Early Theatre
A Journal Associated with the Records of Early English Drama

Bringing 'Such Matters Upon the Stage': Women Exemplars in A Warning for Fair Women (1599) and Golding's A Briefe Discourse (1573)

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Volume 27, Number 1, 2024

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1112488ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.12745/et.27.1.5514

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

McMaster University Library Press / Becker Associates

ISSN

1206-9078 (print)
2293-7609 (digital)

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Cite this article

Christensen, A. (2024). Bringing 'Such Matters Upon the Stage': Women Exemplars in A Warning for Fair Women (1599) and Golding's A Briefe Discourse (1573). *Early Theatre*, *27*(1), 9–33. https://doi.org/10.12745/et.27.1.5514

Article abstract

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27.1 (2024), 9–34
https://doi.org/10.12745/et.27.1.5514

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Bringing 'Such Matters Upon the Stage': Women Exemplars in *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) and Golding's *A Briefe Discourse* (1573)

This essay argues that the unnamed playwright of the 1599 tragedy A Warning for Fair Women *adapts Arthur Golding's 1573 (rpt 1577) pamphlet to reshape the heroine from a negative example of adultery and the beneficiary of church-induced repentance into a positive model of motherhood and spiritual agency aided by another woman. Missing from Golding's account, the play's main source and the fount of subsequent reportage on the murder of George Sanders, is attention to women's spiritual agency and their friendship. I compare the play and source text to argue that the playwright's emendations of Golding's material omit or minimize certain elements, including the moralizing tone, to advance a more positive view of women than critics have recognized.*

Andrew Gurr has observed that *A Warning for Fair Women*'s Induction promotes the play as unique, new, and better than extant Lord Chamberlain's Men's company offerings, 'muscling aside Shakespeare's history plays … and the old revenge tradition … replacing them with the novelty of a true story set in the audience's own London'. However, Gurr then slights *A Warning* for 'banal narrative and moralistic sentiments'.[1] I will return to such pronouncements, but for now I note that the contemporary novelty and appeal of *A Warning* and the modern scholarship on this domestic tragedy notwithstanding, it had not been staged (since its original performance) nor was it readily available to readers (after Charles Dale Cannon's 1975 scholarly edition went out of print) until Resurgens Theatre mounted the world revival at the Shakespeare Tavern in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2018.[2] In anthologies of non-Shakespearean drama, *Arden of Faversham*, that other unattributed Elizabethan domestic tragedy, corners the market on the genre and, as a result, *A Warning* until recently could be accessed only via *Early English Books Online* (*EEBO*) or Cannon's out of print scholarly edition.

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A Warning and *Arden* share plots involving masters and servants and conspiring, adulterous wives whose merchant husbands are often absent, as I have argued in *Separation Scenes*.[3] Both plays concern real life husband murders and contemporary local English settings: *A Warning* calls itself a 'true and home-borne Tragedy' (Epilogue 17).[4] (London is a minor but significant setting in *Arden* and the main setting of *A Warning*.) Like *Arden*, *A Warning* heightens both suspense and dark comedy with failed murder attempts, here ending with murderer Browne's unintentionally funny monologues about his 'unfortunate' sword: 'This metal was not made to kill a man' (7.145–6) and threatening to stab himself alongside personified 'Night' (5.80). Both plays span, at different scales, the discovery of crimes and the meting out of justice. Some scholars propose that *A Warning*'s composition may actually predate *Arden*, though Martin Wiggins has firmly established that *A Warning* came later, dating it internally from soon after Lent 1597.[5] *A Warning*, as noted, went dark after its original sixteenth-century London staging, while *Arden* is often produced and enjoys multiple modern editions and even Spark Notes-type study guides (a dubious honour perhaps).[6] When a play is in print, as we know, it is also more likely to be taught, studied, and staged; so, *Arden* has been mounted no less than five times in a four-year span in the United Kingdom and the United States, including a Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) production in 2014 and a Red Bull (New York) show in March 2023.

Because *A Warning* is based on 'true' events, the reportage surrounding the 1573 case via pamphlet, ballad, and chronicle history informs most studies of the play.[7] Critics often find *A Warning* wanting, either for too 'slavishly' following its main source, Arthur Golding's *A Briefe Discourse of the Late Murther of Master George Sanders* (1573), or, conversely, for *not* following certain details closely enough.[8] Yet I know of no study that compares the pamphlet and the play, as I do now, to credit *A Warning*'s playwright with plumbing Golding's tract for characters as well as thematic and dramaturgical resources in order to advance a very different mission, one that makes the heroine a positive exemplar.

Golding uses Anne's case to drive home the moral of his sermon-like conclusion, directly addressing 'all folks both married and unmarried' to maintain 'their vessel' in a state of 'honesty and cleanness', lest it become 'the sink of sin & the cage of uncleanness'.[9] Ending on a proverbial note that also echoes 'An Homilie against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion', Golding reminds readers that 'the steps of a harlot lead down unto death, and her feet pierce even unto hell'.[10] Clearly that harlot is Anne Sanders. By contrast, *A Warning*'s Anne is an exemplar of motherhood and repentance in part through another woman's spiritual aid. The playwright, possibly Thomas Dekker,[11] deploys some of Golding's

material while omitting or minimizing other aspects, including the translator's moralizing tone, to reinforce a positive representation of Anne Sanders as both a mother and an agent in her own salvation.[12] Other emendations centralize women's friendship, a relationship strikingly absent elsewhere in the genre. For example, Alice Arden has no women friends (her servant, Susan, is more like a pawn than a pal); friendless Anne Frankford in Heywood's *A Women Killed with Kindness* engineers her own redemption scene surrounded by spouse and loyal servants, not a female confidant.[13] Additionally, while older female neighbour figures betray young wives in domestic plays such as Middleton's *Women Beware Women* and Heywood's *Edward IV* (in the Jane Shore plot), in this way echoing the Drury persona of *A Warning*, these other widow figures (Middleton's Livia and Heywood's Mistress Blague) remain reprobate and even vengeful against their friends-turned-victims, unlike Drury who instead aids Anne as spiritual exemplar. As if to demonstrate historian Bernard Capp's argument that women's alliances were both vital to household stability and suspected of disrupting it, the very woman who misleads Anne from her perfectly good husband to a potentially 'better' one also affects the heroine's ultimate prison-house conversion in *A Warning* (see 4.151).[14] This change elbows out the male clerical figures so central to Golding's prose account, as I illustrate below. Mistresses Drury and Sanders both admit their guilt and accept their punishments, their confessions apparent signs of their salvation. Such revisions show a playwright in Shakespeare's Elizabethan company using sources to make room for women exemplars even despite anxiety about 'unsupervised female sociability'.[15]

This is not to argue that the demure Anne Sanders possesses a stage force on par with a Lady Macbeth, a Clytemnestra, or even an Alice Arden — whom one critic calls Clytemnestra's 'bourgeois' counterpart.[16] Modern critical charges of Anne Sanders's passivity are valid: she acquiesces to both neighbour and lover; shows no initiative and little passion for the latter, only instant regret after the crime; and, despite momentary defiance in court, she confesses and accepts her fate. Nonetheless the playwright assigns a form of women's power different from the eviscerating rage of the Scottish queen and the Machiavellian manipulation of the Kentish wife — the power of spiritual exemplarity. Less interesting to modern readers compared to, say, the Duchess of Malfi, who brazenly defies mores to choose her own husband, Anne never (dis)claims 'to create / Any new world or custom'.[17] Instead, she is a dutiful middling-sort wife, 'very circumspect, / respective of her honest name', reluctant to err, except that Drury leads her to believe it is God's plan (1.171–24; 4.160–2).[18] This playwright, I argue, appropriates the story not for the wife's flouting of tradition, but for her seeking spiritual

succour from another woman, reclaiming her own motherhood, and modelling a path to redemption for the on-stage audiences she summons. Sanders's murder was a scandalous case involving the adulterous wife of a prominent merchant, yet the play devotes more stage time to the aftermath of this scandal, especially Anne's imprisonment and reformation, than to either adultery or murder.

'Give entertainment unto Tragedy'[19]

Before demonstrating the main thrust of the dramatist's revisions — the heroine's exemplarity and the emphasis on women's spiritual friendship — I briefly review other evidence of his skilled culling of pamphlet matter for entertaining scenarios and thematic parallels that elaborate relationships either absent from or marginal to Golding's account. For example, whereas in Golding the conspirators correspond only by letters, *A Warning* presents scene upon scene of Browne, Drury, and/or Roger plotting, counterplotting, and covering up their crime (1, 8, 10, 11). We get other back stories, for instance, involving Browne and his victims in defiance of Golding's insistence that George Sanders 'indeed knew not … [his murderer] — whatsoever report hath been made of old acquaintance betwixt them'.[20] Browne shares an off-stage meal with the Sanders household and a postprandial chat with George; later Browne recognizes John Beane as the 'stripling' and 'base drudge' who had foiled his second murder attempt (8.21, 75). The fact of the community meal both extends the play's theme of extra-domestic conviviality that I explore elsewhere and occasions Sanders's desperate moment of recognition at his death: 'You are a gentleman: / Soil not your hands with blood of innocents' (8.77–8).[21]

Golding's 'minor' characters steal the show on stage. Primarily, the Drury/Roger partnership dominates stage time, especially early on, and reflects possibilities inherent in mistress/servant relations on the early modern stage. Is their power dynamic one of (un)equal partners like *The Alchemist*'s 'venture tripartite' or like the housewife Adriana with Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*?[22] The pair evokes the good cop/bad cop vibe with Captain Browne, from whom they each seek and obtain gifts, against whom they work different angles, and to whom they promote the other.[23] In a story whose crime concerns the betrayal of marital intimacy, Drury significantly locates her man as her 'heart's interpreter', and he accepts his role in her bawdy 'trade': 'Drive you the bargain; I will keep the door' (3.27, 37). In addition, they pull off some funny moments as when willfully mistaking Browne's 'inward grief' for stomach gas (1.92, 100, 111–180) and with

stage business whereby Roger is sent away only to be immediately recalled in a sham effort to preserve Browne's privacy (1.80–91; 3.60–71).

A Warning's other master/servant pairs constituted from the pamphlet are rife with humour and innuendo, pathos and comedy. Neighbouring merchant Barnes and his man Beane, for instance, suggest a functional sadomasochism with Barnes barking out orders to Beane, who is stabbed alongside Sanders (scenes 6, 8). George Sanders's man is his master's alter ego, who empathizes and competes with his mistress in scene 4, speaking on his master's behalf at some personal risk. While in Golding, a random 'old man and his maiden' find the dying Beane as they are searching for their 'kine', the playwright names and fleshes out Old John and Joan, assigning them two vital scenes (6 and 8) that include their lugging a wounded body across the stage (8.182–91).[24] They are the rustic counterparts to the equally charming London carpenters, Tom Peart and Will Crowe, who discuss grabbing a beer together. In both cases, *A Warning* limns relationships to advance the plot — the London pair reporting on the Smithfield execution crowd that spooks Anne, and the country folk advancing the play's themes of superstition, dreams, and moral values — all from the pamphlet's one-liners about 'certain men' who 'speak loud of the gallows' and two passers-by who discover wounded Beane.[25] Finally, from Golding's account we learn that Browne is captured in 'a man's house of his own name at Rochester'.[26] On stage, however, this 'man' becomes a butcher whose trade comments on the Irish Browne's slaughtering skills; furthermore, the shop — already established as a busy place during Easter time (6.26–30) — provides a communal/choral dimension to the butcher's judgment. As the captain is carried off, butcher Browne laments, 'I am sorry / It was your fortune to have no more grace' (14.62–3). In shaping characters through their professions — as cattle drivers, the queen's household staff [scene 14], gallows builders, butchers, tradesmen [2], mayors [16, 17], and a waterman [7]) — and their settings (country, court, city, province, the Thames), *A Warning* testifies to the author's purposeful reworking of source information, neither in slavish imitation nor missed opportunities.

Nothing to See Here, Folks

Having demonstrated the playwright developing stage-worthy details from Golding's outline of events and inventing original plot dimensions and characters, I now explore how such development supports the female-friendly dimensions of his version. One way to characterize the changes from Golding is that they refuse to pander to prurience for Anne's sex life. The playwright therefore establishes

her reputation as honest and content in the early scenes, relegating the adultery to dumb show in the middle, and minimizing elements that hint at her lower bodily stratum, such as her pregnancy and presumed prison-house flirtation in the later scenes. He replaces these plot turns with scenes that foreground her motherhood and friendship with her neighbour Anne Drury.

First, Anne Sanders enjoys a reputation for courtesy, reliability, and honesty (1.108–9, 13–1, 156); even her would-be seducer correctly expects to be 'checked with scornful nay' by such a 'demure' and 'modest' wife (2.28). Before Browne presses on, he ponders, 'So chaste her eyes, so virtuous her aspect, / As do repulse love's false artillery' (25–7). Tragedy herself, who has nothing good to say about anyone, calls up Anne's 'unspotted Innocence' in the 'bloody banquet' dumb-show (1.47) and further signals Anne's relative innocence compared to the other 'devils at this damned feast' (74). Moreover, Anne expresses no lust or passion for Browne but handily dismisses his advances in scene 2; when he accosts her on her stoop, she assures him that she 'give[s] small regard / Who comes or goes', expects her husband's return momently, and finds his (Browne's] malingering bothersome: 'trouble me no more' (2.34–5, 67). Notably, even after they consummate their relationship (only in dumbshow), she and Browne appear on-stage together only at their relationship's dissolution when she adamantly again rejects him, this time as 'the author of my whole lament' (11.68). They also wordlessly pass each other in the courtroom as she is arraigned, and he goes to his death protesting her innocence (17.104 sd).

Though critics yawn over the heroine's ho-hum conduct with the captain, whom, I note, the rest of the London population finds attractive (see 1.180, 195; 3.31; 9.41), few critics comment on her animated aftermath. Two highly dramatic, even volatile scenes (10 and 11) display the passion lacking in Anne's investment in or commission of adultery, documenting the force of her immediate regret with expressions of horror, shame, attempted self-harm, and clear disdain for Browne in her vow to

> … hide in some closet of my house,
> And there weep out my eyes or pine to death,
> That have untimely stopped my husband's breath (10.38–40)

The dramatist supplies lines of extreme emotion not for Anne's seduction or fall, but for her repentance; so, once mousy Anne now commands the on- and off-stage audience alike as she vociferously recoils from 'that ensign of despair' (4), the handkerchief poked and bloodied after her husband's stabbing:

> … hide it, burn it, bury in in the earth!
> It is a calendar of bloody letters,
> Containing his, and yours and all our shames. (5–7)

Her powerful speech proclaims her own 'treachery', 'conspiracy', and 'inconstancy' — a performance Drury finds 'outrageous' and audible to 'neighbors' and 'exclamations' that Roger fears 'will bewray us all' (18, 20–1, 24; 7, 15). 'This passion' and 'excessive grief', in Drury's words, cause her co-conspirators to put her on suicide watch (10.44, 47; 11.61). In Anne's chance encounter with Browne in the next scene, mythical and biblical imagery further heightens her rhetoric — from basilisks and drowning in the sea to 'Cimmerian darkness' and stones that will 'cry out for vengeance' as in the gospel of Luke (11.63, 65, 87, 90–2).[27]

I draw two conclusions from this postlapsarian characterization. First, Anne's is not the reaction of a person distant from the 'principles of the Christian religion' as Golding's Mistress Sanders is.[28] Indeed, stage Anne expresses remorse both between the murder and the courtroom drama and again before her execution. Second, her 'outrageous' anguish (10.7) (no longer unremarkable wife or acquiescent adulterer) demands a compelling performance. In the second half of the play, Anne evolves further from threatening sins of self-harm (histrionically calling for 'knife, a sword, or anything' [10.10]) to equally sinful attempts at self-defense in court and prison, to acceptance and confession en route to the scaffold. In all, the playwright balances moral exemplarity with theatrical efficacy, goals that do not always coincide. For example, while suicidal threats and self-righteousness make for bad morality but good theatre, her final acts of maternal moral instruction and a penitent farewell to her children and the world are both spiritually and theatrically sound.

While the play proper transpires 'without a single spoken confirmation of Anne's consent to her husband's murder' and while Anne shows no adamancy toward Browne, invented dumb shows and other allegorical action place her in a moral landscape that would resonate with original audiences.[29] Here, it is important to distinguish our own expectations 'keyed solely to assumptions about realism and verisimilitude' from 'alternative ways in which ideas and emotions may have been conveyed to the original playgoers', as Alan Dessen has pointed out regarding allegorical action.[30] Specifically, in the second (of three) dumb shows, Anne arrives to meet Browne as a tree grows up between them; Lust signals to each of them, in turn, to cut it down, which Anne refuses, while Browne grabs the axe. Chastity demonstrates that the tree stands in for George Sanders (Dumb Show 2.44–6). Anne rejects a disheveled Chastity, runs to Browne, and the two

'embrace' (42, 43; 25 sd). This episode signifies 'an act … to be done', as Tragedy glosses the silent performance (2.49). *A Warning* thus acts out, symbolically, Anne's sexual relationship with Browne, but never dramatizes it. Likely in part for decorum's sake, this omission nonetheless redirects audience focus away from Anne's sexual behaviour. At the same time, her pantomime rejection of both Chastity and the axe shows Anne's moral complexity.

Further, this circumscribed pre-enactment of the adultery arguably locates Anne uniquely in a morality play. I say uniquely because all other dumb show personae's actions are also staged within the span of the play proper; ie, the conspiracy among murderers and the murder itself in Dumb Show 1. Meanwhile, the courtroom drama (Dumb Show 3) is performed by circumscribed allegorical figures such as Justice, Chastity, and so on. In contrast to all other adulterous domestic tragedy wives, who are either discovered in bed (like Anne Frankford), or openly play the wooer and the killer (like Alice Arden), or who willingly commit extramarital sex (Beatrice Joanna, Bianca), Anne Sanders alone occupies the space of morality dumb show heroine.[31]

Further sidelining Anne's sexual behaviour from the main plot, the playwright makes no mention of her pregnancy, the visible marks of which Golding and successive prose retellings acknowledge, if only parenthetically: '(for at the time of her husband's death she looked presently to lie down)'.[32] Dialogue about her pregnancy might inform the legal proceedings, as well as the scenes in prison, when she confesses and goes to execution (scene 21), but no such verbiage occurs. In Golding, her impending 'lying in' explains the timing of Anne Sanders's arraignment that occurred only after she was 'delivered of a child & churched'.[33] In the play, only Anne Sanders herself refers to the birth, and then only as an alibi to refute Roger's claim that he delivered the damning letter and bloody handkerchief from Browne to her house: 'I kept my childbed chamber at that time, / Where 'twas not meet that he or any man / Should have access' (17.182–4). In Golding's handkerchiefless account, the childbirth is factual and the pregnancy the outward flag of Anne's sexual and implicitly extramarital activity (though the child's paternity is never at issue); her condition is evident, part of the interrogatory spectacle, and it delays her and Drury's executions by about a month after Browne's.[34] In contrast, as Cannon notes, 'From the play it is not possible to learn that she had a child, presumably by Browne'.[35] For Ariane Balizet, *A Warning*'s Anne's 'pleas for mercy on the basis of pregnancy are depicted as bald and shameless lies'.[36] Yet, we can see Anne using the familiar practice of women-only birthing rooms as an alibi as part of the dramatist's overall project: by assigning to Anne the reference

to this space and time, the playwright connects Anne less to sex than to her own history of motherhood.[37]

Indeed, the dramatist replaces Anne's tummy bump with an even more shocking (and, like the bloody and stabbed handkerchief, original) tell-tale spectacle — a white rose she wears in her bosom that changes to red (or black) during court proceedings (17.213–16). In effect, the play's *invented* piece of stage business is another allegory.[38] After the court learns that Anne knew of the letter and handkerchief and sold her plate to help Browne flee (17.156–81), she denies each accusation and is chastised by the Lord for her commission of both perjury and conspiracy, along with alleged adultery: ''*Tis thought*, beside conspiring of his death, / You wronged your husband with unchaste behavior' (188, italics added). This Lord later cites her 'wickedness', in counseling her to confess, but in none of the 'lewdness-of-body' language that preoccupied Golding. Defiant, the stage Anne warns the lords that they 'cast away an innocent' if they charge her, yet her corsage betrays her,[39] its 'color is now of another hue' (211, 215–16).[40] Without skipping a beat, Anne avers that her soul remains pure. In this, the dramatist's goal of a strong performance overtakes his goal for strong moral exemplarity, but the two will align by the end.

Much drama transpires in a short time as Anne's revealing rose takes centre stage and she becomes as animated in court as she had been in the immediate aftermath of the murder (and far more than in her preceding scenes). Not pleading the belly streamlines the already overlong legal proceedings, while the rose is shorthand for a mystical form of revelation and justice that comports with the play's overall investment in supernaturalism and use of shocking spectacle. For example, Mistress Drury reads fortunes (4.115–96), Joan finds superstitious meaning in everyday occurrences, she and Beane each report foreboding dreams (8.138–46; 6.63–84), and Beane's wounds bleed afresh in the presence of his murderer (15.85–93), another remarkable spectacle undreamt of in Golding's pamphlet.

The same rationale for streamlining plot and downplaying Anne's sexuality accounts for the almost total disappearance of the perjuring minister of Newgate, Mr. Mell, who, in *A Warning*, is neither named nor important, appearing as he does in just one forty line long, isolated scene that castigates his 'fond overweening and sly fetch' to gain a pardon for Mistress Sanders and a new wife for himself (19.22, 24).[41] Golding, in contrast, elaborates Mell's role as an abuser of clerical authority and the law, who foregoes his requisite 'good counsel and comfort' to persuade himself of Anne's innocence, falls in love with her, and manipulates Drury into recanting her previous confession and perjuring herself.

Mell both terrifies and bribes Drury with the promise of 'certain money to the marriage of her daughter'.[42] Mell's role is further developed in Golding's account insofar as the minister 'unskillfully' (that is, foolishly) trusts a gentleman with his pardon-for-marriage-plot, is discovered by the lords of the council, and finds himself condemned to the pillory with a sandwich board denoting what we would call obstruction of justice, ie, attempting 'to color the detestable fact of George Saunders wife'.[43] Golding glosses this as a warning against 'defac[ing] and discredit[ing]' the wheels of Justice.[44] In the play, court functionary Master James assigns the pillory judgment (19.34–7), but neither Mell's manipulation of Drury nor blabbing to a gentleman is enacted.

Although a dramatist might be tempted to follow the pamphlet's luridness, this writer depicts Mistress Sanders's adultery clearly as a one-off rather than a predisposition. Her relationship with Browne is situational, occurring only by following Drury's highly scripted (on Sanders's own palm!) scheme. Anne never appears on stage with the Mell figure and, as noted, the play relegates her union with Browne to a single dumb show embrace (Dumb Show 2). By truncating the Mell plot, the playwright not only lessens the denouement, but more crucially avoids compounding Sanders's sexual (mis)behaviour by introducing a new partner, out of character for the stage Anne. In doing so, he contradicts Golding who blames Anne's 'solemn asservations and protestations of innocence' for 'blinding' Mell to her guilt and causing him to swerve from his duties.[45]

The same impetus that bypasses the pregnancy and restricts the Mell moment informs the penultimate scene of the play: the gallows builders' casual update that Anne overhears (scene 19), ultimately leading to her admission of guilt. In Golding, Anne hears 'certain men … talking through Newgate, [and] one happened to speak aloud of the gallows that was set up and of the greatness and strongness of the same, saying it would hold them both and more'.[46] These words 'so pierce into the watchful ears of Mistress Saunders' that horror-stricken, she begs Drury to keep her 'former promise' to protect Anne from execution. From these details the playwright develops what I have elsewhere called 'a workingman's view of the executions',[47] adding levity to the grim realism characteristic of the genre. The impact of this lively workaday exchange is to offset the prior scene's official tone, where Master James castigates Mell; to complement scene 17 where two likewise personable 'officers' set up the courtroom, while cracking jokes about 'lusty Browne' (17.6–13); and finally, to ironize Anne's plight. Anne's blank verse soliloquy following the labourers' prose exit to the pub further heightens the profundity of Anne's impending change of heart (21.8–19).

Church Fathers' Counsel or a Mother's Blessing?

A Warning invents details that point to Mistresses Sanders and Drury as exemplary mothers, even if, as Iman Sheeha has persuasively shown, their poor housewifery, especially Drury's, is in evidence as well. Indeed, Drury's bad housekeeping (seen in her over-trusting her male servant, permeable household boundaries, not cooking) influences her once exemplary younger neighbour's household security and productivity (as seen when Anne sells her plate, for instance, and neglects her child after the murder).[48] Yet, these women's care and provision for children nonetheless remain central to their theatrical characterizations.[49] For example, Golding invokes Drury's daughter as a tool, as noted above: Mell's campaign to pardon Anne deploys the 'promise of certain money to the marriage of [Drury's] daughter, and with other persuasions' to convince Drury to assume all the blame.[50] In the nearly Mell-free play, on the other hand, providing for her daughter's future is the main motivation for Drury's 'business' dealings; she explains the potential income stream from her go-between enterprise with neighbour and captain:

> The money I will finger twixt them twain
> Shall make my daughter such a dowry,
> As I will match her better than with Browne
> To some rich attorney or gentleman. (3.48–51)

This providential motive of Drury helps to explain another purposeful omission in the play's retelling. While Golding's Drury is accused of some potentially profitable side hustles — witchcraft, sorcery, and bawdry (along with poisoning her husband and engineering a 'separation' between the earl of Derby and his wife) — the play omits this resumé almost entirely, thereby throwing into relief Drury's primarily maternal responsibility to ensure her child marries well, a concern that Anne Sanders shares for her own children and one reflected in the mother's legacy tradition (21.146).[51] The fiscal behaviour of stage-Drury, extorting jewelry and cash from Browne (and presumably Anne), while not exculpatory, points to a widow's maternal need and her agency.[52]

I have already explained that portraying the heroine neither as big bellied, nor newly delivered of a presumed 'bastard', nor entangled with the minister in the latter part of *A Warning* comports with the positive representation of her motherhood elsewhere in the play, a point to which I now turn. The dramatist highlights Anne's motherly role in her exchange on the stoop with her 'saucy' child, where she displays intimacy, authority, and a sense of fun as she monitors snacks and purchases and refers to her well-ordered home (scene 2). As Sheeha summarizes,

'The theatricality of this scene aims at establishing Mistress Saunders's maternal role and stressing her domestic industry and care'.[53] This same maternal dimension (albeit, sans fun), I argue, informs her final farewell to the children to close the play and keeps the playwright's focus on her as a mother rather than a lover (scene 21).[54]

The playwright recasts the ending to focus on Anne's motherhood in part by manipulating the circumstances of her bequeathal to her children of Calvinist preacher and martyr John Bradford's *Works* (of *Godly Meditations on the Lordes Prayer*, published in 1562), a detail plucked from Golding's account.[55] Bradford seems to have had a special appeal for 'men and women anticipating a violent death for their faith', and although Anne Sanders is no martyr, she calls for the books just as her death is imminent, linking her indirectly with the author who was also executed at Smithfield. 'Bradford's prison ministry' at Newgate and his writings about sin and confession made him a natural choice for Sanders's spiritual instruction.[56] In addition, his leanings toward predestination may help to explain why the playwright retains the detail of *Bradford's Works*: the book's Calvinism may speak to Anne Sanders's acquiescence to 'god's will' first as Mistress Drury presents it in the palm-reading scene (4) and again at this moment of her death when she is close to providential grace. In any case, the book's stage function is revealing. Before Golding's Anne gives books to her offspring, she first asks the three often mentioned prison chaplains, 'Master Cole, Master Charke, and Master Yonge … to write [inside] some admonitions as they thought good', after which, she herself merely subscribes, 'Your sorrowful mother Anne Saunders'.[57] On stage, Anne's own handling of the books and her own admonitions to her children are paramount and no intermediaries are used. By omitting the chaplains' patriarchal authorization of the books, the play depicts Sanders's gift to her children as unmediated; she proceeds to instruct them herself about keeping the meditations close to them, and so forth. Anne regains her authority in the family and dominates the stage at the end.

Extending Anne's primacy, *A Warning*'s crucial final and spectacular moments highlight her authority in the family via voice and action, in contrast to the last pages of the pamphlet where Golding moves from reporting to sermon: 'to show what is to be gathered of this terrible example'.[58] His messages warn against judging lest ye be judged, spreading gossip, and harlotry.[59] In the play, it is Anne Sanders who instructs, speaking almost sixty lines, compared against her children's three unison lines of wailing, and those of the Sheriff and Doctor, whose words are pedestrian, as seen here, as they escort the convict to the gallows:

SHERIFF What, Doctor, have you made an end?
The morning is far spent, 'tis time to go.
DOCTOR Even when you will, Sheriff; we are ready. (21.151–3)

To be sure, Golding's tract represents other voices, including the dean's futile exhortations and Browne's scaffold speech, but the drama is still comparatively more multivocal and lacks the pamphlet's shaping editorializing. Golding cites the presence of extended family, whom the penitent 'sent for', namely, her brother-in-law — 'the Lawyer', who speaks 'in the name of all [the in-laws]', whereupon they 'kneeled down altogether praying to GOD with her and for her'.[60] The play does not introduce adult family, Anne's scaffold speech addressing kin groups only implicitly (21.131–3).[61] In the pamphlet, she confesses before the dean of Paul's and the chaplains who had been working on her all along — Cole, Clark, and Young. With the reduced number and influence of clergy, no corporate, public prayer by George's surviving family, and no interlocutors in the denouement, *A Warning* accommodates the women's speech and agency that Golding excludes.[62]

That speech and agency recuperate Anne's reputation. Through Anne's own voice that dominates, the scene stresses her parental role in the spiritual instruction of children in contrast to Golding's report of Anne's execution that focuses less on her than on male preachers and other voices, including his own. On stage, after she and Mistress Drury repent, the Doctor reports that the children, knowing it is 'the last [day] / They should behold their mother on the earth', have come to ask her 'blessing ere you die, / And take their sorrowful farewell of you' (21.95–6, 97–8). After this point, Anne Sanders alone directs the action, calling the children in and bidding the 'gentle Keeper, bring me / Those books that lie within my chamber window' (102–3). She then endeavours to transcribe for the Doctor the sin and sorrow 'figured' in her conscience ('breast'), but invisible to him (21.105, 104). This self-revelation contrasts with the painful labours that Golding's churchmen take to uncover the 'heinous fact[s]' and her 'former sinfulness'.[63]

When her children enter, Anne begs their forgiveness and issues another set of imperatives: that they should 'learn' from her mistake, 'follow virtue', 'beware … sin', 'live' and marry well, be 'content', avoid pride, 'sleep' and 'rise' with the holy book in their beds, and leave her to die: 'stay not to disturb' the walk to the scaffold (136–70). Their brief exchange highlights the family over which Anne presides if only momentarily; the scene repeats the word 'mother' five times, 'father' four, and 'children' three. A final dramatic choice further stresses maternal

authority. In Golding's account, the convicted sinner's words dwell on her femininity: Anne calls herself 'a weak woman in a strong battle' and asks Jesus to 'save thy handmaid'.[64] Further, her last words are not technically her own: 'After this she also said a godly Prayer out of the [Anglican] Service book'.[65] On stage, in contrast, Anne's final acts are to kiss her children, whom she tenderly calls 'sweethearts', 'one after another', and to direct their immediate and longer-term actions as noted above (171, 168). To the end, then, the playwright departs from the pamphlet to foster Anne's own agency as a mother and a penitent.

Having shown how Anne's final centre-stage performance is rooted in maternity, I now re-emphasize that her conversion transpires not only via women's rhetorical power, as others have noted, but more particularly to the exclusion of men. That power is evidenced in Drury's persuasion of Anne to first sin and then repent — Drury, as noted, plays a central role in bringing her friend to Jesus[66] — and in Anne's scaffold speech. This speech shares the rhetorical and cultural work of the mother's blessing or mother's legacy tradition. Kathleen Kalpin-Smith, Sheeha, and Kilrika Stavreva each observe early modern cultural anxiety about women's speech in public and/or when not under the control of men.[67] In this context, importantly, *A Warning*'s final rhetorical acts are not only not engineered by men, but the male involvement central to Golding's account is pointedly pre-empted. Briefly, the clerical 'visitors' to prisons bore the whole burden of reforming criminals and dispensing spiritual advice. But in *A Warning* Drury and Sanders perform these tasks themselves. Protestant prison chaplains at Newgate and elsewhere were employed to exhort confessions, perhaps exerting some 'institutional pressure and psychological duress' if needed, and even to draft gallows speeches.[68] Martin and others who study scaffold speech by female homicides concur that accused women were influenced, 'coached and stage managed' by male ministers and other religious and legal functionaries and practices. For Martin the result was 'mediated subjectivity' for these women.[69] On stage, however, that mediation vanishes as women speak for themselves, if not for men.

'Few women can my mistress' voice withstand', Roger boasts (1.212). Indeed, the two scenes where Drury corrupts Anne (scene 4) and then aids her to repent (20) are of a piece — each proving Mistress Drury's power of speech in the absence of male supervision. As Sheeha effectively summarizes, her role in the prison conversion 'bring[s] Mistress Drury's unsupervised speech back under control and … in the service of conventional morality'.[70] Kalpin-Smith in her chapter on women's scaffold speeches emphasizes that the validity of such speech was based in its compulsion by minister and audience.[71] Similarly, Martin describes

the expanded roles of Protestant prison chaplains in 'obtaining … confessions'.[72] *A Warning* deviates from this format.

Before showing how the play demotes male functionaries, leaving the women to resolve their fates themselves, a note on Drury's claims of prophetic speech (her 'rules of palmistry') is in order (4.183). Drury misleads her younger neighbour through her seductive words and palm reading. Presented with her friend's 'declar[ation]' of God's plan for a second husband, Anne soon loses her resolve: 'If it be so, I must submit myself / To that which God and destiny sets down' (197–8). In particular, Anne succumbs to Drury's seduction to second marriage only because she believes that God 'hath decreed' it and that 'to repine / Against his Providence … 'tis sin' (160–2).[73] Does Anne's apparent belief in fortune-telling put her Protestant Christian faith in doubt? Not necessarily. Although palm reading and other forms of fortune-telling did grow increasingly suspect, as I have elsewhere shown,[74] Keith Thomas and other social historians have demonstrated that folk and even pagan beliefs and practices from maypoles to astrological charts coexisted (peacefully and otherwise) with Christianity throughout the early modern period.[75] In fact, *A Warning* interweaves many threads of the occult and supernatural, including beliefs in prescient dreams. Arguably the play's reference to 'murder will out' (when Beane's body bleeds anew in the sight of his killer) has roots both in the Reformation discourse of providentialism and an enduring superstition about the meaning of marvels (15.85, 103).[76] As staged, then, Drury's purported 'skill' seems, at once, part of her 'demonic' associations and also on par with housewives' benign skill in physic and healing (see 1.92–120). Given this complex context, chiromancy might have been familiar, but also dangerous, to theatregoers. In any case, because the women are 'inward' with each other (1.127), we might view Drury's introduction of palm reading as like an invitation to a Mary Kay cosmetics demonstration today — strange, even annoying, but not beyond the pale of friendship.

While Golding enumerates 'certain personages of honor', including Saunders family members and the dean of Paul's (at the time, the long-serving Thomas Nowell) as present between sentencing and execution and shows the clergy providing spiritual guidance to the prisoners, on stage Anne predominates over male family members and clergy. According to Golding, despite the dean's 'godly exhortations' to clear Anne's conscience and reconcile with God, he 'could obtain nothing at her hand'.[77] For Golding the clerical authorities occupy a central position because his Anne Sanders is 'utterly unprovided to die',[78] whereas in *A Warning* Anne's knowledge of morality is never in doubt, though she sins. The dean of Paul's — called up thrice in the pamphlet — is altogether absent from the

play; thus even as a figurehead, he lacks importance. In folding the three named churchmen into one 'Doctor' and eliminating the dean of Paul's, the playwright reduces the impact of clerical intervention.

This is to say that although the stage Anne does sin and initially refuses to confess or accept her sentence, she does not need the catechizing that her fellows do. According to Golding, Anne 'besought them [ministers] of spiritual comfort and counsel', behaves with 'meekness', and 'kneels mildly' before her husband's kin.[79] Golding also cites the prisoners' collective slender knowledge of 'the Christian religion' and describes them as 'very raw and ignorant in all things pertaining to God and to their souls' health'[80] — rhetorical framing that justifies the role of both the on-site clergy and Golding himself in providing the needed instruction.[81] Indeed, in both Golding's account and the play Browne is the worst of the lot, admitting to truancy from church services, neither praying nor reading 'any book of godliness', and generally living a life of 'appetites and lust', greed, and 'outrageous contempt both of God and man' (18.73–97).[82] For her part, stage Drury admits more forcefully than in the prose pamphlet to her own formerly sinful life: 'My soul was ignorant, blind, and almost choked / With this world's vanities' (21.86–7). Anne's scaffold speech begs forgiveness from her husband, God, kin, and children and puts herself forward as an exemplar: a 'warning' by 'foul example': 'learn by your mother's fall' (134, 140).

Whereas Golding highlights the clergy's role in orchestrating the characters' final moments, even, as Martin shows, to the point of writing their confessions, the play's women possess a greater measure of spiritual agency. In particular, though Mistress Sanders acknowledges that the Doctor had 'seriously instructed' her at Newgate (21.61), 'it is only Mistress Drury who finally persuades [her] to confess her sin', as Mary Floyd-Wilson reminds us.[83] This execution-day dialogue takes place only after Anne sends the keeper away that 'we may confer / Of things that nearly do concern our souls' (21.18–19) and before the Doctor enters (at line 60) ready to receive their confessions. That shocking transformation comes out of Drury's own rhetorical transformation into a minister who speaks not of fingering coins and reading palms but of grace, conscience, and the 'endless joys of heaven' (21.36–7, 43). In a metaphor that contrasts her open door policy in London (inviting Browne to drop by and ushering in 'merchants' wives'), she warns Anne not to 'shut up our hearts / Against the Holy Spirit that knocks for entrance' (21.48–9); her final invocation of hell-fire closes the deal (52). In a moment of sheer drama not unlike the hue-changing rose, Anne registers her sudden turn: 'Your words amaze me…. / Even at this instant I am strangely changed' (53). In foregrounding what Kalpin-Smith calls Drury's 'persuasive speech' — inducing

Mistress Sanders both to transgress *and* repent — the playwright 'mobilizes existing anxieties about the private conversations between women'.[84]

That anxiety about women's influence on each other may indeed be operational, as Sheeha has also argued, yet highlighting Drury's role in this way also has the effect of demoting the patriarchal figures.[85] While Golding grants Drury some role in striking Anne Sanders with 'fear and remorse', he attributes the real work of transformation to churchmen. According to Golding, Drury 'counsel[s]' her friend to quit 'dissembling' and be truthful, but primarily it is 'by the advice of master Cole, (who labored very earnestly with her to bring her to repentance)' that Sanders ultimately admits both her 'consent' to the murder of George Sanders and her 'sinfulness of life committed with Browne'.[86] The spiritual moment goes to the Annes; the Doctor merely formalizes their conversions with language of Christianity (see lines 77, 93).

From Notoriety to Exemplarity

In adapting the comparatively monologic, didactic pamphlet to the stage at all, the dramatist surrenders the control on which Golding depends. Golding aims to 'set the story straight', as it were, to end rumour-mongering and 'give … a plain declaration of the whole matter' that has hitherto bred only chaotic conjecture with 'every man debating the matter as occasion or affection leadeth him'. But Golding's pamphlet is not 'the whole matter': he warns the reader not to 'look for a full discovery of every particular by-matter' associated with the case, because too much information is likely 'to feed the fond humor of … curious appetites' that his pamphlet intends to starve.[87] For Golding, the murder has bred 'great occasion of talk among all sorts of men, not only here in the town, but also far abroad in the country, generally throughout the whole realm, and the sequels and accidents ensuing thereupon, breed much diversity of reports and opinions'.[88] Golding puts forth Anne as a 'warning' to all sinners and the church as chief agent in her redemption. *A Warning*, in contrast, purporting entertainment, is freer with damning details and develops roles for women in their own spiritual arcs. The pamphlet may have occasioned 'often divided' reactions to the case,[89] despite the author's shaping admonishments, but the play — any play — actively invites the very gaze and wonder that Golding shuns: 'When God bringeth such matters upon the stage unto ye open face of the world, it is not to the intent that men should gaze and wonder at the persons, as birds do at an owl, not they should delight themselves & others with the fond and peradventure sinister reporting of them'.[90]

Notes

An earlier version of this essay was presented at the Shakespeare Association of America seminar The King's/Lord Chamberlain's Men and Their Playwrights (Washington DC, April 2019).

1 Andrew Gurr, '"The Stage Is Hung with Black": Genre and the Trappings of Stagecraft in Shakespearean Tragedy', *Shakespeare and Genre: From Early Modern Inheritances to Postmodern Legacies*, ed. Anthony R. Guneratne (New York, 2012), 67–82, 69, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137010353_4; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* (Cambridge, 2004), 131. See *A Warning* Induction, esp. 55–67, in Ann Christensen, ed., *A Warning for Fair Women: Adultery and Murder in Shakespeare's Theater* (Lincoln, 2021), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1jbzcfc.

2 Charles Dale Cannon, ed., *A Warning for Fair Women: A Critical Edition* (The Hague, 1975), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110879858. The Resurgens Theatre production at the Shakespeare Tavern in Atlanta GA (November 2018), was based on Christensen, ed., *A Warning*; see esp. 'A Note about the Text' and Introduction, xlvi-lii. The 'Reading Early Plays' (REP) group, founded by Martin Wiggins, has sponsored two online table readings in which I have gratefully participated (July 2021, June 2023); participants observed the play's power and complexity. Gerald Baker, who read Browne's lines in 2023, noted, '*Warning* … seemed tonally and emotionally complex enough to be consistent with what else we know of the L[ord] C[hamberlain]'s Men repertory and to come out of the same network of ideas and techniques' (email message 8 June 2023). The play was first published as Anonymous, *A Warning for Faire Women. Containing, the Most Tragicall and Lamentable Murther of Master George Sanders of London Marchant, Nigh Shooters Hill. Consented Vnto by His Owne Wife, Acted by M. Browne, Mistris Drewry and Trusty Roger Agents Therin: With Their Seuerall Ends. As It Hath Beene Lately Diuerse Times Acted by the Right Honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine His Seruantes* (London, 1599; STC: 25089).

3 Ann C. Christensen, *Separation Scenes: Domestic Drama in Early Modern England* (Lincoln, 2017), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1hxgb28.

4 All references to the play come from Christensen, ed., *A Warning*.

5 Martin Wiggins email 8 June 2023. Randall Martin had proposed the predating of *A Warning* in *Women, Murder, and Equity in Early Modern England* (New York, 2008), 225n29, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203935125. *Arden* first appeared in print in 1592, and *A Warning for Fair Women* in 1599; both were obviously written earlier and were also performed earlier. On dating see also Cannon, *A Warning*, 48; Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*

(Ithaca, 1994), 91, https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501737381; and Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, xxiii–xxvi.

6 See for example, Anonymous, 'Arden of Faversham Summary and Study Guide', Supersummary, https://www.supersummary.com/arden-of-faversham/summary/. UKEssays offers an 'essay writing service' for help with the play. *Arden* appears in stand-alone editions including the newest Arden Shakespeare (2022), New Mermaids (1984), New Mermaids revised edition (2007), and Bloomsbury (2007, 2013, 2019), and is anthologized in David Bevington et. al., eds, *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* (New York, 2002), as well as the Oxford World Classics collection, *A Woman Killed with Kindness and Other Domestic Plays*, ed. Martin Wiggins (Oxford, 2008), and the Revels Student Edition *Plays on Women: A Chaste Maid in Cheapside; The Roaring Girl; Arden of Faversham; A Woman Killed with Kindness*, ed. Kathleen E. McLuskie and David Bevington (Manchester, 2013). Stage productions of *Arden* include Brave Spirits (Washington DC, 2015); RSC (Stratford UK, 1970, 1983, and 2017); Shakespeare at Winedale (Round Top TX, 2018); American Shakespeare Center, Blackfriars Playhouse (Staunton VA, 2019); City Theatre Company (Austin TX, 2016); and Red Bull (New York, 2023).

7 See John Stow, *The Annales of England, Faithfully Collected out of the Most Autenticall Authors, Records, and Other Monuments of Antiquitie, from the First Inhabitation until This Present Yeere 1592* (London, 1592; STC: 23334); Raphael Holinshed et. al., *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles: Comprising 1. The Description and Historie of England* (London, 1587; STC: 51097). See excerpts of Stow and the ballad, 'The woefl lamentacon of Mres. Anne Saunders' (rpt Hyder Rollins) and other materials in the appendices to Christensen, ed., *A Warning,* 135–64. On the prose sources, see also Cannon, *A Warning*; Orlin, *Private*; Joseph H. Marshburn, '"A Cruell Murder Donne in Kent" and Its Literary Manifestations', *Studies in Philology* 46 (1949), 131–40, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172884; Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*; and Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: the Life of Edward de Vere* (Liverpool, 2003), 89–92, https://doi.org/10.5949/UPO9781846313592. Marissa Greenberg adds another citation of the murder from Thomas Heywood, *Troia Britanica:* 'now by the violent hand / Of one George Browne, who murdrous fury leads, / Was Maister Saunders slaine (the matter scand) / Anne Druery (for the fact) and Saunders wife, / George Browne, with trusty Roger lost his life' (Canto 17. Arg. 2. 123). Marissa Greenberg, *Metropolitan Tragedy: Genre, Justice, and the City in Early Modern England* (Toronto, 2015), 152n21, https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442617711. Dolan is precise in observing that it is only the play's last part that relies 'almost slavishly on Golding's tract' whereby, she argues, 'the dramatist moves [away] … from his initial sympathy for [Anne Sanders]'; Frances E. Dolan, 'Gender, Moral Agency,

and Dramatic Form in *A Warning for Fair Women*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 29.2 (1989), 211, https://doi.org/10.2307/450471.

8 The full title of Arthur Golding's pamphlet is *A Briefe Discourse of the Late Murther of Master George Sanders, a Worshipful Citizen of London and of the Apprehension, Arreignement, and Execution of the Principall and Accessaries of the Same. Seene and Allowed* (London, 1577; STC: 11986). Critics have traced particular echoes and departures from pamphlet to stage. For example, Iman Sheeha observes 'a striking departure from the source pamphlet where Mistress Drury denies corrupting citizens' wives' to show that the stage representation of Drury is 'an habitual homewrecker'. Iman Sheeha, '"[M]istris Drewry,/ You do not well": The Gossip as an Ill-Doer in *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599)', *Early Theatre* 22.2 (2019), 89–118, 97, https://doi.org/10.12745/et.22.2.3662. Frances Dolan and Randall Martin separately note Golding's reference to the crowd of spectators at Anne Saunders's hanging (Dolan, 'Gender', l; Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, 83), in keeping with what Martin calls Golding's 'wider agenda or promoting godly reform' (ibid). Cheryl Birdseye recognizes effective and purposeful dramaturgy in the writer's use of 'naturalistic and allegorical figures as part of his hybridized experiment with emotional engagement and forensic detachment, whilst also exposing the constraints of categorizing complex events, such as those surrounding the Sanders case, within traditional dramatic genres'. Birdseye, 'Finding Her Conscience: Auditing Female Confession in *A Warning for Fair Women*', unpublished manuscript, 6. See also Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, vii–xii.

9 Golding in Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 139, 143, 14. All subsequent references to Golding come from this edition.

10 'An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion (1571)', *Internet Shakespeare Editions*, https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Homilies_2-21_M/index.html. Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 148. See also Proverbs 5:5, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%205%3A5&version=KJV.

11 Scholars have debated the authorship question for a long while, yet, to date, no one name has stuck, and while I have treated the topic elsewhere (Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, xxiv–xxvi, 168n27–34I), I am persuaded by Martin Wiggins's attribution of *A Warning* to none other than Thomas Dekker. Wiggins included *A Warning* in the Dekker oeuvre when he sponsored the Shakespeare Institute's annual read-aloud on Dekker in 2016 at Stratford-on-Avon. Each year members of the institute read aloud, in chronological order, the complete dramatic canon of a particular sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century playwright. See Silvia Morris's post on this event, 'The Dekker Marathon', https://theshakespeareblog.com/2016/06/the-thomas-dekker-marathon/.

12 For a view of Anne as an 'angry woman', see Birdseye, 'Finding Her Conscience', 19–24.

13 Susan Mountford is present, newly wed, and often silent, though the National Theatre Company production directed by Katie Mitchell gave her (not Frankford) the potent last line of the play, delivered as 'an unambivalently scathing rebuke': 'Here lies she whom her husband's kindness kill'd'. Paul Taylor, *'A Woman Killed with Kindness*, National Theatre: Lyttelton, London', *Independent Digital News and Media* (July 2011), https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/a-woman-killed-with-kindness-national-theatre-lyttelton-london-2317704.html. Lyn Gardner observes that in this production, Anne and Susan 'are sisters under the skin in more ways than one'. *'A Woman Killed with Kindness'*, *The Guardian News and Media* (20 July, 2011), https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/jul/20/a-woman-killed-with-kindness-review.

14 Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), 50–1, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199255986.001.0001. Capp shows that 'men often found deeply troubling' women in their own company. For Sheeha, Drury's centrality to the plot comes by virtue of her gossip role, which grants her proximity to Anne Sanders's home and private thoughts. For Sheeha, the play figures Drury 'as an agent of disorder by staging the way the gossip (mis)governs her household' ('"Mistris"', 95).

15 Sheeha '"Mistris"', 91.

16 John Addington Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* (London, 1900), 359.

17 John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (London, 1913), 3.2.

18 See also Sheeha, '"Mistris"', who considers the two women in relation to their roles as household mistresses and motherhood.

19 Christensen, ed., *A Warning* Prologue, 6.

20 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 137–8. The expository dialogue (scene 1) reveals that Browne is 'known' in Dublin — whether born to native Irish or an Old English family, the play is not clear — tapping into political currents on England's handling of its 'plantation' that would appeal to London audiences, among whom were Sanders's fellows — successful English merchants, possibly with Irish investments. Sanders recites familiar tropes about both the 'the land's good increase' and its lawless inhabitants, while the captain defends Ireland, 'As civil in the English pale as here [in London]', granting that those beyond the Pale 'may one day be reduced' (1.13–19).

21 Sanders is always late for dinner; the only meal we see on stage is the 'bloody banquet'. These coincidences reflect domestic disturbances as I discuss in Christensen, *Separation*, 82, 90–1.

22 *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques: Authoritative Texts of Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist, The Masque of Blackness, Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court, Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue: Contexts, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*, ed. Richard Harp (New York, 2001); William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles (Washington DC, nd), https://folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-comedy-of-errors/.

23 See Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, li-lii. The 2018 Resurgens Theatre revival productively paired the tall, lanky Matthew Trautwein as Roger with the diminutive but potent Ash Anderson as Drury for spectacular comedic and musical exchanges.

24 In her performance in the University of Houston table reading (December 2017), Wendy Wood depicted Joan as overeager and whining to Jeffry Villenes's uninterested Beane. In the Resurgens Theatre production, the kiss was charmingly thwarted by Jane's hat brim (see https://resurgenstheatre.org/past-productions).

25 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, cf. scenes 6, 8, 20.

26 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 138.

27 Luke 19:39–40 (King James Version); see also Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 201n382.

28 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 143.

29 Birdseye, 'Finding Her Conscience', 4.

30 Alan C. Dessen, 'Allegorical Action and Elizabethan Staging', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 55.2 (2015), 391–402, 400, https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.2015.0012.

31 Plays cited include Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, ed. Brian Scobie, New Mermaids Edition (New York, 1985); Anonymous, *Arden of Faversham*, ed. Martin White, New Mermaids Edition (London, New York, 1982); Thomas Middleton, 'The Changeling', in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford, 2007), 1637–78, https://doi.org/10.1093/oseo/instance.00012327; and Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women*, ed. William C. Carroll, New Mermaids Edition (New York, 1994).

32 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 139. In this and most other details, Stow and Holinshed reproduce Golding excerpts virtually verbatim, even the parentheses. See Stow, *The Annales of England* and Holinshed et. al., *The First and Second.*

33 Golding, rpt Christensen ed., *A Warning*, 139.

34 For discussions of the handkerchief, see Sheeha, '"Mistris"', 102–3 and Ariane M. Balizet, *Blood and Home in Early Modern Drama: Domestic Identity on the Renaissance Stage* (New York, 2014), 76–82, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315866857.

35 Cannon, *A Warning*, 185n1274.

36 Balizet, *Blood*, 87, 170n80.
37 Capp, *When Gossips*, 214. Capp shows that attending to a mother during childbirth was a women-only occasion, and women were central to associated religious and cultural spaces and events (christenings and churching).
38 See also Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 208n488.
39 For a discussion of the staging of blood in this play, see Balizet, *Blood.*
40 See Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 209n49.
41 He is called 'Minister' in the speech tag.
42 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 141.
43 Ibid, 141–2.
44 Ibid, 142.
45 Ibid, 141.
46 Ibid, 142.
47 Scene 20 summary in Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 125.
48 Sheeha, '"Mistris", 104–5. Sheeha traces the 'degeneration of Mistress Saunders's housewifery and the responsibility of Mistress Drury for the literal dissolution of the house as its items [the plate] leave the domestic space and enter the market'.
49 Iman Sheeha, 'Devotional Identity and the Mother's Legacy in *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599)', in *People and Piety: Protestant Devotional Identities in Early Modern England,* ed. Elizabeth Clarke and Robert W. Daniel (Manchester, 2020), 97–113, https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526150134.00016. Sheeha proposes a decline in Anne's maternal control when her unsupervised child is seen outside the home at mealtime and engaged in a kind of betting game: Anne is 'too distracted by the murder and too far removed from her initial role as careful mother to look after the child' (105–6).
50 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 141.
51 See, for example, Dorothy Leigh's advice to her sons in which one chapter concerns the 'choice of wives' (ch. 12) and another 'the folly for a man to mislike his own choice' (ch. 13); Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing* (London, 1616; STC: 15402). I reprint Leigh's table of contents and opening poem in Christensen, ed., *A Warning*. For greater detail on the tradition, see Sheeha 'Devotional Identity'.
52 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 144–5. Golding omits another mention of the daughter from the historical record. According to *The Acts of The Privy Council* (vol. 8), 'the Lieutenant of the Tower [was ordered] to send for a physician for George Browne to look unto him, and to suffer *Anne Drury's daughter or some other woman to come unto her and lie in her chamber*, so that they be by him searched and examined that they bring in nothing that may do harm' (italics added, qtd in Marshburn, '"A Cruell Murder"', 137n21).

53 Sheeha, 'Devotional Identity', 102.
54 Sheeha correctly views these two scenes as parallel; ibid, 105–8.
55 Bradford was a proponent of the doctrine of God's election and justification by faith in Christ, which, though not exactly the same as a strict belief in predestination, did lead him to some disputes with 'free-willers'. He had three sisters with whom he stayed in touch (even though only one of them shared his devoted Protestantism) and counted a number of godly women among his supporters, including Lady Vane from Holborn, Mrs. Anne Warcup, and Anne Boleyn's former silkwoman, Joan Wilkinson. D. Andrew Penny, 'Bradford, John, (c. 1510–55)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3175.
56 Ibid.
57 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 144.
58 Ibid, 145.
59 The final beat of the scene begins when the Doctor reports the Sanders's children's arrival at Newgate after Drury and he have clinched Anne Sanders's salvation.
60 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 143–4.
61 Anne says:

> Mercy I aske of God, of him, and you,
> *And of his kinred which I have abusde,*
> *And of my friends and kinred wheresoever,*
> Of whom I am ashamèd and abasht,
> And of al men and women in the world,
> Whome by my foule example I have griev'd. (21.129–34, italics added)

62 Dolan has argued that the playwright presents the woman as an agent only 'in so far as she is a transgressor' ('Gender', 201).
63 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 143.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid, 145.
66 Sheeha, '"Mistress"', discusses the women's friendship.
67 See Kathleen Kalpin Smith, *Gender, Speech, and Audience Reception in Early Modern England* (New York, 2017); Kilrika Stavreva, *Words Like Daggers: Violent Female Speech in Early Modern England* (Lincoln, 2015), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315465777; and Sheeha, '"Mistress"'.
68 Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, 91–4.
69 Ibid, 91.
70 Sheeha, '"Mistress"', 107.
71 Kalpin Smith, *Gender, Speech*, 130–1.
72 Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, 91–97.

73 Anne initially rejects the idea of replaced love, but Drury insists with words like 'ordained', 'manifest', and 'must' (4.1.166, 117, 124, 126, 181). I discuss scene 4 in detail in Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, xxxvi–xxxix.
74 See my 'Notes for Further Study' on the topic of the supernatural and occult in Christensen, ed., *A Warning,* lv.
75 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971); Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge, 2013), 14–15, https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139567541.
76 Martin discusses providentialism in relation to Golding's pamphlet, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, 84.
77 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 141.
78 Ibid, 142.
79 Ibid, 143.
80 Ibid.
81 See Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*.
82 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 145.
83 Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge,* 57, 71, citing 21.53.
84 Kalpin Smith, *Gender, Speech*, 74.
85 Sheeha, '"Mistress"', 90.
86 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 143.
87 Ibid, 136.
88 Ibid. Martin, attuned to the power of 'local rumor and hearsay', observes 'official anxiety' in true-crime narratives about 'how the public would judge the trial and outcome of each case' (*Women, Murder, and Equity*, 3,11).
89 See Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, 5.
90 Golding, rpt Christensen, ed., *A Warning*, 147.