reynolds, *Vox Coeli*, sig. G4r.  
86 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. B4v.  
87 Ibid, sig. C4r.
The Iberian Kite meane while by slight, surprizeth both alive.
While for their shares, of Indian wares, English & Dutch doe brawle;
The Spanyards watch, advantage catch, to seize on them & all.
Then bee agreed, and take good heed,
Make not a needles fray:
Lest to a third (that ravenous Bird)
You both bee made a pray.\(^{88}\)

The Spanish are also to blame for the isolation of Protestant forces in France, against whom, the French King Louis XIII, “being misled by his Hispaniolized counsellors, intended a new civil war.”\(^{89}\) Although the Huguenots petitioned for aid from James, “for the support of the common cause of religion,” they met with little success. They were doubly helpless, “deserted by England, (from whence in Queen Elizabeth’s days they received often assistances both of men and money,” while their allies in Germany, being themselves “now everywhere almost oppressed, could not assist the French Churches as they had formerly done.”\(^{90}\) The fall of the German states under Hapsburg control was particularly alarming, as it was “the heart of Europe,” a bastion of Protestantism. If lost, “the rest of the Princes shall not long draw or enjoy any vitall life or spirits.”\(^{91}\) The fact that James’ daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren were amongst those victims of Spain made his inaction seem all the more neglectful. His concerned subjects feared that abandoning solidarity with other Protestant states, such as those so critically endangered in Germany or in the Low Countries, would leave each country much more vulnerable against an enriched and empowered Catholic foe. State by state, Spain advanced its plan to “cloyster” England in a “fatall Church-yard to burie and interne themselves in.”\(^{92}\)

THE POPE AS ANTICHRIST, CATHOLICISM AS ANTI-RELIGION

Spain’s plans for world domination not only threatened England’s political sovereignty, but necessarily its religion as well. The feared Universal Empire would be effected by Spain, but more importantly it would be Roman Catholic in nature, executed under supposedly religious pretexts and validated by the Pope. Again, Scott illustrates in the Spanish ambassador’s words, “our nation was by the Bishop of Rome selected before other peoples to conquer and rule the nations with a rod of Iron, and our Kings to that end adorned with the title of Catholike King.” Spain was the secular arm of the Roman Church, seeking “by all meanes to

\(^{89}\) Simonds D’Ewes, 164.
\(^{90}\) Ibid, 153-154, 164, 200.
\(^{91}\) [Thomas Scott,] Certaine Reasons and Arguments of policie, Why the King of England should hereafter give over all further Treatie, and enter into Warre with the Spaniard (1624), sig. B2v.
\(^{92}\) Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A4v.
advance the state of the Romish faith and the Spanish faction together,” and undoing the work of true Christians everywhere. But this supposedly religious zeal on the part of Catholic powers should not be mistaken for piety. Instead, their imperialism is fundamentally un-Christian, as John Reynolds explains, “The Pope may, but our Saviour Christ never authorized or approved usurpation.” The fact that Spain pastes over imperial conquest with religious excuses demonstrates that Catholics love “Earth’s Empire better than Heaven’s Glory.” As further proof, Reynolds points out that if Spain’s ultimate goal was to further their faith, they would not have bothered annexing Portugal, which was already “still more Catholique than Spain.” The advancement of Catholic religion, for the Pope and for Spain, is merely a pretext for the advancement of Romish tyranny.

Within this ideological framework, Catholicism is utterly irreligious. It is not just a wrong religion but an anti-religion, not only heretical but almost atheistic. Indeed, godlessness and popery were billed as quite a pair, each accompanying the other: “Atheism brings in Papisme; irreligion, superstition.” According to the testimony of Simonds D’Ewes, who “unadvisedly” happened upon the French ambassador and his retinue at Mass, those Catholics did not display any semblance of piety at all, but rather did “divine, talk, laugh, and play in so atheistical and profane a manner.” Their religion was sinfulness posturing as piety, so to follow the Pope was to follow an Antichrist, “likest unto the divel, who prosecutes with most deadly hatred the image of God in man.” Catholicism and the Pope were painted as forces of apocalyptic destruction. According to Thomas Taylor, the beast of Revelations “can be no other but the Pope of Rome, who...riseth above the earth, and all earthly power,” to ensnare all the world under “a terrible tyranny and yoke, to which that of Babel was altogether incomparable.” Sensationalist pamphleteers, poets, and playwrights spared no hyperboles. Papists pervert religious practice, “Their penury is turn’d into plenty, their Chastity becomes charity for the relieving of collapsed Ladies wants.” Even confession became a tool of political manipulation for Catholics, “horribly abused, to unlocke the secrets of Princes, to rule over the consciences of men... to make a superstitious and trembling soule your instrument to say, sweare, reveale, conceale, whatsoever you command, that may be for the advantage of your Catholike cause. And so every Priest is an absolute privie Councillor.”

Their missionary work is all imperialism and no charity. Taylor describes “that infinite effusion of blood, which the Popish Spaniards have made among the

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93 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. A4v, B1r.
94 Reynolds, *Vox Coeli*, sig. B4v, C1r, C1v.
95 [Thomas Scott,] *The Projector* (1623), sig. A3v.
96 Simonds D’Ewes, 167.
poore Indians, under pretence of converting them to the faith,” before proceeding with a statistical description of their gruesome devastation. The actions of conquistadors in the Americas defamed Christianity to such an extent that “some of them [the Indians] professed, that if the Spaniards went to heaven when they were dead, they would never come there.” Taylor stresses that all he reports is according to “the words of their owne Writers.” Here, Taylor is referencing the work of Bartolomeo de Las Casas, whose treatise on the brutal destruction of the Indies gained significant readership amongst English audiences, who appreciated any affirmation of Spaniards’ villainy. To them, it proved “that the Romish Woolves are never satisfied with blood, nor can be; seeing they must bee nourished of that whereof they are engendred.”

The armies of Antichrist would eventually cannibalize humanity; as fowlers may “feede upon the seely birds they catch, with delight; so these feede on Gods people as on bread.” The “more than hellish Cruelty” continually visited upon “those poore armelesse and harmlesse Indians” is evidence that “malice of spleene and gall...must be hereditary to the Kings of Spaine,” the same familial trait that their Austrian cousins are now “venting” upon the Palatinate. No doubt, they would torture and kill the innocents in England just as in Germany and the Americas, if given the chance. Therefore, England’s sovereignty, along with those of the threatened Protestant states on the continent, was a keystone in the survival of piety, morality, and Christianity in general, in the face of the diabolical ambitions of the Catholic empire.

“The Romish Locusts:” Fear of ‘Jesuitical’ Infiltration

As Spain and the Papacy threatened England from abroad, their agents supposedly undermined it from within. While Vox Populi maintains that English subjects generally oppose the Spanish match and the concomitant dangers, it acknowledges two sorts of people who “unmeasureably desired the match might proceed.” Scott’s readers would have easily recognized these two groups as conventionally-depicted enemies of their country’s public interests: the “begging and beggarly Courtyers” hoping to satisfy their vanity with Spanish bounty, and the “Romish Catholiques,” who hope not only for toleration, but a “total restauration of their religion.”

Amongst this secret Catholic population, Gondomar counts “all men of the Romish faith who are of the Spanish Faction, and would have been my bloodhounds...as persons hating the prosperitie of their Country, and the valour, worth, and wit of their owne nation, in respect of us and

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102 Ibid, 49.
105 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. B2r.
our Catholike cause.”106 He assures his Catholic assembly that all English
recusants’ national loyalty is eclipsed by their love for Spain, “as I dare say they will
be for Spaine against all the world.” Indeed, he finds their enmity towards their
sovereign shocking, as they fail to recognize the kingly virtues that are obvious
even to the Ambassador, “what I myself have seen and heard proceed from their
King beyond admiration...they have slighted, misreported, scorned, and perverted
to his disgrace and my rejoicing, magnifying in the meane time our defects, for
graces.”107 Friends of Spain in England (all typically regarded as demonized
Jesuits) are such “zealous persons” that they would voluntarily impoverish England
(and themselves) in order to advance Spanish dominion. According to Gondomar,
they have offered to “underhand contribute largely of their estates” to the Infanta’s
dowry should plans for the match proceed. By paying such a price in English
currency, they make sure that “by this marriage...the state should rather be rob’d
and weakened...than strengthened, as the English vainly hope.”108

In his autobiography, D’Ewes echoes this concern, stating that even though
“there were indeed divers moneys now collecting here in England for the aid of the
Palatinate,” it was generally feared “that the Emperor and Popish party received
more considerable assistances of money from the Pontificians of England.”109 Scott
and D’Ewes are speaking of an “invisible kingdome” in England, whose subjects are
even more crazed to bring their country to destruction than the Spanish, and eager
to perform works of disobedience “whensoever [the Catholike King] shal have
occasion to use that Iesuitical vertue of theirs.”110

Surviving sources indicate a rumbling anxiety about Jesuitical infiltration.
Secret papists were thought to pervade all areas of authority and influence in
pursuit of a popish agenda, “not knowne but to [their] owne faction,” and as
“masked creatures, that have tongues for their Prince, but do reserve their hearts
for the Pope.”111 Just as they “poison and corrupt the Youth and prime Wits of
France,” they work towards the same goal in England.112 Of Jesuits, “their first
founder was a Souldier, and ever since, the way of peace they have not knowne, at
least not lov’d.”113 D’Ewes recalls how Gondomar uses his power to obtain a degree
of immunity for those ‘pontificians’, “Certainly the Ambassador had either great
interest in King James, or from some other observations knew well his own
strength, that prevailed...to get priests and Jesuits daily freed from their just
imprisonments.”114 Since their King appeared determined to maintain a Spanish

106 Ibid, sig. C1r.
109 Simonds D’Ewes, 154.
110 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. A4v.
111 Barnabe Rich, The Honestie of this Age, Prooving by good Circumstance that the
World was never honest till now (London, 1615), 24, 25.
112 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. E3r.
113 Alured, Coppie of a Letter, 6.
114 Simonds D’Ewes, 168.
accord, anxious Protestants saw toleration looming in the near future, as an inevitable stipulation in the Spanish match negotiations. If the Jesuits had a plan to bring about England’s destruction, the Spanish match seemed like a fitting trigger to set that plan into motion. D’Ewes seems to have had their schemes all figured out,

For all men knew the Jesuits to be the sworn instruments of the Spanish King, and would easily bring to pass, by poison or otherwise, the abortive ends of our King and Prince, after he should once have two or three children by the Spanish lady, who, then overliving them, would be sure to train up her offspring in the Romish religion, to the utter ruin of this flourishing Church and Kingdom.115

Even before the Spanish match and before toleration, the pamphleteer Richard Barnabe saw reason to fret. He warns his readers that papists “finde so many friends in England and Ireland, both to receive and harbour them, as it is much to be feared, we shall finde the smart of it in time to come.”116

The threat of popery was everywhere. As a force for sinfulness itself, it had the power to work its way into the lives and consciences of individuals, as its agents worked their way through society, “Neerer than neighbours, vipers within our owne mothers bowels.”117 Without proper spiritual fortification, regular subjects are vulnerable, “Easily can they steale away the hearts of the weaker sort...leading captive simple women loaden with sinnes; and led away with divers lusts.”118 To properly protect the commonwealth, every subject required the ability to internally and personally resist the seductions and inveiglements of Antichrist, the “horrible provocations” lurking “daily and hourely amongst us, in all places, in every corner.”119 Passionate Protestants therefore enjoined themselves to educate the larger public in godly principles and disseminate essential information about the dangers of popery and vice. Gee advises, “believe you not any of those oyly-mouthed Absolons, though they speak plausible things, to steale you away from God’s Truth, and the King’s Obedience.”120 They understood this task to be especially critical while the nation stood so vulnerable to Spanish influence and suppression of Catholics apparently slackened. Without their verbal inoculations, popery would spread like a disease, through souls and through the state.

RELIGIOUS DISUNITY; FACTION & THE BODY POLITIC

By their very presence, Catholic recusants compromise the cohesion of the social fabric, for which subjects and the Crown almost universally cried for unity of religion and loyalty. The need for concord within the body politic, with all parts

116 Rich, Honestie of this Age, 24
117 Taylor, Mappe of Rome, 35
118 Gee, Foot out of the Snare, 3.
120 Gee, Foot out of the Snare, 9.
functioning within an appropriate hierarchical order, has an almost metaphysical significance, corresponding metaphorically with the wholeness of parts within a healthy corporal body, or the harmonious and predictable motions of the celestial spheres—“There must be no schisme in a Citie, as no division in the Body.” If a ‘head’ of state cannot depend on his subservient parts, all are doomed. Therefore, by working themselves “so far into the body of the State,” religious dissidents could undermine it with “meere wit (without gunpowder) and leave the King but a fewe subjects whose faithes hee might rely upon.” Official toleration of Catholics would no doubt accelerate this process by allowing them to promote, publish, and practice their religious difference. Having the “libertie to walke freely up and downe, to face and outface their accusers, judges, Magistrates, Bishops, and to exercise their functions almost as freely altogether as safely as at Rome,” Papists would be able to “freely confer, and...apply themselves to many persons,” and work their subversive mischief. They would tear England and Protestants apart: “Whereas Chrits Church is like his Coate...itching Seperatists seeke to make a hole in our coate and Church, which the Papists labour to rent worse, and the desperate Jesuit makes it past mending.” John Gee seems to have already noticed the effects, “Our Countrey, which ought to bee even and uniforme, is now made like a piece of Arras, full of strange formes and divers colours.” Ultimately, popish corruption of the general population would lead to the death of their Protestant King, whose physical body might be rent apart as well as his state, for as Gondomar insinuates, “what catholique body that is sound at the hart, can abide a corrupt and heretical head?”

Existing ruptures within England’s Protestant populace particularly racked the nerves of Scott and his fellows. Such religious rifts, like so many other concerns, smacked of Jesuitical conspiracy, fitting very well as part of their plan to divide and conquer the world. In one anonymous pamphlet (commonly attributed to Thomas Scott), a Protestant accuses his Catholic interlocutor of dividing Protestants, as well as nations; “You first pretend our Gospel and that Gospel which is preached and professed in the Netherlands differ, because there is difference betwenee Protestants and Puritans in England; for so you are pleased to style such true Christians as protest against your falshoods...How well this hangs together, the premisses and conclusion, you cannot but see and smile to behold.” In Vox Populi, Scott confirms that Antichrist’s agents encourage the development and estrangement of Protestant factions then pit them against one another,

121 Adams, Eirenopolis, 31.
122 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B2r.
125 Gee, Foot Out of the Snare, 2. ‘Arras’ refers to a hanging tapestry. It is striking how describing society as a ‘rich tapestry’ has such a negative connotation here.
126 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B2r.
127 Scott, A Tongue-Combat, 86.
especially by slinging accusations of Puritanism, to which James was deeply opposed. Gondomar confidently asserts that he has secured the government’s antipathy towards godly and patriotic Protestants, who are generally united on the Spanish match issue, “in England & Scotland all for the most part (except such as are of our faith) oppose this match to their utmost, by prayers, counsels, speeches, wishes; but if any be found longer tongued then his fellows, we have still meanes to charme their sawciness, to silence them, and expel them the Court, to disgrace them and crosse their preferment’s, with the imputation pragmaticke Puritanisme.”

Disrupting England’s Protestant unity would weaken the state, particularly as emphasizing a Puritan threat distracts the Anglican government from their common Catholic enemy. Encouraging anti-puritan sentiments in the King and in the court effectively disarmed any opposition to the pro-Spanish faction, which was of course a great concern for Scott and his ilk. Gondomar therefore works to further this effect, so that “those that seeme most adverse to us and adverse from our opinion, by their disobedience and example helpe forward our plots.”

He tells his wicked audience, “if by any meanes we can continue differences in their Church, or make them wider…the benefit will be ours…for personall quarrels produce reall questions.” By ‘reall questions’ he implies that moderate Anglicans may find cause to doubt their faith, being averse to the hardline Puritanism and disappointed in the factiousness of Protestantism in general, opening themselves up to Catholic manipulation.

For much of the public, the apparent ‘Catholicization’ of James policy was alarming, making it not only more important to rally against it, but also more dangerous. Many were concerned that England’s most loyal subjects—those resisting and speaking against the temptations of popery—received the most censure. Because “the Seas of our Kings affection to Spaine went so lofty,” and because of Gondomar’s machinations, “no sincere advice…can point at the King of Spaine, but that they are called in, and their Authors imprisoned…though never so honest and loyall subjects.”

One poet finds it only logical that James’ subjects should to decry his policy, when it was so hostile towards the truest and godliest Englishmen, “When we do heare and see and know all this, shall not a Brittaine against a Brittayne hisse?”

PARLIAMENT & POPERY

Just as Gondomar was hated for turning the King against his most loyal citizens, he also received blame for turning James against his Parliament. Surviving comments declaring England’s state of crisis very often show particular

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128 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. C3r; see also Rich, The Honestie of this Age, 32.
129 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. C2r.
130 Ibid, sig. Dv.
131 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A2v-A3r, H1r.
concern for how Parliament, “the lively representation of the wisdom, wealth and power of the whole kingdom,” might be crippled by discord.\(^{133}\) According to most people’s expectations, in England’s natural condition, royal government and Parliament should function in concert, with ‘Court’ and ‘Country’ in harmonious agreement working mutually in service of the commonwealth. Of course, reality fell short. The estrangement between King and Parliament caused real concern during the Spanish Match period, as by the release of \textit{Vox Populi} in 1620, James had not bothered to call on the institution since the ‘addled’ debacle in 1614. For Scott, the fact that a Parliament hadn’t occurred, especially when England needed it most, signaled some kind of blockage or serious upset. Of course, for this infirmity in the body of the State, Scott’s diagnosis is Popery.

Gondomar, who traveled through London’s streets in a closed litter to avoid being accosted by a cursing and spitting public, had first-hand experience of England’s general antipathy towards Spaniards and Spanish religion. In \textit{Vox Populi}, he explains how the English therefore loathe the idea of a Spanish match, preferring to “buy it off with halfe of their estates” rather than see it go through.\(^{134}\) If this were the case, James could have eliminated any fiscal need for treaties with Spain by summoning Parliament, which would then supposedly fill the Exchequer out of generosity and a desperate desire to avoid the alternative means of supply. In this sense, such an interaction between King and Parliament would seem to be in all England’s best interests, and therefore Spain’s best interests would lie in keeping the two apart. So, Gondomar claims to have purposefully disrupted the solidarity between King and Parliament, “working such a dislike betwixt the King and the lower house...as the King will never indure Parliament againe, but rather suffer absolute want then receive conditionall relief from his subjects.”\(^{135}\) Chamberlain confirms that this is a common inference, even that some gossipers blamed Gondomar for the abrupt dissolution of Parliament in 1622.\(^{136}\) In their view, Spanish agency had effectively jammed the proper functioning of English government by isolating the King from his Country.\(^{137}\)

The belief that Parliament could solve the nation’s problems pops up frequently in contemporary sources. Certainly, Parliament offered a more appropriate source of supply than Spain, “whatsoever the occasions or necessities of the Crowne be, it will find more support by casting it selfe into the Armes of the Subjects which are the two Houses of Parliament, then by seeking to any forraigne fawning foe, or envious enemy.”\(^{138}\) When James finally called upon Parliament in

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\(^{134}\) Scott, \textit{Vox Populi}, sig. B2r.

\(^{135}\) Ibid, sig. B3r.

\(^{136}\) Chamberlain, 419.

\(^{137}\) The significance of the split between the Crown and ‘the Country’ will be dealt with in more detail in Section 3.

1621, D’Ewes was elated about the prospect, “of which all men that had any religion hoped much good, and daily prayed for a happy issue.” Through such an issue, he expected that France and Germany might finally receive the military aid they needed, saving the “true Professors of the Gospel” in each nation from perishing “under the power and tyranny of the anti-christian adversary.”

Parliament as a whole strongly supported military action in Germany and against Spain, so when James expressed an interest in war subsidies in 1621, Parliament readily expressed their willingness to provide. However, when they also pleaded for an end to marriage negotiations, James swiftly and angrily closed the session. As one poem suggests, an end to Parliament would spell Britain’s defeat,

- *Wee had a Parliament a salve for soares*
- *A Magna Charta all cast out of doores*
- *The bold and hardie Brittaines conquered are*
- *Without a drumb, a sword or sound of warr*[^140]

The real explanation for why James had not summoned Parliament in 6 years, or for why Parliaments in following years would be so unsuccessful, is certainly more complex than Thomas Scott’s, or the fictional Gondomar’s. Nevertheless, Protestant pamphlet-writers and preachers commonly associated the failure of parliaments, and indeed all sorts of political and social troubles, with Catholic influence. For Scott and his subscribers, Popery was a root of all evils, the cause and result of every threat to the commonwealth and to proper religion throughout Europe.[^141] Scott’s take on self-serving nobles is illustrative here; while greed and ambition are sins commonly attributed to the ambitious and powerful, Scott and his contemporaries explain their presence in the English political system by the simultaneous presence of papists—Gondomar and the insidious Jesuits. They likewise point at how popery bent the Crown away from the restorative Force for Good that was Parliament, and instead towards an unholy union (the proposed royal marriage) with a Catholic superpower. Popery led to sinfulness, and likewise sinfulness led inexorably towards popery.

**LEGACY OF ANTIPATHY**

While this schema of anti-Catholic anxieties may seem overly sensational, it is not completely illogical. After all, real acts of religious violence had threatened King and Country in the recent past, with no guarantee that those threats had ceased. Catholic conspirators had certainly endangered the lives of English monarchs before, including numerous plots against Elizabeth I. The idea of having another Catholic Queen Mary (the Spanish Infanta Maria) understandably gave many English Protestants the shivers, reckoning back to the reign of Mary I, “That Mary was a fiery starre; To all the fountaynes pure; God grant this mary prove not

[^139]: Simonds D’Ewes, 169.
The great “catholike villanie” of 1605 was only a near miss for the Romish menace. The event was fresh in the living memory of nearly every Jacobean over the age of sixteen, who were still thankful that the gunpowder plotters were thwarted in their mission to “destroy young and olde, Religion and Justice on a day.” The legendary victory of ’88, an actual attempt at invasion by Spain, had occurred only a generation earlier. Even though James had maintained an accord since his succession, many of his subjects found it difficult to forget that history. Quite the opposite, many who called for war strove to preserve its vividness—“Let fathers tell their children, and so let it be in everlasting memory, that the Lords grace and the Papists wickednesse may never be put out.” Thomas Taylor reminds his readers that they must continue in due diligence, asking how many souls might have been lost if that “\textit{inuincible nauie} in ’88 had not beene broken by God? and in England, Scotland, and Ireland, how many above that number, if their fireworks had prevailed in 1605?” For him and many others, the dangers had by no means passed. Some expected it at any moment. A genre of poetry prophesying England’s destruction circulated, one of which portends, “If 88 be past then thrive, thou maist till 44 or five…but oh accurst shall be the tyme when as you see, to sixteen joined twenty three,” meaning that the period of peace since 1588 would only last the 44 years until 1623, the likely date of the poem’s authorship, when “much Alteration shall be had in Religion.” Others’ predicted apocalyptic destruction,

\begin{quote}
\textit{The Gospell sunne shall loose his glorious light}
\textit{And ignorance as black as darkest night}
\textit{Shall spread her sable wings about this Isle}
\textit{And Babilons proud whore once more defile}
\textit{Albions white cliffs, the Israelites must double}
\textit{The bricks they made, yet be allowed noe stubble}
\end{quote}

Gondomar’s influence meant nothing was secure—“Pray Heavens he hatch not 88 agen.” Indeed, Spain continued to imperil Protestant holdings in Europe, including those of James’ own progeny through his daughter Elizabeth. So far, up to the early 1620s, England might only have been spared from Spanish domination, or at least the style of religious warfare currently devastating the Continent, by its happy geographical isolation. Despite its wide moat, if England found itself without strong allies in Europe, it might be left vulnerable to the hungry Hapsburg colossus.

Therefore, voices amongst James’ subjects called loudly for war against Spain and for aiding Protestant princes in Germany against their Hapsburg

\begin{itemize}
\item[142] “Early Stuart Libels,” Nv7.
\item[143] Taylor, Mappe of Rome, 25. 95.
\item[144] Taylor, Mappe of Rome, 15.
\item[145] “Early Stuart Libels,” Ni4: lines 1-10.
\item[146] Ibid, Niv2: lines 119-124.
\item[147] Ibid, Niii1: line 20.
\end{itemize}
oppressors. Scott and his fellows were part of this movement, which believed that anti-Catholicism and the Spanish enemy should constitute a unifying rallying point for all true English subjects, as the threat of popery threatened almost everything—their religion, their national sovereignty, social cohesion, and moral integrity. James I, as head of church and state, and professed defender of the Gospel, should have championed this common cause. However, the opposite appeared to be true; James seemed determined to negotiate with Antichrist’s imperial agents, hispanize his own bloodline, and abandon the Palatinate to ruin. In these terms, popular hysteria seems like an understandable response. His decision not to assume that role—as a militant and nationalistic defender of pro-Protestant policies—cost James an important opportunity to affirm his legitimacy as sovereign in their eyes of his more staunchly Protestant and Puritanical subjects. In Reynold’s words, “The Protestants, I say...without whome his Majesty can never subsist nor raigne...sith they are the life, vigour, heart, soule thereof.”

The image that many English Protestants shared of the perfect king and that of their actual king were incongruous. Instead, the failure of government policy in the face of imminent disaster indicated to them that crooked enemies of the state had been able to lead England’s peaceable ruler astray. For Thomas Scott, popery had taken hold of the court.

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150 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. H3r.
**PART II: Distrust of Court and fear of moral decline**

POPERY AND THE COURT

...poore religion, thow
that are more happy where the labouring plough
doeth tear the earth then in great Princes Courts
where nought but high impyety imports
where vertues never raysd for vertues cause
where will & power doth make & forfeit Lawes
where flattery rules & pride doth governe all
where nothings good, but what is bestiall
where wilt thou goe in safety? England, no
Spanyne theer doth plot thy utter overthrowe\textsuperscript{151}

Popery represented all sorts of sin and degradation afflicting the country, but according to conventional belief it had a special propensity to insinuate itself amongst England’s ruling classes, namely, the court. Indeed, for any sort of Popish crime or corruption, “there is a Region, or perhaps a Religion for it: And if it should come amongst us, certainly it were better living in a Wilderness than in a Court.”\textsuperscript{152} Of course, this was also where Romish influence was most potent and most damaging, not only to those at court but to the population as a whole—“because the actions of those that be placed in authority, are received by the common people, for precepts and instructions.”\textsuperscript{153} Instead of presenting an example of righteousness and honest public service, the court instead fostered an atmosphere of sinfulness, dissimulation, and greedy crookedness. For example, as Richard Barnabe asserts, “that which amongst inferiours we call a Bribe, in superiors it is called a Gift, a Present, a Gratification,” and such ‘gifts’ are exchanged frequently and freely at court.\textsuperscript{154} Scott is sure that decision-makers at court persistently ignore religious considerations, as “the number of those that are truly religious are ever the least and for the most part of least account.” Instead, atheistic indifference reigns, and favors Spain; “the greatest number will stand indifferent and fall to the stronger side where there is most hope of gaine and glorie.”\textsuperscript{155} Those who should “minister correction” in England, instead encourage their own vices in others and ally themselves with “those that bee most vicious.”\textsuperscript{156}

The moral corruption of England’s governing body and the King’s company formed a major crux in the public’s anxieties concerning the Spanish match. If

\textsuperscript{151} “Early Stuart Libels,” Nii6: lines 31-40.
\textsuperscript{152} The Proceedings against Sir John Hollis, Sir John Wentworth, and Mr. Lunsden, in the Star-Chamber (1737), sig. Br.
\textsuperscript{153} Rich, The Honestie of this Age, 25.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, 33.
\textsuperscript{155} Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B3r.
\textsuperscript{156} Rich, The Honestie of this Age, 30.
lust, greed, and self-interest could undo those closest to the King, it meant that the metaphorical head of England’s body politic would not have the moral fortitude or integrity to protect and serve the commonweal. In fact, such perversion would turn the interests of Court and Country in direct opposition to each other, which ought to be in concert. The ‘wicked advisor’ and ‘corrupt courtier’ were old and familiar motifs in English politics by the Jacobean period. But to concerned subjects, the fact that the Crown seemed more willing to haggle with an aggressive Catholic enemy than answer the appeals of its people and parliament was a disturbing sign that those motifs had become all too real.

According to this anti-Catholic ideological framework, Popery maintained its debilitating influence by working through what many considered England’s moral soft-spot, the coven of private interest and corruption that was the Royal Court. To anxious Protestants, the environment there—where factionalism was the lay of the land and parties whispered negotiations behind closed doors—seemed dangerously congruent with their conception of the treacherous habits of Jesuit perpetrators. Whereas many saw a potential restoration of order through the activity of Parliament, they saw corresponding ruination in the court, and the moral infirmity of the courtier, “of whom there be too many, that upon the shift of every King or Princes marriage, doe please themselves with some probable project and preferment, before all other respects or considerations whatsoever.”

The Gondomar in *Vox Populi* rejoices in the fact that King James relies on powerful courtly advisors, whose support Spain may easily purchase, as opposed to the honest public servants in Parliament, who could theoretically provide subsidies without compromising England’s national integrity, in either sense of the word. The selfish interests of the nobility, according to Scott and his fellows, could be easily exploited—government turned to tyranny.

‘EGYPTIAN FLIES’ AND CORRUPT COURTIERS

In service of “their owne benefit or grace rather then their countries good,” jealous nobles block the exercise of common law which is the jurisdiction of Parliament, and instead “cry up the [royal] prerogative, whereby they prey upon the subject by suites and exactions, milk the estate and keep it poore, procure themselves much suspition amongst the better & more judicious sort & hate amongst th’oppressed commons.” Popular poetry abounds with metaphors linking lords and courtiers to inhuman parasites, or often to swarms of locusts,

*These in our gardens in our houses swarme*  
One drinks a Mannor another eats a farme  
This with a lordshipp warmes his lusting whore...  
...Ægipt had skipping grashoppers I yeild  
That eate the herbes and fruits of every feild

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157 Gerrard, *Countrie Gentleman Moderator*, sig. I1r.  
158 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. B3v.
And we have skipjack courtiers I dare say
That doe devour far more in one poore day.\textsuperscript{59}

Here, courtiers are the scourge of the land, impoverishing the countryside in order to sate their lustful hungers. On a more practical level, many took issue with expenses at court; fiscal restraint did not factor amongst James’ strengths. In fact, most saw his spending as too liberal, even reckless, except of course for the noble families receiving his expensive favors. Widely printed works such as Scott’s pamphlets painted this profligacy as generosity, thereby softening the risk of criticizing the King’s personal behavior. Still, Scott identifies it as a problem, as the Spaniards in \textit{Vox Populi} have noticed “the generall bountie & munificence of his [King James’] minde, and the necessity of the state so exhausted.” England is unable to support James’ spending, even if he “onely seeks to have that he might give to others.”\textsuperscript{60} Whether out of generosity or gluttony, the court’s supposed tendency to turn people and resources towards consumables is a recurring motif in popular literature. According to one poet, in order to present a lavish feast for the French ambassador, the law courts at Westminster were put to more frivolous use, “Lawyers wise wordes, were turned to longe boardes, to dishes the budgetts & [Bookes]; The seates of their benchers to napkins & trenchers, and clients transformed to Cooke.”\textsuperscript{61} In this way, the court misappropriates one of England’s highest-touted institutions for ostentation and indulgence, turning law into lotus-eating.

Aside from literally, morally, and spiritually impoverishing their country, their desperate need to indulge expensive lusts could lure the Crown and court into Spain’s pocket. The continued negotiations for the match signaled that some powerful personages in the council already desired such an end. Many expected that, should the match proceed, England would receive a fortune of gold, “more then London can hold were the walls built as high as heaven.” Yet instead of enriching the nation or solving any fiscal strains, that wealth would further the degeneration of England’s ruling classes and their ingratiation to Catholic powers,

\begin{quote}
The Gentry shall spend, even world without end,  
They all there meanes shall out live,  
Yett never bee poore, for there pockefyed whore  
Shall helpe them to what shee can give.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

The term ‘pockefyed whore’ (referring to the Spanish pay-masters) raises the idea of prostitution, and of the venereal nature of such a relationship—popery was catching, infectious, yet seductive. Moral corruption hazarded Protestant souls and English independence, yet those most responsible for the nation’s

\textsuperscript{60} Scott, \textit{Vox Populi}, sig. Biv.
\textsuperscript{61} “Early Stuart Libels,” Nii3: lines 25-28; D’Ewes mentions how the Ambassador’s first audience during this visit occurred at Whitehall on a Sunday, and was such a spectacle that “many thousands profaned the day...neglecting the service of God”, 164-165.
\textsuperscript{62} “Early Stuart Libels,” Nvii: lines 7-8, 35-38.
welfare were also suspected of being most vulnerable to hazardous temptations. From this perspective, the court and council appears to have more of liability than of leadership.

Even writers who styled themselves as opposition to rancorous anti-Spanish voices agreed with the basic premise that the courtiers’ virtues were constantly in jeopardy, even if they didn’t make the further leap that Crown policy could be tainted as well. One pamphleteer describes the Court, with all its sensuous delights, as a dangerous place for Courtiers: “even in those seeming sweet, and odoriferous roses of Courtly delights, full many thornes and thistles doe privily grow up.” He calls it a hazardous place for souls in general, and warns aspiring gentry to avoid pursuing any position therein unless they are of the strongest kind of moral constitution.\textsuperscript{\textit{163}} ‘Therefore, even pure young nobles with no real ties to Spain or to Rome could easily become agents of popery when they are seduced by the “fleshly desires”, the greed and ambition, or the generally lecherous personalities and activities that pervade courtly life.’\textsuperscript{\textit{164}} People commonly imagined that sinfulness was not only becoming normative there, but encouraged and rewarded. They feared that at Court, powerful figures “have bin more ready to support the sin then to punish sin,” and that “it was holden for a Maxime amongst a great number of yong wantons, that to surrender themselves to the lust of such men as were in great place and authority, was the next way to get preferment, and to winne them many friends.”\textsuperscript{\textit{165}} Rumours (and some realities) about life at the Jacobean court seemed to particularly underscore these suspicions.

THE ‘SPORT’ OF KINGS; COURT FAVORITES AND FEMININE LEVITY

When it came to specific courtly individuals accused of vaulting ambition, using lustiness and lechery to achieve government office, and suspected of serving a popish agenda, George Villiers took premier place. Needless to say, he was exceedingly unpopular.\textsuperscript{\textit{166}} As a handsome face from a minor background, in 1614 he was placed under the nose of James, who quickly took to him and heaped upon him successive titles, monopolies, and influence. He was Duke of Buckingham by 1623, and a cunning and enterprising socialite. Possessing no qualms about nepotism, he granted offices and wealth to the rest of the Villiers clan, who

\textsuperscript{\textit{163}} A.D.B., \textit{Court of the Most Illustrious and Most Magnificent James}, 4-5, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{\textit{164}} Throughout \textit{The Court of the Most Illustrious and Most Magnificent James}, cited above, the author lists the many corruptions and sins thriving at court and suggests how aspiring courtiers might avoid them.
\textsuperscript{\textit{165}} Rich, \textit{The Honestie of this Age}, 26.
\textsuperscript{\textit{166}} Except during his brief interim as a celebrated hero from 1623 up to his military botches, Buckingham received the focus of public discontent, as a poster child for courtly corruption, moral degeneracy, and Hispano-Catholic influence. For more about the meaning of Buckingham’s day in the sun, look to Cogswell’s \textit{The Blessed Revolution}. 
similarly became the object of the public’s ill sentiment.\textsuperscript{167} Clearly, he was fit to flare popular concerns about the parasitic nobility, seeking to hoard the nation’s resources for them and theirs, and without much care for religion either. Poems and pamphlets frequently accuse him as such—“Thy titles great are, but thy vices flower; and right by might thy oft dost overthrowe; Thou lov’st thy kindred well, but shouldst doe more prayse great Jehovah and his name adore.”\textsuperscript{168} The fact that Buckingham had a Catholic mother and wife, and worked to get a Catholic wife for the Prince too right up to the secret and scandalous embassy to Madrid, added Hispanophilia and popery to his seeming list of offenses.

Sexual deviance numbered amongst his offences as well. It is generally believed, and at the time it was widely suspected, that his relationship with the King was sexual; it was at least extremely personal and extremely close. Buckingham therefore not only flouted proper social order, by rising so high in society so quickly, but he also transgressed contemporary sexual and moral codes. Their ‘closeness’ stirred the anxieties of moralists, as well as the creative juices of many a bawdy poet. Buckingham’s title lent itself easily to hunting imagery (popularly employed as sexual metaphor since antiquity) as he was himself something of a young ‘buck’, and hunting was after all the sport of kings. One poem, addressing Buckingham in the second person, makes ready use of sporting puns as references to their sodomitic love:

\begin{quote}
The Kinge loves you, you him
Both love the same
You love the kinge, wee you
Both buck-in-game.
\end{quote}

It goes on to convey a sense of the King’s affinity for recreation, particularly with strapping young gentlemen—“In game the king loves sport; Of sports the buck”—Buckingham being preeminent among them.\textsuperscript{169} Ribald descriptions of the courtly frivolity of which James seemed to be fond, including masques, dancing, hunting, and all sorts of ‘sport’, were frequently imbued with homoerotic or lecherous tones. For example, one verse reports that the King may exhaust himself with hunting, but he returns to his ‘merry boys that with masks, and toyes; Can make him fatt againe.’ It lists some of those ‘merry boys’ by name and revels in the sensuous and carnal nature of their activities—they “will dance a heate till they stinke of sweat; As if the devill weere in it.”\textsuperscript{170}

Bacchanalian imagery and classical eroticism colored Buckingham’s public reputation too. Libels branded him the ‘Phaeton’ to James’ ‘Phoebus’, evoking the mythological story of when the sun god Phoebus unwisely granted the reigns of the chariot of the sun to the inexperienced and fool-hardily Phaeton, who nearly drove the chariot into the earth. The analogy suggests that James allowed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[167] “Early Stuart Libels,” L10.
\item[168] Ibid, Nv10: lines 55-58.
\item[169] “Early Stuart Libels,” L6: lines 1-4, 4-5.
\item[170] Ibid, L5: lines 24-25, 28-29.
\end{footnotes}
Buckingham more power than he is fit to wield, and that immense sorts of destruction may result.\textsuperscript{171} As the King’s lover, Buckingham was like Ganymede, the boy beauty with whom Jove became infatuated. One poem focuses on the Olympians’ and demigods’ rage at Jove’s love, which they consider “so ’gainst nature”, their hatred of Ganymede, and Jove’s resulting neglectfulness. In it, Great Jove, who phallicly “swaies the emperiall Scepter” with his “white fac’d boy,” remains oblivious to the outrage of other gods, their threats, and their preparations for war.\textsuperscript{172} The image is one of a king at odds with his entire kingdom, and with nature itself.

The chaos ensuing in this poem communicates just how destructive gender disruption was thought to be. Its use of cosmic imagery is not at all unique. For a society very concerned with social and religious order, turning “love’s pleasures arse verse” represented a major upset. With the King and his foremost minister being so up-ended, the nation over which they ruled faced similarly perverse disorder, analogous to celestial disruption, “Each Planets course doth alter; The sun and moone; Are out of Tune; The sphæres begin to faulter.”\textsuperscript{173} Indeed, to so many English subjects, the policies James and Buckingham pursued—negotiating the royal match with Spain; appeasing a Catholic superpower despite their offences in Germany; relaxing recusancy laws at home while begrudging the Protestant cause in Europe; choosing Spain before Parliament as a source of income—seemed perverse enough already. The two foremost deciders of foreign policy seemed to deviate from their proper and necessary sexual natures. Even D’Ewes, who maintains a relatively warm opinion of Buckingham despite his “mischief”, notes that the Duke was “full of delicacy”—“yea, his hands and face seemed to me, especially, effeminate and curious.”\textsuperscript{174} Another poem—written during the famous flight of Buckingham and Charles to Madrid—jokes that English subjects shouldn’t be too harsh on James for endangering his country in this way, as missing Buckingham had thrown the King into a womanly hysteria, as a wife grieves for an absent husband;

\begin{quote}
Nor have the people cause to hate
The King who ventured thus his state, 
His care of thinges well knowne.
For Buckingham his spouse is gone,
And left the widowed King alone,
With sacke and greefe upblowne.\textsuperscript{175}
\end{quote}

The verse is facetious. Yet the King’s supposed effeminacy—the idea of his assuming a passive feminine sexual role—might have reinforced many of his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{171} Ibid, L8: lines 1-11.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Ibid, L7: lines 1-16.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Ibid, L7: lines 56, 20-24.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Simonds D’Ewes, 166-167.
\item \textsuperscript{175} “Early Stuart Libels,” Nv9: lines 37-42.
\end{itemize}
subjects’ fears of a passive England metaphorically violated by a dominating Spain.\textsuperscript{176}

While Scott refrains from such risqué language as seen in contemporary libelous poetry, his work still strongly reflects common concerns for England’s emasculation. James’ own personality, including his relationship with Buckingham, was thought to play a large part in this supposed trend. Scott focuses on the King’s determination to avoid the manly and honorable pursuit of war-making. Once again, Gondomar explains how the King of England “extreamly hunts after peace, and so affects the true name of a Peacemaker, as that for it he wil doe or suffer any thing.”\textsuperscript{177} Peacemaking would generally be considered a monarchical virtue, yet the fact that James would do anything to maintain peace instead sounds very ominous. Similarly, Gondomar describes James as “the King of Schollers,” who loves books and words so much that he longs “to live almost altogether in their element.”\textsuperscript{178} Again, it befits great kings to possess wisdom and scholarly understanding, but it does not befit them to be bookish. Barnabe concurs, expressing his wish to England and its leaders that they would finally abandon feminine Patience, and instead “become a little Cholerike, if not for their sakes that do love thee, yet for thine owne security.”\textsuperscript{179} Reynolds elaborates, “words are feminine, and deeds masculine, and it’s a great point of honour, discretion, and happiness for a Prince to deal first blowe to enemies.”\textsuperscript{180} These pamphleteers were frustrated that James continued to deal in diplomacy. Meanwhile, they perceived England’s military muscle to be atrophying with neglect, and feminine frivolity and languidness to be gradually replacing masculine virtue and vigor.

\textbf{‘THAT ENGLISH VIRAGO’ AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF ELIZABETH}
\textit{“we commend her clemencye, that in his throane last sate”}\textsuperscript{181}

In \textit{Vox Populi}, Scott writes Gondomar as being very interested in encouraging “feminine levity” in English high society in order to direct resources away from the country’s defenses. With England’s armies and navies rusted and rotten from disuse, Spain could easily decide to turn upon them militarily, as, in Scott’s view, Spain surely would. Gondomar gleefully informs his Catholic audience, “I have certaine knowledge that the commons generally are so effeminate and cowardly, as that...of a thousand souldiers, scarce one hundred dare discharge a musket, and of that hundred, scarce one can use it like a

\textsuperscript{176} Many sources are rife with this language, especially Thomas Thompson’s \textit{Antichrist Arraigned} (London, 1618), and Taylor’s \textit{Mappe of Rome}.
\textsuperscript{177} Scott, \textit{Vox Populi}, sig. Biv.
\textsuperscript{178} Scott, \textit{Vox Populi}, sig. Div.
\textsuperscript{179} Rich, \textit{The Honestie of this Age}, 25.
souldier.” They are so ill-armed and ill-funded, that “one corselet serveth many men.” The depletion of Crown finances and Gondomar’s insistence have together prevented the furnishing of England’s navy, “which being the wal of their iland, & once the strongest in Christendome lies now at roade unarmed & fit for ruine.” The supposed result was that Englishmen had forgotten how to fight, their country’s primary naval defenses had become unserviceable, and the Crown had squandered its resources on a bloated, foppish, and hedonistic court—“Thus stands the state of that poor miserable country, which had never more people and fewer men.”

The romanticized ‘Golden Age’ of Queen Elizabeth routinely presented a point of contrast. Concerned subjects looked back on the former monarch’s reign through a particularly rosy lens. Then, they recalled, England had men and heroes aplenty, being “in her Triumphe, in her lustre, in her glory.” Scott suggests that the true death of that era, when “Englands Navy-Royall could give a Law to the Ocean,” occurs at the ignominious demise of “that admirable Engine Raleigh,” who Gondomar refers to as “that old Pyrat...one of the last now living, bred under that deceased English Virago, and by her flesht in our blood and ruine.” In Vox Populi, Gondomar claims to have personally brought him down, symbolically ending the popular anti-Spanish maritime and colonial campaigns by Raleigh and other heroic privateers like him—in order to “quench the heate & valour of that nation, that none should dare hereafter to undertake the like.” The fact that James not only agreed to restrain English privateering but also to send English ships to help the Spanish fight off Barbary corsairs surely made more than a few anti-Spanish citizens wax nostalgic.

Those who looked back fondly on Elizabeth’s reign—“when England was delighted in Combats, Warres, and Victories”—ironically imbued her image with the masculine strength and militant passion that they found so lacking in their current male monarch. Reynolds imagines Elizabeth’s speech as full of fiery and bellicose zeal, in contrast to the wilting sensitivity of James’ pastoral verses. He pictures her reminiscing in heaven, “when I raigned, our valour could stop the progression of Spaine; yea my ships domineerd in his Seas and ports, and their Clouds of smoke and fire, with their Peales of thunder, strucke such amazement to the harts, and terrour to the courages of Castille.” Other such disquieted voices, recalled how she, unlike James, sent frequent assistances, “both of men and money,” to Protestants in France and Germany. Also unlike James, Queen Elizabeth—“the happiest instrument of God’s glory of her sex since the blessed

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182 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B4r-Civ.
183 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. Gir.
184 Ibid, sig. F4v; Scott, Vox Populi, sig. Cir.
185 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. Cir.
186 See the pastoral poem by James I discussed on pp. 44-45
187 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. Gir.
188 Simonds D’Ewes, 200.
Virgin”—did not seek a Spanish marriage. Instead, despite being a “loane woman” and having few friends abroad and division at home, she refused the King of Spain as a suitor.\textsuperscript{189}

Popular prose and poetry bemoans their nation’s waning virtue and virility in this time of peril. For many, this meant that its leaders and countrymen had forgotten their own potential. John Taylor remembers a time when his country was full of “men with martaill minds inspir’d,” but since that time, “these Eighteene yeares a blessed Peace, hath made our sinnes...increase.”\textsuperscript{190} Now he sees a need to rouse up his fellow Englishmen to battle-readiness, “Men prize not Manhood at so low a rate, to make it idle and effeminate...worthy Countrymen I hope and trust you’le do as much as your forefather durst.”\textsuperscript{191} Reynolds offers some further encouragement, “As for strength, if England would know its self, it neede not expect nor hope for any from Spaine.” Both Taylor and Reynolds share the common nationalistic believe that the true English nature is honorable, stalwart, and resourceful. By reclaiming this forceful Englishness, and by forsaking “her new fangled pride and prodigality,” they believed that the country had what it takes to take on any Hapsburg force, “Wee know it is strong enough to beat Spaine, and all his Kingomes and Princes, and no way so weake, to feare that Spaine should make England a Province; for it were farre safer for England and Englishmen, if they wore worse cloathes, and had better hearts and swords, and if they were more martiall and lesse effeminate.”\textsuperscript{192} One poem rhetorically asks the once-vigorous nations of Britain,

\begin{verbatim}
Are we so stupid growne so dull so Colde
shall it I say to after tymes be tolde
That England Scotland Ireland did give leave
unto the mice to breed spyders to weave
and eateinge rust within their Armes to rest
When their owne best of Princes was distrest...?
\end{verbatim}

The ‘best of Princes’ referred to here is James’ son-in-law Frederick, just ousted by Spanish and Imperial forces from his Electorate in the Palatine. The poem goes on lamenting how England continues to do nothing, “so much degenerate from the bravery of all our Ancestors,” even while ‘Rome’s bold Eagles’ dare to assault James’ own progeny.\textsuperscript{193} James’ subjects hoped and pleaded for English forces to be mobilized in defense of their King’s and their country’s honor—“alas good vertue, art though become so faint-hearted, that thou wilt not

\begin{verbatim}
\textsuperscript{190} John Taylor, \textit{An Englishman’s Love to Bohemia} (London, 1620), 9; John Taylor, \textit{The Subjects Joy for the Parliament} (1621).
\textsuperscript{191} Taylor, \textit{An Englishman’s Love to Bohemia}, 9.
\textsuperscript{192} Reynolds, \textit{Vox Coeli}, sig. G2v.
\textsuperscript{193} “Early Stuart Libels,” Nii5: lines 18-23.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, Nii5: lines 11-13.
\end{verbatim}
discover thy selfe, that art thus injured?" Otherwise, they felt the current royal policy would doom all England’s posterity to live not only under the political and religious tyranny of Spain and Catholicism, but also yoke their “Childrens Children” with the shame of their forefathers’ having abandoned virtue and honor.

While thy sonnes rash unluckye armes attempt,
From the Austrian yoke Bohemian necke t’exempt,
Thow dost condemne this plott K. James; & that
The world may thinke thee no confederate,
Thow leavst thy sonne to fates, & wilt not ayd,
Though but with prayers alone his case decayd.
Nay with unwatered, undew’d cheeks canst see,
Throwne out of house & home thy progenye.
Rare profe of justice! yet lett me but utter,
With thy good leave what all the world doth mutter.
This way perhaps a just Kinge thou mayst seeme,
But men a cruell Father will thee deeme.

TO CONCLUDE: “Ilium deplores, but still old Priams glad.”

Vox Populi closes with a short message from its author, this time in his own voice, “Let not those be secure, whom it concerns to be rowsed up, knowing that this aspiring Nebuchadnezzar wil not loose the glorie of his gretnes, (who continueth still to magnifie himselfe in his great Babel,) until it be spoken, they kingdome is departed from thee.” One verse, addressed to Buckingham after he and Charles left to court the Infanta, playfully warns him to quit his mission and return to his country, before he finds it literally removed, pulled off into Spain’s empire,

Come e’re the [Chart] be alter’d, lest perhaps
Your stay may make an error in the Mapps.
Least England should be found, when you should passe
A thousand times more southward then it was.

For these writers and so much of their audience, the situation seemed clear, the stakes high, and the appropriate course of action obvious. Nevertheless, the public saw their government persistently fail to act against these crises, or even considered the King and court to be, in many ways, complicit in bringing those

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195 Rich, The Honestie of this Age, 25.
197 Ibid, Nii2.
199 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. D2r.
crises to pass. They believed that the Catholic ‘Universal Empire’ would stop at nothing and could not be bargained with, yet James continued to entertain negotiations with Gondomar and Spain, and that the future of True Religion may very well depend on success in the Palatinate, yet their king sent no aid. England’s true Protestant populace and their Parliament called for war, yet “Still Jove with Ganymed Iyes playinge, here’s no Tritans sound.” When England called for forcefulness, virtue, and virility, her leaders chose emasculate indulgence and a path of diplomacy often described as something closer to prostitution than policymaking. In Scott’s understanding, James and the Hispanophiles at court were so intent on achieving a Spanish match, they would almost bargain away “their hope of heaven.”

Whether or not the public’s hopes and fears were realistic, this crisis certainly widened a rift between the royal government of England and large numbers of its subjects, or at least threw certain differences between them into starker contrast. “It is the enchanting melody of the match, that brings England out of tune.”

More specifically, according to the worldview offered by Thomas Scott and the other commentators discussed herein, the match brought England’s King and Court out of tune with their country. In the public outcry against the Spanish match, one can see a coherent and wide-spread public ideology emerging that points at the Royal Court as a potential originator and perpetuator of major national crises. Here, instead of constituting the strong head and proud heart of the body-politick, the Court is the Achilles heel.

The fact that such an impassioned cult grew around the memory of Queen Elizabeth shows that this ideology did not necessarily seek progressive governmental change. The vast majority of interested individuals simply hoped that James would reverse his policy choices up that point. Additionally, even the most vocal and Puritanical opposition to the Spanish match rarely blamed the King himself for bad policy, despite the popularity of libelous poetry about his personal lechery and lifestyle. Instead, ‘wicked advisors’ such as Buckingham or Gondomar, or vague popish influence, received most of the brunt of public hatred. Nevertheless, the critical fact here is that James’ subjects knew and were willing to publicly admit that royal policy could be wrong, and often was, and that they cared passionately enough to do something about it. The very common belief that a corrupt, popish, and effeminate court would indubitably betray public interests certainly had consequences for England’s political culture, especially under the conservative Tudor/Stuart model of monarchical government. Combined with intense (and generally normative) anti-Catholic sentiment and the incendiary Spanish match policy, the idea really gained teeth in the public sphere. Of course, along with the widespread belief that England’s King and Court might very well

202 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B4r.
203 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. H2v-H3r.
bring the country to ruin, one can see an invigorated sense of the proper role of the public and of Parliament.
Chapter Three

The nature and scope of the public uproar over the Spanish Match in the early 1620s proves that many ‘private men’, or members of the ordinary public not literally employed in government business, related to their government and with politics in changing or uncertain ways. Certainly, it shook many subjects’ faith in the courtly government of James I. Distrust of court did not originate with the Spanish match crisis. However, in the eyes of many disconcerted subjects like Thomas Scott, the crisis did show how serious the problem might be, even to the extent that the Kings’ court could welcome an unholy union with the Catholic Monarchy in preference to the critical Protestant cause in Germany. The perceived failure of royal policy more firmly established the conviction that courtly interests could be completely perverted, directly opposed to the interests of the commonweal and even the proper religion of English subjects. Anti-Spanish sources count its own court amongst England’s enemies, along with Gondomar, Spain, Jesuits, or the Pope. And, opposite those enemies, other heroes subtly emerge.

The developing antipathy toward the royal policy-making machine gives particular meaning to the public discourse against the Spanish match. While developing media and channels of discourse had made political discussion accessible, common, and popular amongst England’s middling sort, the foreign policy crisis made it seem necessary. This detail encapsulates a critical aspect of the changing political culture of early modern Britain—of changing perspectives on active citizenship and royal authority. Public expressions of dissent (such as Vox Populi) assume the role of righteous opposition to the destructive schemes of wicked papists such as Gondomar and voluptuaries like Buckingham, exposing enemies and bringing Truth to light, “for the good of God’s Church and of my Country.” Those ‘true English subjects’ feeling so betrayed by their government seem to accrue many of the civic virtues of which England’s courtiers are

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204 Troubles in Bohemia and divers other kingdomes (London, 1619), 38.
supposedly bereft, and accordingly inherit the responsibility to advise their abused King when good council is lacking. In this way, Spanish match sources communicate—sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly—a growing valuation of civic engagement on the part of private subjects, bearing witness to the continuing transformation of the ‘private subject’ into the ‘public citizen’.

Including the simple fact that English subjects engaged in public discourse at all (and despite the admonishments from the establishment), several themes emerge in Spanish match sources indicating a developing political culture in conflict with the orthodoxy of the early Stuart monarchy. Many of these are related to the emphasis on the moral integrity of ‘the Country’, as the ideological opposite of the corrupt court. As the Country’s representative body, Parliament is raised as the glorious antidote to popery and a champion of the commonweal. In conjunction with Parliament, sources describe an ideal of civic involvement on the part of England’s (qualified) populace, as an essential part of local and national political life. Finally, public discourse is also subject to changing cultural treatment, increasingly accepted as a lasting forum for maintaining the civic and republican virtues praised in contrast to courtly iniquity. With these considerations, discourse within a public sphere becomes a necessary tool for communication and expression used by heroic patriots, in Parliament and the country, in service of the public good.

COURT AND COUNTRY

Many anti-Spanish subjects at the time of the Spanish match idealized ‘the Country’ as the moral foil of the corruption they perceived at the center of England’s state. Indeed, ‘Court’ and ‘Country’ formed a dichotomy, so that as the reputation of court became increasingly tarnished, that of ‘the country’ seemed more and more pristine. The rotten culture of court was placed ideologically opposite that of England’s countryside, which came to represent all the virtues that parasitic courtiers seemed to lack, and simultaneously lacked all those vices with which courtiers were inextricably associated. In the idealized pastoral landscape, virtue reigned instead of vice, godliness instead of popery, public service instead of self-promotion, and honesty and Truth instead of secrecy and dissimulation.205

The general consensus on the court-country duality, and the fashion for the pastoral idyll, prevailed so thoroughly, even the King and courtiers subscribed to the idea. In order to cultivate a positive image of his rule, King James often attempted to align himself and his court with pastoral virtues. The theme of a romantic and idealized countryside featured largely in court-produced masques, art, and poetry. For example, in a poem about Charles and Buckingham’s mad dash to Spain in 1623, James replaces the frenetic lobbying and panic one might

actually have encountered in his capital with a pastoral fantasy in which natural features of the countryside poetically manifest his subjects’ distress:

*The spring neglects his course to keepe,*

*The ayre with mightie stormes doth weepe,*

*The pretty birdes disdaine to singe,*

*The meades to swell, the woodes to springe.*

Elsewhere in the poem, James metaphorically refers to England as “Arcadia”, his subjects as “shepherds”, and himself as “Regall Pan”. Here, James is attempting to appropriate the idyllic language and imagery frequently employed by anti-court poets, as well as the manuscript libel form, in order to foster support for royal policy and reduce common dissent. However, such attempts to win the sympathies of England’s larger public were problematic at best. First, by writing and circulating the poem as a manuscript libel, James again falls into the trap of inadvertently legitimizing the very medium he is trying to discourage. Secondly, as Leah Marcus argues, the traditionally decentralized landscapes of the pastoral idiom contradict the centralizing tendencies of the Jacobean state. When used for royalist purposes, they seem somewhat hypocritical, or even undermine their intent. In other words, by comparing his monarchy with a pastoral idyll, James more effectively emphasized the difference between the two.

**PARLIAMENT AND TYRANNY**

Just as he blamed England’s preening courtiers for working against their nation’s interests, Scott was confident that its Parliament was on the right side. As an ostensibly ‘public’ institution and a representative of the Country, Parliament was often touted as the cure to the disease caused by the poisonous Court. Although the proceedings of Parliament were intended to remain just as private as those of Royals Councils (a large proportion of Parliamentary motions even had conciliar origins), members of the Commons had an air of honesty and independence. In the vein of ‘good commonwealthsmen’ and patriots, they were often painted as public servants, voices for popular concerns, isolated from the more corrupting realms of politics. Instead of for private interests, they were perceived as speakers for the *true* interests of the polity, the King and

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206 “Early Stuart Libels,” Nvi: lines 7-10, 14, 43, 47.
207 For more on the Spenserian poets and use of pastoral themes in the Jacobean court, see Leah S. Marcus, “Politics & Pastoral.”
In this way, parliament men epitomized an ideal of civic virtue and duty. The fact that Parliament in general supported the popular line—war against Spain instead of a marriage with Spain—and served to enforce this perception amongst the papaphobic population. From 1618 to 1623 the institution stood with the larger public as the ideological opposition to pro-Spanish royal policy.

Revisionist scholars assert that parliament was more obsequious than confrontational, that individual members were more interested in consensus than in counterbalancing the strong executive government. Those scholars were essentially correct in doing so. Contrary to the older Whiggish habit of reading Jacobean parliamentary politics as a preamble to revolution, those in Parliament in the early seventeenth century sought to perform their traditional role as servants of a monarchical government. Certainly, when the interests between parliament and king misaligned, as they did during our period of interest, contemporaries looked forward to a rosy future of reconciliation and harmony, not an eventual assertion of parliamentary sovereignty. Opposition to government was considered pathogenic, so to suggest that James’ subjects welcomed the foreign policy controversy between Parliament and Crown in any measure would be anachronistic.

Yet revisionist scholars fail to emphasize the very real perception of the Commons as the moral opposition to court, and especially how the policy controversy during the Spanish match period encouraged that perception. Although conflict between ‘Court’ and ‘Country’ does not reflect the mechanical reality of politics in the 1620s, such a duality did exist in the popular imagination, as a recurring motif in public discourse, and certainly affected common conceptions of the proper relationship between Crown and Parliament.

While the corruptible interests at court tended to pry the King from his Kingdom, towards popery and Spain instead of godliness and the commonweal, Parliament would bring them back together. Parliament was where King and Kingdom met, “where Prince and People meet and joyne in consultation...in whose even balancing the weale of a State doth consist.” Parliaments were therefore fundamentally good for a state, and being representative of the state, would inevitably reach conclusions favoring the commonweal. The Commons did not only represent the Country, but made its best wishes a reality, “you the Representative Body of the Commons, in regard of the liberty of the Subject, but chiefly of the free course of the Gospel without impeachment, by whome is not

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210 Taylor presents an excellent example of the belief that Parliament was responsible for maintaining solidarity with their monarch in _The Subjects Joy for Parliament_, in contrast to the idea that a monarch should comply with Parliament’s wishes. Also, my brother Nikola Mirkovic requested a credit for helping me think of the word ‘pathogenic.’

211 [Thomas Scott,] _Vox Regis_ (London, 1624), 67.
only represented, but also actuated the desire and zeale of the body of this kingdom." One representative said, in looking forward to the Parliament of 1621, "let all endeavour by unity and good accord to pattern this Parliament by the best that have been that it may...infuse into Parliaments a kind of multiplying power and faculty whereby they may be more frequent." Gee also rejoices, “The God of blessing dispose of your Counsell. Wee waite for you, as for the raine”

Even while it credits the King as the divinely-elected source of law, John Taylor’s 1621 broadside (titled The Subjects Joy for the Parliament) especially praises the King for finally calling Parliament—where “Prince, and Peeres, and people thus Combine”—as a hopeful end to the nation’s period of neglectful levity—“Our Gracious King, these evils to prevent, assembled hath a Royall Parlament.” Reynolds, whose ideology is markedly less conservative than Taylor’s, demonstrates his faith in Parliament by dedicating his Vox Coeli to it. He heaps glories upon the institution, describing it not only as the “re-presentive body of England,” but also as “great Britaines greatest Palladines and Champions...the invincible Bulwarke of our King and his Royall Progeny, and the inexpugnable Citadel and Acrocorinth* of our Estate...the Conscript Fathers of our Supreamest Senate.” He expects them to be on his side, and perhaps even to provide him “safe shelter and sanctuary of your auspicious protection,” presumably from the censure of the Crown for publishing his pamphlet. D’Ewes notices how Parliament was eager to take up the Protestant cause against popery when the Crown resisted the effort. In one case, the Crown continually deferred the punishment of a convicted papist, provoking the Romanists of England to “boast that nothing should be inflicted.” But when Parliament appeared “stoutly in the cause,” the proper punishment was carried through, “in which the faithful zealous affection of the whole state and kingdom, in their body representative, consisting of the two Houses of Parliament, was fully expressed.” D’Ewes subscribed to the common belief that Parliament embodied the will and the welfare of its country.

Thomas Scott communicated his belief in fair Parliamentary elections, that England’s freeholders should be able to “choose their sheere Knights and Burgesses freely,” as well as directly. He was not alone in this conviction, although this is a level of populism and democracy that might have discomfited many contemporaries more frightened of ‘mob rule’. Whether this idea was mainstream or not, the many voices protesting the Spanish match seem to generally agree on

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212 Gee, Foot out of the Snare, sig. A4r.
213 “House of Lords Journal Volume 3: 17 March 1628.”
214 Gee, Foot out of the Snare, sig. A3v.
216 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A3r, B1v.
217 Simonds D’Ewes, 190.
218 Scott, Vox Populi, sig. B3v.
the more basic principle that Parliament, as representing the force of Law, could function as a check on Tyranny. Tyranny was, of course, considered a particularly popish evil. Sources almost ubiquitously reference tyranny in association with Spain’s ‘universal empire’ and the world-dominating ambitions of the Roman Church. The situation in the Palatinate betrayed the machiavellian colors of Catholic kings and their Jesuitical armies, whose “onely intent is, how they might divide the Princes of the Empire one from another...to induce (in their place) the Tyranny of Spain, and the Papall Primacy into Germany.” Many English Protestants took the King’s reluctance to work with Parliament as a sure sign that Gondomar and Catholic forces had swayed their sovereign’s opinion too closely to popish tyranny, and away from English common law, “a lawe proper to their nation.”

It is logical that when royal policy betrayed popular expectations so drastically, seemingly in favor a supposedly despotic and imperial foe, support for limiting the royal prerogative gained force. At a time when the King “doth so much insist upon his prerogative” and “will not admit any dyminution,” Scott even implies that government without law is tyranny—“Saloman or Caesar must not rule without a Lawe, nor by his absolute authority make any...It inclines therefore too much towards tyranny for a Magistrate to exercise an absolute authority without limit.” An anonymous poet laments the King’s meager respect for what he sees as the constitutional obligation of English monarchs, “Wee had a Parliament a salve for soares, a Magna Charta all cast out of doores,” and that ignoring Parliament in this way would bring about Spanish domination. In this view, the concept of the ‘royal prerogative’ lacks the legitimizing force of law, so that any action unsupported by law is abusive by its very nature, “the lawe is the instrument and sword of the publique magistrate without which to strike is to Tyrannize and without which to converse in any publique business is to become private.” Parliament, as the constitutional creator of law, should therefore play an essential role in maintaining ‘good government’, and keeping a monarchy from tipping towards despotism. Without the counsel of Parliament, “the greatest Peere or Officer yea the greatest profest Enginere in State stratagems may easily erre upon either hand many degrees from good government and so fall into an Anarchy or Tyrannie.”

219 Thomas Taylors sermons published in *A Mappe of Rome* form a diatribe of popish totalitarianism, including histories of Catholic ‘machiavels’, Roman imperialism, and papal persecution.

220 *Troubles in Bohemia*, 30.

221 Scott, *Vox Populi*, sig. B3v.


By 1621, concerns were surfacing as to whether parliament would survive as an institution. While members continued to long for an ideal unity, it was simultaneously clear that the ‘indissoluble knot’ joining King and Parliament together was more an inconvenience than a blessing on the king’s part. On the proceedings of the 1621 Parliament, John Chamberlain notes, “both at home and abrode there was such an opinion of disunion twixt [the King] and his people as yf nothing could be expected.”\textsuperscript{226} As it possessed a monopoly on both taxation and legislation, the Crown would, at least constitutionally, have to work with parliament to pass laws and as a source of much-needed revenue—as the “only ordinarie, auncient, and plaine highway” for supplying the financial wants of the Crown.\textsuperscript{227} The granting of financial subsidies was parliament’s primary leveraging point, in return for which it received redress of grievances and services from the government for its constituent counties. The Crown had reason to avoid such concessions. The option of issuing royal proclamations could reduce monarchs’ need to call on Parliament for legislative matters. More importantly, calling a parliament came with a price, since the delivery of services in itself cost the Crown money, later provoking William Laud to accurately grumble that Parliaments’ policy was to ‘sell subsidies, and not to give them.’\textsuperscript{228} Considering that alternative sources of revenue were also available, including levying fines, tariffs, and selling titles, the Crown’s actual financial incentives to call a parliament seem significantly diminished, along with parliament’s bargaining power. Yet opting for alternative revenues came with an alternative price, albeit a less tangible one, as those “other devises and projects are but by-paths that leade to discontent.”\textsuperscript{229} Indeed such measures were hotly contested, and often effectively opposed; for example, Parliament made significant progress in eliminating monopolies during the 1621 sessions. By 1621, the King already had a steep level of discontent to deal with, and whether or not Parliament’s bargaining power had been reduced, its cultural power was growing.

When Scott presented the Spanish Match and the presence of Gondomar as a threat to virtuous Parliament in 	extit{Vox Populi}, he was exploiting existing concerns that had already put Parliamentarians on the defensive, who were perhaps encouraged to respond by intensifying their praise and advocacy for the institution.\textsuperscript{230} The long interim between Parliaments by 1620, and then the disappointing sessions in 1621, showed James’ subjects that he didn’t much sympathize with their constitutional concerns. Certainly, his policies seem to align more with their idea of popery-tinged tyranny than with Parliamentary

\textsuperscript{226} Chamberlain, 345.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid, 419.
\textsuperscript{228} State Papers 16/94/88, as quoted in Russell, 	extit{Parliaments and English Politics}, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{229} Chamberlain, 419; Russell, 	extit{Parliaments and English Politics}, 50-56.
\textsuperscript{230} For Scott’s framing of the Parliamentary issue in 	extit{Vox Populi}, see pp. 27-29 in Chapter Two.
lawfulness, being much less concerned with seeking popular or legal legitimacy than with asserting his prerogative.

Thomas Scott went so far as to argue that Parliament should have some measure of policy-making power, but here he was rather exceptional.²³¹ Few if any during this period would have argued against the primary authority of Kings in foreign policy matters. Yet, James’ subjects in general refused to accept ‘The Prerogative’ alone as justification for the Spanish match policies. At least when royal policy erred so dangerously, English subjects believed their King should listen to the pleas of his country’s representative body. As an example, Reynolds cites the disaster that ensued when Mary I insisted on her prerogative and refused to consult Parliament about her marriage to Philip II of Spain. He goes on, almost challenging James to live up to his esteem, “But wise King James is opposite to...Mary, as well in Religion as sexe; and therefore, I hope, nay, I assure my selfe, he will first consult this Match with his Parliament.”²³² While it had little political muscle, Parliament was becoming more and more a way to measure Kings’ virtue as rulers; even though Kings had the ability and often the right to avoid dealing with Parliament, a Good King wouldn’t want to.

LIBEL AND LEGITIMACY

The assembly of the 1621 Parliament was perceived an opportunity for James to restore rightful harmony with his Country, but tension marred the later proceedings. Members of Parliament painstakingly tried to identify and negotiate the threshold between free speech and violating James’ strict definition of his prerogative—“there is not that goode understanding between the King and them that were to be wisht, whilst he is so apprehensive of the least point that may seeme to touch his prerogative, and they so jealous and carefull to preserve their privileges.”²³³ In his letters, John Chamberlain paints a picture of a Lower House striving to suppress papists in England and Hapsburgs abroad despite formidable constrictions. He reports that “many goode and free speaches” urged for war against the Spanish, and describes one speech in particular that seems to have captured the general Parliamentary, and perhaps national, sentiment:

*I have heard extraordinarie commendation of a neat speech made by one Pimme a recever, wherein he laboured to shew that the Kings pietie, clemencie, justice bountie, facilitie, peaceable disposition, and other his naturall vertues were by the adverse partie perverted and turned to a quite contrarie course; and though he were somewhat long in the explanation of these particulers, yet he had great attention and was exceedingly commended both for matter and manner.*²³⁴

²³¹ Lake, “Constitutional Consensus,” 817.
While its opportunities and ability to do so were limited, one of parliament’s main roles when in session was to offer counsel on government policy. But James was not receptive to this counsel; such speeches went too far. Presented with a petition concerning the rights of Parliament in December of 1621, the King accused the “fiery and popular spirits of the House of Commons” of debating in matters “far above their reach and capacity, tending to our high dishonour and breach of prerogative royal.”

Less than a month after this rebuke, James dissolved Parliament.

Clearly, there was no unified understanding of what kinds of speech, commentary, or criticism were warranted and what kinds were wrongful. In particular, the opinion of the Crown versus that of Parliament and the public differed most strikingly. Members of Parliament, whose business quite directly attended on government policies, were still liable to receive accusations of insubordination for seditious or presumptuous talk. Like their representatives in the Lower House, private subjects also wandered into the social gray area of political discourse, and received similar admonishments from the Crown. However, unlike members of Parliament, the greater public could not be dissolved or dismissed and was therefore much less censorable. The controversy over the Spanish match provoked an inflation of both the urgency and amount of discourse, which in turn forced the English public to confront the reality of political speech and renegotiate its legitimacy.

During the 1620s the legitimacy of political speech on the part of civilians was never assumed, and attitudes towards discussing political matters in public media were problematic and inconsistent. Of course, it was taken for granted that political appeals should only be made in the service of the public good. But even more so, they were only justified in times of crisis or uncertainty, as a warning to king and country about some impending disaster, especially when intended for a general audience. Producers of printed materials regularly make a plea to the necessity of their activities, that they would have avoided the presses altogether if the commonweal didn’t so demand their service. They almost unfailingly display a need to excuse their own boldness, insisting that their publication is “pertinent and necessarie” due to the dire need of the country, the “nature of the times”, or their own “zeale and fidelity.” Otherwise, it was assumed that subjects should remain contentedly in their proper place within the social hierarchy—silent, consenting, and deferential.

Public political discussion was therefore supposed to be exceptional, only warranted in exceptional situations, and generally considered an aberration from the natural societal order. However, especially during the ‘exceptional’ Spanish match controversy, such aberrations seemed to have become much more common.

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236 *Court of the most Illustrious and most Magnificent James*, sig. B2v-B3r; Reynolds, *Vox Coeli*, sig. A3r, A4.
Lake and Pincus suggest that perhaps there were too many “crises” and too much uncertainty during the period for subjects to return to the normality of a silent private populace isolated from the political few.\(^{237}\) To be sure, the reality that some vocal subjects might be driven to shed light on some perceived crisis, or perhaps to capitalize on other subjects’ frantic fear of popish infiltration, was one that Jacobians would have to face. The sources responding to the foreign policy crises in the late Jacobean period exhibit that very struggle.

For one, polemics tend to perpetuate themselves. Arguments carried out in public media quite often became a parley, so that instead of putting a given contestation to rest, as many writers apparently intended, they instead encouraged them to continue and amplify—“he that replieth, multiplieth.”\(^{238}\) This problem gets at the futility of fighting against discourse on its own terms, of trying to discredit public media using public media—by publicly confronting critical opinion, James’ regime became inevitably embroiled in the polemical itself. The fundamental self-legitimizing nature of public polemics largely disarmed appeals meant to discourage dissent, including James’ pastoral verses discussed earlier in this chapter. Responding to criticism invites further responses in turn, and employing libelous or polemical media implicitly acknowledges their effectiveness, and further normalizes such methods of exchange. John Taylor similarly betrayed his own intent by writing cheap print about the dangers of cheap print.\(^{239}\) In these cases, both King James and Taylor express their discomfort with performances of public politics, and especially with public dissent. Nevertheless, by using and sometimes relying on public media, they also inadvertently confirm its power, predominance, and institutionalization in Jacobean society.

Therein lies a core contradiction inherent in most political discourse during this period, especially in polemical texts and libels. While poets, preachers, and pamphleteers excuse their own contributions to public discourse, they continue to levy accusations of libelous speech upon their opponents. Such charges affirm that the stain of libel remains one of the most potent attacks in a standard polemical arsenal, even while writers appear increasingly comfortable using those same ‘libelous’ techniques.\(^{240}\) Most of the time, the definition of ‘libel’ seemed to depend on one’s perspective; Protestant pamphleteers considered themselves and their fellows to be dutiful patriots, but railed against the “sedicious sermons and pernicious pamphlets” produced by Catholics.\(^{241}\) Likewise, conservative Anglicans used the same accusative language when they condemned ‘puritan’ polemicists.\(^{242}\)

\(^{237}\) Lake and Pincus, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 278.
\(^{238}\) Works of Francis Bacon, 487.
\(^{239}\) Taylor, An Arrant thiefe; idem, A Common Whore, and Taylor’s poems discussed in Section 1.

\(^{241}\) Reynolds Vox Coeli, sig. D4r.
\(^{242}\) Gerrard, Country Gentleman Moderator, sig. H3v-H4r.
As was especially true in the early 1620s, whether or not a situation or threat was ‘critical’ enough to warrant a literary ingress to the treacherous realm of politics wholly depended on one’s position relative to the issue or polemic at hand. So, because the perception of crises was very subjective, the legitimacy of public appeals was subjective as well; one person’s justified appeal might, and usually did, seem criminal to someone else.

Still, although they weren’t considered normative, public appeals were quite normal. Some contemporary evidence even suggests an increasingly positive perspective of political debate amongst members of the general populace. For example, Thomas Scott’s *A Tongue-Combate* is itself set up as part of a polemic, purportedly answering and correcting the injuries and falsehoods printed in an earlier Catholic pamphlet. It is also about an argument, imagining a cordially-conducted debate between a Protestant soldier and a Catholic soldier who are both shipping off to fight on opposing sides in the Netherlands. It acknowledges the parley-style verbal contest as a typical, healthy, and constructive way to reach an optimal conclusion. Of course, Scott assumes that the optimal conclusion is the victory of Protestant reason and light over the Catholic “subjection and slavery.”

There is no sense in *A Tongue-Combate* that polemical fights should be fair, especially when one of the arguers is Catholic. In Scott’s hypothetical debate, only the argument of the Protestant ‘Tawnie-scarfe’ is justifiable, against which the poor Catholic ‘Red-scarfe’ doesn’t stand a chance. Scott, therefore, did not value free speech in itself, but only the freedom to say what he thought was right.

While the term ‘free speech’ was frequently used during the period, it had a very limited, cloudy, and contentious meaning amongst different sectors of the populace. The view espoused by King James, on the other hand, was comparatively clear and simple: any venture into political matters on the part of private citizens represented a transgression into the exclusive domain of government, and no polemical position could excuse such a violation. As one official of the Star Chamber put it, “it is not the matter but the manner which is punishable”—meaning the truth or falsehood of a public statement was immaterial. With no exception, private citizens should not ‘intermeddle’ in public matters. However, an additional ideological hurdle remained for the Crown, as its private subjects embraced a more public identity.

**PUBLIC MEN AND PRIVATE SUBJECTS**

When King James issued a proclamation in 1621 forbidding public discourse on state matters, D’Ewes considered the measure “unseasonable and harsh” (and obviously engineered by Gondomar). He explains that news of the Church of

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God’s losses in Germany had taken an emotional toll on English subjects, requiring “men’s mutual condoling.” He suggests that allowing public ‘condoling’ might be beneficial to Protestants at home and abroad, “a means to stir them up to a more zealous and earnest intercession with God by prayer.”

This gentle suggestion identifies D’Ewes as one amongst a rising tide of individuals who expressed very different feelings about public discourse (or at least certain contributions to public discourse) than those James I asserted in his verses and proclamations. As politically aware subject wrestled with the propriety or impropriety of appeals against the Spanish match, for war in Germany, about the loss of England’s martial reputation, or whatever other politically-charged issue, many looked at such appeals in a decidedly positive light. An alternative ideology materializes in those sources that suggests ways in which public conversation can play a helpful, rather than harmful, role in national politics, and also suggests some important roles for private subjects within the public sphere. That ideology did not eclipse conservative sentiments, but rather existed in conflict with it. Indeed, that coexistence was uneasy.

Despite the supposed impertinence of public speech, private subjects felt a strong citizen-like obligation to speak out anyway. Most sources reveal that their authors were aware of that contradiction, at least on some level, but were nevertheless committed, “I had rather with some impeach to my name, write and say something (according to my weake Talent)...then unseasonably or uncivilly to be wanting in my bounden duty.”

Pamphleteers, poets, coranto-coiners, and preachers were driven to public discourse even though it was ostensibly none of their business. Their criticisms and commentaries were determinedly intended to be constructive. D’Ewes, as quoted above, saw a potential to encourage a kind of mutual sympathy and concern amongst England’s loyal subjects. Others who preached or went to print suggest that they believed in the real potential of public appeals to influence opinion, or perhaps even policy, and are intent on using that potential for good. Thomas Taylor, for example, reluctantly printed his sermons in the hope that they might “winne back some of his seduced Countrymen” from sinfulness and popery.

The preface to those sermons is written by a William Jemmat, who verbalizes similar hopes in a much less reserved tone,

This I hoped might be a meanes to restraine our declining times from gazing and doting on that pompous Harlot, the Church of Rome. For when our nation shall see, and consider a fresh, how insatiable she hath alwaies beeene of blood, and English blood! I cannot thinke we can be so inconsiderate, as to dreame of any toleration, much lesse any sound reconcilement with so implacable an enemie.

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245 Simonds D’Ewes, 161-162.
246 A.D.B., The Court of the most Illustrious and most Magnificent James, sig. B3v-B4r.
247 Taylor, Mappe of Rome, ‘Author’s Apologie.’
248 Jemmat, preface to Mappe of Rome.
One of the boldest intents stated by an author ironically appears in a pamphlet defending the profession of courtiers. The author, while “not ignorant of mine owne calling and condition of life, which is Private,” feels qualified enough to offer advice to those in government, presuming that his admonitions might help Courtiers and Magistrates “hence learne better to rule.”

With their King blinded by the perverse counsel of Gondomar and greedy court-climbers, anxious Protestant subjects stepped up to the task of advisors themselves. “In point of integritie and duty,” they planned to bring righteous light to counteract the dark popish hazes. Coloring their speech with patriotic tones, those humble advisors believed they could repay their country more through speech than by silent deference, “Being as well in heart and tongue an Englishman, and therefore knowing by Grace, what I owe by Nature to my Naturall Prince and Countrey...I would not, I could not be silent thereat, but must expose this...to the light and sight of the world.”

Here, silence constitutes a failure to perform one’s duty, up-ending the traditional role of the unquestioningly loyal subject. Framed in this way, subjects’ interest in national politics comes from love, instead of from impertinence or nosiness. Dissent and criticism of royal policy could be thus dressed as loyalty and care, “The reason why all good Protestants and loyal subjects so feared this match, proceeded from their love to God, his truth, the King and the Prince.” They argued that the truest Protestant citizens would naturally be the most incensed at the menace of popish tyranny. Thomas Alured points out the additional fact that, besides the interest they have out of love for their sovereign, subjects have a serious stake in royal policy, including the Spanish match, as it may directly affect the common welfare, and perhaps their own souls. He spells it out,

...every good Subject as well as every great subject hath an interest in the marriage and welfare of the Kings Sonne here on Earth, which occasions so many to wish, that it may bring to him glory...which is much doubted cannot be from Spaine, since the motion of this match makes a general feare that it can neither be safe for the Kings person, nor good for this Church and Common-wealth, because that thereby may be an in-let to the Romish Locusts, who like a Canker-worme may in an instant smite our Gourd, under whose shadow we sit safe.

In this passage, whether he intended to or not, Alured is implying that politics is actually the business of ordinary subjects, as well as those directly employed in governing. Reynolds expressed a similar sentiment, seeing it as only appropriate to publish and print his message, which he resolved “to make publique, because it solely tended to England’s publique glory and prosperitie.”

249 A.D.B., The Court of the most Illustrious and most Magnificent James, sig. B2v.
250 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A3r, B1v.
251 Simonds D’Ewes, 182-183.
252 Alured, Coppie of a Letter, 2.
253 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A3v.
Many learned Englishmen took it for granted that they should have some business in serving the general commonweal and that they should need to be well-informed and politically aware in order to do so. As described by Richard Cust, this sensibility owes much to the legacy of classical republicanism, blended with the Protestant ideal of the ‘godly magistrate’ as gleaned from Calvinist readings of scripture. The result was an ideology in which civic humanism and religious virtue were one and the same, so that promoting secular order was a godly pursuit, and true religion could be strengthened through service to the state.  

Given this honorable imperative to serve one’s respublica, living too privately, even for a ‘private man’, could amount to ignoring one’s responsibilities to the commonwealth. One author instructed “every Courtier, and honest man whatsoever...that to deny to dedicate, and devote his best services to God, his King, and Countrey, is nothing else in deed, than as if he should willfully expose himselfe to exile and banishment.” So, not only should England’s loyal subjects speak in times of crisis, they should do their best to engage in forms of public service. On the religious front, sometimes subjects might have to strive actively simply to avoid being turned against God and the state. Taylor instructs his listeners to trust in God to save them from Romish snares, as “God hath waies enow to deliver his Church, even when things seeme very desperate.” However, to “live by faith at all times, especiall in dangers” is not at all a policy of inaction. Remaining one of the faithful takes considerable dedication, especially in the face of Catholic wiles. Individuals in the godly community must “Labour to be a member of the Church...keepe the way of uprightnesse. For in this way God hath promised helpe and protection, and thou maist expect it.” The necessary effort resembles preparations for a spiritual battle, “Arme thy selfe, and addresse thee to beare brunts and blowes as a sooldier.” Likewise, it is the “Luke warme Protestants” that allow popery’s ingress into England. Because the threat of popery was so enmeshed with high political issues, the spiritual battle as almost as political as it was religious.

This active form of spiritual diligence was considered to set godly subjects apart from a supposedly slothful yet indulgent Catholic faith. For Protestant writers, disparaging Catholics typically includes some reference to their unthinking obstinacy and superstition—their “Ignorance and wilfulnesse...blinde zeale and pore implicit faith”—with which they are linked with Rome and the Pope. Of course, Protestants were ideally supposed to be unwaveringly faithful

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255 A.D.B., The Court of the most Illustrious and most Magnificent James, sig. D2r.
256 Taylor, Mappe of Rome, 59
257 Ibid, 70.
258 Gee, Foot out of the Snare, sig. B3v.
259 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. C1r.
too, but nevertheless anti-Catholic sources imply that godly Protestants are uniquely driven by reason, light, and “Truth.”²⁶⁰ In this view, “sound Protestants” have the mental acuity to recognize true godliness from devilish dissimulation, whereas Catholics refuse to see the light. The ability to be discerning and critical, as well as having a personal dedication to Truth, becomes a part of what makes godly countrymen so exceptional and virtuous. This clearly takes issue with the ideal of virtuous countrymen that their current King was prescribing. As he so adeptly made radical assertions in the guise of conservative values, Thomas Scott bridged the connection between religious and political judiciousness, “I dare charge [God] with his own promise and bring his own written word a witness against himselfe on my behalfe...If I dare doe this to God shall I feare to do thus to my Soveraigne?”²⁶¹ While his Sovereign would have answered with an unequivocal ‘Yes’, the idea of an intellectually and publicly active citizenry found plenty of support amongst his subjects.

Here, Protestant writers raised up the idea of a “Jealous, Vigilant, and attentive” citizen standing watch for anything that “might any way appertaine to my Soveraigne and his Princely posteritie, to his Dominions and Subjects.”²⁶² In fact, the interests of simple countrymen, as well as of their representatives in Parliament, could easily have been painted as more public than the publicly-employed men in government, who were supposedly only interested in their own private gains anyway.²⁶³ It was to the detriment of the entire country when such publicly-interested subjects were silenced. For example, one libel poem relates how King James sought out those “who could not their true zeale to England smother” in order to censure them after the souring of Parliamentary proceedings in 1621, and “thus all things turne unto the Countries losse.”²⁶⁴ Some advanced very practical reasons for why voices from the multitude should be heard. For one, the common sort might be more likely to understand common problems, “as Famine is felt first by the Poore, and as Frost strikes the Valley when higher grounds scape free, so even the Commons are they where the disorders of a State and the mischief's approaching are first felt and soonest discerned.”²⁶⁵ Common subjects may have to voice their grievances publicly in order to bring them to the attention of representatives in Parliament. For example, in regard to enforcing recusancy laws, Richard Grosvenor urged common subjects to make their voices heard, “Command your knights that if there bee occasion offered they shall in the

²⁶⁰ In Foot out of the Snare, Gee endlessly describes Catholic ‘superstition,’ as opposed to Protestant ‘Light’ and ‘Reason’; Cust, “The ‘public man’”.
²⁶¹ Scott, Vox Regis, ‘to the Reader’.
²⁶² Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A4r.
²⁶⁵ Scott, Vox Regis, 18.
name of the countrey, and...by speciall commaund of the countrey, make publique protestation against a tolleracion.”

Others suggested some more passionate reasons for why some private subjects should have a public presence. As was typical in political pamphlets, Reynolds references the closeness of heavenly and kingly powers, “the eternall and everlasting Jehova...will give Lawes to all the Kings and Princes of the earth, as they doe to their subjects by their subordinate and yet transcendent power.” However, he also presents himself as evidence that kings are not alone in receiving divine inspiration about public or religious matters. Even if his tone is facetious, the underlying concept is bona fide: according to him, just “as Prometheus fetch’d fire from heaven,” his pamphlet (aptly titled Vox Coeli) was “fetch’d from thense” in the same way, by the “fire of my zeale to the good of my Prince and Country.”

Additionally, Kings are not the only ones with a God-given conscience, nor are they the only ones fettered by laws. “Kings though they bee in some sort above the Law, because they are dispensers of it, are not yet without a Lawe, because they must rule themselves and others by it.” Of course, the law that a king should live by is God’s—“Gods Lawe is Caesars verge, which Caesar must neither transgresse, nor suffer to bee transgrest.” If a kingly act or ordinance should conflict with God’s law, subjects’ primary loyalty lies with God and one’s conscience. Scott clarifies: when kingly demands appear to contradict higher law, “if thou canst manifest this by the word of God, then thy Conscience tels thee right; and thou art not to doe what is commanded by man,” for “it is there better to obay God than man,” even if that man is the divinely ordained sovereign. Scott does not offer any suggestion on who should enforce a king’s adherence to law, and certainly does not suggest that sovereigns should be held punitively accountable for missteps. However, he does provide an excuse for dissent, or even a certain kind of civil disobedience, that is not at all anomalous considering prevailing Protestant notions about duty to God and conscience.

This idea has obvious implications for the legitimacy of public speech as well, which became a vehicle for the expression of private men’s consciences. Once again, when private men are noble and their consciences true, their public expressions become heroic as well, even if they are in opposition to magisterial authorities:

“the more [Gondomar] strives to suppresse the truth, the more it will flourish and prevaile; For (for the good of England) if one penne, or tongue bee commaund to silence, they will occasion and set tenne at libertie to write and speake; as

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267 Reynolds, Vox Coeli, sig. A3v, B3r.

268 Scott, High-ways of God and the King, 70.

269 Ibid, 70-71.

Grasse or Cammomell, which the more it is depressed, the thicker it will spread and grow.\textsuperscript{271}

Comparing himself and his fellows to weeds might not seem like the most flattering choice, yet there is an obvious sense of pride in this statement, pride in performing a public service and in being an honest countryman defying the forces of tyranny. Reynolds (typically) identifies Gondomar as the source of persecution against loyal and vocal subjects, so at least notionally he isn’t speaking against his King directly. But his King certainly didn’t see it that way, and as much as people like Scott and Reynolds would deny it, James I had a point in feeling criticized. Reynolds is implying that the King’s conscience may be hijacked by plotters such as Gondomar, and to that extent Reynolds believes in a special role that private subjects have in policing the Crown when it is led astray—for love of their Country as well as the King.

In political sources from the late Jacobean era, there is a sense of wanting to bring public matters back into the public. This involves a renegotiation of what the terms ‘private’ and ‘public’ really describe. The two words formerly served as vocational descriptions (referring to those who were employed in public office, including political or magisterial positions, versus those who were not), but gradually acquired additional and more complex meanings during this period. Scott alludes to this complexity, explaining how the “Spirit of privacie...may be in a publique Person, when for his owne or peoples sinne he hath lost the publike spirit wherewith God imbues Princes.”\textsuperscript{272} Likewise, private persons should have some public spirit too. Scott prays at the end of the sermon that his congregation shall not “wander in our private wayes from the publique rule of thy word, and the true end of our callings in Church or Commonwealth.”\textsuperscript{273} Public actions are those in the service of the commonweal, which should be the primary consideration of monarchs and those in government, but which private persons may take up as well. Private actions, on the other hand, are those that serve only private interests. When princes act privately, they transgress the bounds of law into the realm of tyranny, no longer in service of but opposed to the commonweal. “When as publique persons should do publique actions in publique in the Gates of the City, in the King’s high-way, in the eye of all. For chamber workes are suspicious and carry a shew of privacy and parciality.”\textsuperscript{274} The distinction between private and public citizens is much blurrier than it had been.

CONCLUSION

...	extit{O God, which madest the glorious sunn}

What hath poore England against Religion done?

\textsuperscript{271} Reynolds, \textit{Vox Coeli}, sig. H1r.
\textsuperscript{272} Scott, \textit{High-wayes of God and the King}, 68-9.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid, 85.
\textsuperscript{274} Ibid, 69-70.
Indeed, ‘Contraries’ abound in this ideological landscape, and the controversy over the Spanish match highlighted them further. For one, the crisis caused a surge in popular discourse, which was increasingly common and influential yet still generally considered illegitimate and dangerous. Also, it reinforced the belief that private interests preoccupied the minds of ‘public men’—councilors and courtiers—and further encouraged private countrymen to extol forms of public service. And all the while, English subjects continued to profess their unfailing loyalty to their sovereign, yet vocally objected to his current policies.

Perhaps the most significant ‘contrarie’ development was the prying open of a gulf between English subjects and the Crown. In this period, traditional ideals of harmony and unity prevailed, diversity was not valued but instead bemoaned, and the presence of a government opposition was taken as a sign of failure. Jacobean
to strive for a perfect uniformity of opinion, but they did so more and more by engaging with an expanding public sphere that was fundamentally conversational, and inevitably encouraged contention. Perhaps this is due to the fact that English society at that point was not yet fully accustomed to popular media, or at least not experienced enough to expect a certain level of diversity, contention, or polarization as the inevitable result of open discourse. In any case, the effect of this contradiction and controversy, in conjunction with the others aforementioned, is that it forced homogeneity-loving Jacobeansto take sides—that of the Country or of the Crown—with each side trying to reproduce homogeneity in their own image.

In Francis Bacon’s treatise on religious controversy, he shows how, when avenues for criticism are so numerous and established, monarchs’ options for controlling controversy were very slim indeed. King James was in a corner, in this respect. Persecuting opposing parties with repressive force could often backfire—“punitis ingenii gliscit auctoritas,”—while answering a polemic in kind only stokes controversy further. This sentiment was echoed by more popular voices as well, such as those of Scott and Reynolds—the aforementioned ‘Graffe’ and ‘Cammomell’ that flourish and prevails. The machine for creating popular opinion had become more powerful than establishment propaganda, or had at least surpassed the establishment’s ability to control it. In this particular contestation, as it played out in the public arena, the Country seemed to have the edge.

Great King beware least thou thy selfe confound

276 The Latin translates: “In punished works, fame increases,” or more colloquially, by repressing a work, one increases its reputation. The Works of Francis Bacon, 487-488.
In thy ambitious thoughts; strive to be good
Not greater then thou art, tis durt and mudd
Make up a vitious Prince, when verteous Kings
Are Gods on earth holly & glorious things

Conclusion

In 1623, the Spanish match policy abruptly turned around. After ‘Tom’ and ‘Jack’ returned from their bizarre journey to Madrid, they vehemently took up the patriot line and led England to its longed-for war. It wouldn’t be long before relations would once again sour between the King, his favorite, and the public. But, at least for that brief interim, it appeared that harmony between Court and Country was restored. There even appeared to be a kind of mutuality between the court and country in politicized media in the public sphere, as suddenly anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish appeals had free reign.

Certainly the best example of the Spanish Match on the stage is Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*, which was a raunchy and sensationaly popular production when it debuted in 1624. It depicts a literal game at chess, in which the playing-pieces are obvious representations of actual and well-known court figures, most notably the demonized Spanish Ambassador Gondomar. In an age when particularly successful performances ran for only a couple performances, *A Game at Chess* ran for 9 days strait.²⁷⁸ Even more extraordinary is that such an unambiguously political work somehow earned licensing from the Stationer’s Office to make it to the stage at all, and then survived repeated complaints from Spanish representatives. Therefore, it is broadly supposed, by historians as by contemporaries, that it received endorsements from higher-ups—“I meane the Prince and the Duke if not from the King, for they were all loth to have it forbidden, and by report laught hartely at it.”²⁷⁹

While this example proves that functional harmony was indeed possible after the developments of the Spanish match period, examples such as *A Game at


Chess should not serve to exaggerate the regime’s power in the public sphere. Middleton’s notorious play debuted at a time when the message of government propaganda was very likely to have synced with public opinion anyway—when Prince Charles and Buckingham adopted the anti-Spanish platform for which a larger public had long since been campaigning. In this brief period, it was the regime that had conformed to public opinion, as opposed to the regime’s enforcement of conformity. Despite the ingenuity with which Buckingham often approached popular politics and public appeals, when his military campaigns turned sour, the public railed once again.\textsuperscript{280}

By the 1620s, the existence of a critical and influential public sphere caused cultural, practical, and ideological problems for the conservative government, being ill-adapted to a society undergoing particular social and cultural change. The relationship between the public and the establishment was in flux, and each sought ways to negotiate between them, such as between the royal prerogative and rights to speech in Parliament, or the usefulness or dangerousness of libels. Clearly, that relationship continued to pose something of a challenge. Revisionist historians were right to point out that James’ Parliaments did not congratulate themselves for stymieing royal policies, nor did they celebrate constitutional conflict as a righteous step towards democracy. The ‘public men’ of the early 1620s, and surely the private ones as well, did not experience the same revolutionary anticipations that parliamentary historians have so often applied in hindsight.\textsuperscript{281} What they saw, rather, was their familiar form of government malfunctioning; the pieces of the governing mechanism were misaligned. After all, this was partially what made the issue so alarming for many Englishmen. Now, which piece of that mechanism was considered out of order was a matter of perspective. For the James I and certainly many other establishment supporters, the culprits were the vulgar masses and the ‘public men’ who inappropriately genuflected to them, given over to seditious puritanical influences or simple indecency. But when controversy amplified and polarized political discourse as in the years from 1619 to 1623, another opinion emerges more powerfully that lays blame on the Court, and sometimes on the King himself.

As sources discussed in previous chapters show, there were protocols for ascribing certain kinds of guilt to divinely-ordained monarchs for mistakes or failures. “A popular political culture that had at its core a series of expectations about the responsibilities of the good king (or good lord) carried with it the possibility of a rejection of respect for that authority.”\textsuperscript{282} When there is opportunity for wide proportions of a population to engage with political discourse, there will inevitably be some level of disagreement concerning the Crown’s fulfillment of its responsibilities to the commonwealth. This does not

\textsuperscript{280} Cogswell, “Buckingham does the Globe,” 276-278.
\textsuperscript{281} Russell, Parliaments and English Politics, 4-5.
\textsuperscript{282} Walter, Understanding Popular Violence, 5.
indicate an objection to monarchy, and indeed there is no evidence of any real anti-monarchical vibrations in the 1620s. It does, however, give the legitimacy of individual monarchs a qualifier—that they be just rulers, and they must serve their subjects—and opens up the possibility that a king’s service may be judged a failure. This critically contradicts the accepted divine justifications for monarchical authority, especially from the perspective of James and his unfortunate successor. Officially, subjects should never scrutinize their monarch. But when they can, they will anyway, and very likely feel justified in doing so.

As the policy turnaround in 1623 shows, if the populace at large supported Crown policy, then the conservative model could maintain. If, however, the populace declares the king’s policy inadequate, misguided, or tyrannical, then his rule could be seen as illegitimate, having failed in his responsibilities. Still, by disagreeing with James’ policies towards Spain, no one took the step to claim that his rule was illegitimate. They did, however, continually petition him to modify his policy decisions; in other words, to enact policy that Parliament and his people supported. At that time, everyone desired a return to an imagined conservative order, in which the monarch’s activities and the subjects’ interests were in harmony and public politics would become obsolete. However, king and subject hoped for different harmonies. James demanded that his subjects agree with his decisions unconditionally, while vocal subjects unrelentingly attempted to bring the Crown to agree with their positions. Herein lies the fatal contradiction: either people and Parliament relent to absolute rule, or king compromises some measure of his sovereignty. This was the core issue at stake in the uproar over the Spanish Match Crisis, as it was at the outbreak of the Civil War. This theoretical conflict existed long before this period, periodically manifesting itself in such times of crisis. In the 1640s, it demanded resolution.
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