Murderous Mothers and The Family/State Analogy in Classical and Renaissance Drama

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> Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime to his sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew both father and mother.
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> *Gorboduc*, The Argument[1]

Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* begins with this summary of its action. The play, written in 1562 during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, is usually interpreted as a piece of advice to the young Queen on matters ranging from the issue of succession to the monarch's dependence on good counsel; having heard of its first performance, Elizabeth commanded a second for her own benefit, clearly recognizing the play's efforts at dutiful counsel. In light of the play's history, then, the portion of the Argument excerpted above is perplexing: rather than attributing the fall of Britain exclusively to Gorboduc's unwise political policies, it immediately shifts focus to the familial relationships at the heart of the kingdom's structure of rule—relationships which could, at least apparently, have had little to do with the orphaned "Virgin Queen." Gorboduc, the argument clarifies, is not only king and head of the government; he is also a father and husband, and these family ties counterbalance his controlling authority over his kingdom with disastrous results. The country's demise, according to the Argument, is directly traceable to Queen Videna, who "more dearly loved" her elder son Ferrex, and avenges his death on his brother, thus committing child murder. Rather than foregrounding the king's unwise division of his country which leads to a general uprising

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(which would be the premise of its attempt at political advice-giving), the Argument suggests that both king and queen are punished with the people's civil rebellion *for her infanticide*. In fact, Videna's act intervenes at both the linguistic and metaphoric level even in this brief excerpt—once she kills her son, king and queen become "father and mother," as if her violence were transformative of the total relationship between rulers and ruled. Since early modern culture assumed the monarch's right to rule was based in his patriarchal relationship to his nation, that in effect he commanded their obedience because he functioned as father to them, this linguistic shift accentuates the primal, biblical violation of rebellion. But it also reminds readers that familial and political duties for the ruling couple may compete rather than cooperate. Both Gorboduc and Videna, after all, are unable to resist the tug of familial affections regardless of the nation's best interests.

Videna has been associated with the archetypal bad mother of classical drama, Medea; Videna's passionate and violent relationship to her children might indeed have looked familiar to a Renaissance audience watching or reading the play for the first time, given the prevalence of Medea-figures in comparable dramas. On reflection, however, the play's awkward explanation for Videna's actions, that she loved one son more than the other, bears little resemblance to Medea's specific material injuries at her husband's hands: it is Jason's rejection of Medea in favor of a new wife which prompts her to murder his heirs, destroying her fickle husband's future as the price for his violation of the marriage bond. Videna initially conspires against her youngest child only out of her greater love for the elder, who she feels has been slighted. The emotional freight of this "cause" to the tragedy may be sufficient to Videna, but it is inexplicable to the audience and reader, lacking the practical basis of Medea's revenge—and while Euripides' version of Medea insisted that audience sympathies be engaged in her plight, Sackville and Norton do not at any point lead us to sympathize with, identify with or comprehend Videna's motivations. While I would agree with general critical consensus that *Gorboduc* is essentially a political play, I would argue that some questions remain to be answered about the play before we fully appreciate its political message. The playwrights have deliberately situated a seemingly inexplicable act of infanticide at the heart of the play's political meaning. What then is this child-murder meant to convey about government, about the subject/monarch relationship, and about political stability, the play's political themes? And since Videna clearly evokes the specter of Medea, what intertextual resonances are Sackville and Norton constructing between English politics and the play's classical antecedents?

Answering these questions about *Gorboduc*, however, requires venturing further afield in Renaissance and classical drama. Videna does not function as an isolated instance. Early modern plays, especially those like *Gorboduc* which are heavily influenced by Seneca, depict a host of murderous mothers, including Lady Macbeth (who achieves more than a passing similarity to Videna) or Fulke Greville's stunningly violent Rossa who dominates his closet play *Mustapha*.[2] Betty Travitsky has written on the connections among plays that portray such women, arguing convincingly that they use the specter of violent mothers to examine the "conflict between the newly enhanced *sense* of maternal responsibility and the continued patriarchal *fact* of women's legal subordination."[3] Muderous mothers, and Videna specifically, thus represent to Travitsky the effects of gender ideologies aimed at delineating the mother's social and political role: they manifest the fear that women are by nature disordered, and when given power through motherhood are liable to lapse into extreme evil, uncontrollable passion, and monstrous acts. The murdering mother is, as Travitsky argues, an archetype—one whose roots lie in early modern fascination with classical myths about mothers like Medea, Clytemnestra, and other Greek and Roman female furies. Yet Travitsky does not pursue the political implications of making this literary-historical leap. What I wish to do in this essay is register differently the function of murdering mothers as vehicles for confronting ideological change. Clearly, as we see in the Argument to *Gorboduc*, early modern drama adapts its sources to its own ends, and, I would argue, these ends have as much or more to do with the changing function of political theory, as with changes in ideologies of gender alone.

In this essay I will suggest that plays like *Gorboduc* are working through implications of one of the Renaissance's most powerful and most ubiquitous mechanisms for explaining and enforcing political structure: the family/state analogy.[4] Murderous mothers in Renaissance drama are motivated first and foremost by blood ties and familial passions. Their existence threatens the integrity or continuity of the *polis*, an entity headed and controlled by the figure of the male monarch, and which requires in contrast an attachment or relationship to abstractions like law, nation, and good or bad rule. They are used, in other words, to oppose passionate, tribal or familial loyalties to the less immediate, but structurally crucial loyalties that bind a subject to the government whose representatives she or he must obey. In effect, the distinction between the ties of marriage, which bring a woman into a household and family, and the ties of birth and blood, which unite a woman to her offspring quite differently than she is united to her spouse, stands as a metaphor

for the distinction between tribal/familial structures and the essentially (and in the Renaissance, the increasingly) contractual nature of law.[5] The fact that *murdering* mothers dominate plays from *Gorboduc* to Fulke Greville's *Mustapha*, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* indicates that mothers and wives have a powerful, threatening role in the Renaissance imagination. They appear in such dramatic work, I will suggest, in order to exorcise for the plays' audiences the logical and functional obstacles to the smooth working of political ideologies stemming from the family/state analogy. Moreover, as *Gorboduc* demonstrates, early modern drama borrowed the figure of the murderous mother from classical sources; thus if we wish to fully appreciate how characters like Videna, Rossa, Lady Macbeth, and their sisters function in these plays, we must consider their pre-texts in classical sources. For the sake of brevity, I will accomplish this in this essay by focusing primarily on the interconnections between Euripides' *Medea* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, and a handful of their most powerful Renaissance reincarnations, including *Gorboduc*'s Videna and *Mustapha*'s Rossa.

I.

The early modern family and the extended network of servants, distant relatives, foster-children, laborers, and other retainers that comprised the Renaissance household, was a pattern in miniature of the state. The family, wrote Thomas Smith in his 1589 observations on English government, "is the first and most natural . . . one of the best kinds of a commonwealth, that is called *Aristocratia*, where a few, and the best, do govern"; a household, asserted Dod and Cleaver in 1598, was a little commonwealth.[6] English ideology regarding the connection between household or family and the state was borrowed in part from European models, and in part from classical literature, which both encouraged a similar mirroring: Aristotle's *Politics* cites the moral imperative for husbands to rule at home as integral to the moral health of the state: "But as concerning the husband and the wife, the father and the children, and every of their virtues . . . we shall necessarily treat thereof in our discourse of the forms of government. For sith every house is parcel of the city, and all the matters above spoken of are parts of the house, and the virtue of the part is to be imputed to the whole, it is necessary to refer the instructing and ordering of women and children to such magistrates as have the oversight of the states of cities."[7] The acquisitive function of the household addressed by Aristotle influences continental Renaissance works like Francesco Barbaro's *De Re Uxoria,* which elaborate the household/state

analogy, suggesting that a wife's economic function is to guard her husband's goods as if she were entrusted with the wealth of a city. Establishment of a clear, theorized connection between patriarchy and absolute monarchy under James I—largely through the writings like Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*—intensified the potency of this interrelationship.[8] The Elizabethan "Exhortation concerning good Order, and obedience to rulers and Magistrates" announced:

> Almighty God hath created an appointed all things in heaven, earth, and waters in a most excellent and perfect order . . . every degree of people in their vocation, calling and office, hath appointed to them their duty and order: some are in high degree, some in low, some kings and Princes, some inferiours and subjects, priests, and lay men, masters and servants, fathers, and children, husbands and wives, rich and poor, and every one hath neede of other.[9]

The interdependent binaries of the "Exhortation" reflect the underpinning of English state function: obedience and order are founded in the interrelated hierarchies of Church and family. Duty and obedience in one context (e.g. the family) assured obedience in others (the state). The home thus becomes, in Cicero's words, "the nursery . . . of the state," inculcating behaviors, beliefs and assumptions that will support the overall structure of ordered government.[10] Not only does early modern political and moral thought suggest that household and state mirror one another, however; writings like Filmer's or like the earlier Elizabethan Homily on Order made family and state mutually constitutive—the latter relied on the former to order and inform behavior. As the Homily put it, kings and subjects are like fathers and children or husbands and wives in that each binary pair shows God's organizing hand at work, and further "each hath need of other" if civilization is to resist "chaos and babylonical confusion." Or, in the words of Thomas Pickering, "Upon this condition of the Familie, being the Seminarie of all other Societies, it followeth, that the holie and righteous government thereof, is a direct meane for the good ordering, both of Church and Commonwealth" (Pierce 6).

Because the family/state analogy is so ubiquitous and so fundamental to Renaissance views of everything from marriage to biblical truth, it has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention over the years. Most recently, feminist critics have put pressure on the fragility of the logic represented in the analogy's situation of the wife and mother in its ordered, hierarchical world. At the heart of the analogy is the king/father link,

rendering women's position, as some have suggested, difficult to resolve—her presence is additive and occasionally confusing since she can function as both subordinate and superior (wife, but also parent; woman, but also in charge of male servants and others of lower rank in her home).[11] These fundamental incommensurabilities within the analogy often stem from the different nature of the husband/wife relationship in contrast with the parent/child relationship. Susan Amussen, for instance, notes that the marital partnership could be mustered to defend a contractual basis for government, while the parental hierarchy bolstered patriarchalist theories of government (55–61).[12] What is crucial in my own argument is that these tensions, whatever they are, stem from the different roles a woman must play as wife versus mother within the family. The fact that the analogy's instabilities mark it from its inception in classical sources means that by the Renaissance, the analogy worked in complex and often logically incoherent ways to situate women's roles at the heart of political structures.

But the family/state analogy does even more work in its cultural moment than many have considered: as Deborah Shuger points out, the analogy is ideology, meant to explain to English subjects their practical hierarchical obligations to the ruler, but it is also designed to construct their *emotional* relationship to their governors, especially to the monarch.[13] Amussen clarifies the potency of the analogy: uneducated subjects often "use[d] their own personal experience to define the proper relations between ruler and ruled"; the analogy "offered meanings to authority . . . by which everyone could understand politics" (62–63). The family/state analogy thus performed crucial cultural and political work, and its function had to adjust over time to changes in English political life. Throughout the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century, England did indeed experience a profound political shift, making the difficult, slow transition from a loose association of feudal lords to the bureaucratic centralized nation-state that it would eventually become; the analogy as ideology was put under correspondingly intense pressure, as it was mobilized to address new relationships between subject and government.[14] As the "seminarie of all other societies" and the "nursery of the state" the analogy had to help negotiate the transfer from one system to the other. Subjects who once established their primary loyalties within a feudal structure—a structure that already strongly resembled an extended family in which most are related and all share intimate knowledge of one another if not actual blood ties—needed to generate new loyalties to an abstract entity—the "state"—represented by a loved, but often distant monarch. Whatever affection and loyalty subjects then feel

toward their king or queen underwrote in turn their obedience to the monarch's local representatives. The function of the family/state analogy in making such a transition should be clear: by reading the new, abstract relationships with the state in terms of an older, even primordial blood network, this ideological tool encourages the centrality of loyalty and love. However, loyalty and love must be balanced against obedience within a hierarchy. The implicit subordination of the family to the state, which emerges in the primary, emphatically superior analogizing of king to father, helps discourage the kinds of unrest that an actual feudal government can foster. If the head of state is "like a father" to his (or her, given Elizabethan interpretations of the queen's "Princely" nature) subjects, and second only to God in claiming their submission, then the local, personal ties that once figured so prominently in the daily lives of Englishmen and women are attenuated in favor of the supreme worldly "father's" claim to his people's love.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* outlines a process strikingly resonant with this description of the analogy, a process of weaning unruly subjects from the reality of blood ties and familial loyalties, which tend to degenerate into blood feud, and attaching subjects' loyalty and obedience instead to the authority of the Prince whose first concern is to preserve the peace for the good ordering of city business. Capulets and Montagues are expected to attach their loyalties and their love to the Prince above their own families, suppressing family feuds to enhance civil order. Such a process, however, is difficult and fraught with danger. *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, might be interpreted as suggesting that the only way to resolve families to the rule of law is for them to lose in the most final fashion their own flesh and blood. Only when blood is shed in excess and the family's future (its children) are destroyed do Capulets and Montagues reconcile. More to the point, by making family absolutely fundamental to explaining social roles and inculcating suitable attitudes necessary to the smooth running of the state, the analogy actually places at the heart of the process the very thing that many early modern thinkers implicitly believed threatens the state's stability. Again, as Shakespeare indicates, families are by *nature* bloodthirsty, insatiable, resistant entities. And at the heart of the family is often a woman, a mother, whose instincts cannot be contained or controlled. Think, for instance, of Lady Capulet's bloodthirsty reaction to news of her nephew's death: in an eerie echo of the Furies' demand for bloodshed to satisfy bloodshed in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, she insists on a primordial form of justice, rather than the legal mercy this Prince can award: "I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give. / Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live" (3.1. 174–5).[15] Attempt-

ing to restore an enlightened application of the law and draw subjects away from blood-feud, the Prince instead banishes Romeo. The ostensible purpose of the family/state analogy, then, is to repress disobedience, and to attenuate the claims of blood and household while promoting the claims of king and nation; but these repressions, like any other, can only be partial and incomplete. On the popular stages, in dramatic scripts, the lingering power of family loyalty, of blood that calls for blood, repeatedly speaks itself into being, most often by women who resist the "civilizing" pressure of political ideology, and put into play their own resistant interpretations of the nature of families and marriage.

II.

While early modern writers used Greek texts to inform their political philosophies and theories of literature, writers of the drama appear, if we accept most twentieth-century critical discussions of Renaissance drama, to have preferred Roman matters as source material.[16] Seneca's prominence as source material for Renaissance dramatists ensured that political families figured in numerous dramatic texts. Greek tragedies were, however, also regularly translated either from the original language, or from their prior Latin translations. Jasper Heywood and Alexander Neville both published translated Seneca's renderings of Greek tragic stories; but Lady Jane Lumley and George Peele worked with Euripides' Greek plays when they both translated the *Iphigenia* in 1558 and 1579 respectively. John Studley's several translations from the Greek (including *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, and *Hippolytus* between 1566 and 1567), and Thomas Watson's *Antigone* (1581) additionally suggest the continuing importance of Greek tragic material for academic drama, though it certainly had less prominence on the public stages at court or at the large amphitheaters. Whether via ancient Greek originals, then, or via Senecan interpretations, the mythological themes of Greek tragedy, especially the tragic conflicts between family duty and civic duty represented in the plays I named above, infected the early modern drama generally. For my purposes here it is less important whether Renaissance writers borrowed directly from Euripides or Aeschylus, than that the family dynamics the Greek tragedians described remained available and imaginatively compelling in the Renaissance drama.

What Renaissance writers found in the ancient plays was the struggle between the state and the family dramatized over and over again, almost always represented through the conflicting interests associated with feminine attachments to blood and primal familial ties. Page duBois has

charted some of the fundamental psychological *topoi* of classical literature which are most often organized through stock metaphors—field, furrow, stone, oven, or tablet. These metaphoric depictions often labor on behalf of political ideologies. Demeter, for instance, represents a primal connection between women's bodies and the fertile earth which is "prepolitical, prehistorical," and functions in tension with the *polis,* the historical construction of civil and political identity. The Maenads of Euripides' *Bacchae* are similarly located outside the city, emblematically situated in opposition to the civil values of the *polis*:

> Women are, in the religious life of the city, made "prehistoric," as Clytemnestra is in the *Oresteia*; like the Eumenides, they are buried, made insignificant in the political life of the city. They embody a metaphor that is seen and marked as archaic and that functions as long as the city can support this version of their identity. Eventually, however, especially in the context of tragedy, women break their silence; they can no longer be contained in the metaphor.[17]

Political transitions often depend upon the rewriting of ideologies to new uses; the drama as a form—representational, ideologically supple, and repetitive like ritual yet without many of religious ritual's restrictions—tends to serve this purpose especially well. In plays focused on strong female characters who usurp speech and self-representation, drama stages the internal stresses of ideology. At least one critic has observed that Medea is unique in fifth-century drama for seizing center stage, speaking on her own behalf at extraordinary length; in so doing, she signals that Euripides' play articulates the failure of containment duBois mentions.[18] Medea's murder of her children signals, as I will argue, that ideologies representing women's bodily function as reproductive vessels for male seed, as passive, secure, compliant regenerators of the male line, are likewise under assault. Her speech and her destruction of Jason's familial line are two sides of the same coin: appropriating the logos of patriarchal identity and becoming a speaking subject, Medea completes her usurpation of masculine prerogative by executing Jason's male heirs (she has two sons) and the new wife who might bear him further children. In essence, Medea breaks the vessel's silence by breaking the vessel and destroying the seed it is meant to contain.

Jason's and Medea's conflict arises out of his decision to set her aside for a new wife, a decision he claims is motivated by a pragmatic concern to protect both her and her sons: "My object was—and this is the most

important thing—that we should live well and not be in want . . . and that I should bring up our children in a manner worthy of my house, and by producing brothers to my children by you, I should place them all on a level footing, unite them into one family and be prosperous" (559–55).[19] Euripides' Medea is a barbarian, an outsider to Athenian society who by Athenian law cannot become a citizen or enjoy the rights of citizenship. In fact, Jason's marriage to Medea is not recognized by Athen's laws, which frees him to enter a politically advantageous marriage with Glauce, Creon's daughter, thereby securing a connection to the throne of Corinth. Medea's grievance against Jason thus functions on several levels: if we believe Jason, it stems from her anger at her alienation from his bed, or as he puts it, "you would agree with me if sex were not provoking you" (568–69). If we instead believe Medea, the chorus and various other characters in the play, Jason has betrayed the obligation he owed her, both because she destroyed her own family to marry him, and because the marriage bond itself demands to be honored regardless of Athenian law. In other words, Jason lives by the letter of Greek law, Medea by the spirit of the contract it implies. In terms of the family/state analogy, we should recall here the partnership of marriage which could be perceived as contractual—and in this respect, dependent upon interpretations of law and legal codes. Jason's betrayal is thus a reminder that laws, applied by men for men, may not serve or support women's sense of what marriage means. Medea draws the distinction also in terms of Athenian values, sarcastically noting that "in the eyes of many women of Greece, you have made me happy indeed. What a wonderful husband, what a trustworthy one." To the proper women of Greece, who embrace ideologies of submission and gender hierarchy, the mere fact that Jason married her would be sufficient to repay her. Jason responds by telling her she did all for him out of love—which leaves him with no corresponding obligation, since she "took more than [she] gave" (109–10): "you live in the land of Greece instead of a barbarian country, you understand the workings of justice and know what it is to live by the rule of law and not at the whim of the mighty" (534–36). Jason sees reciprocity inherent in the exchange of political good for personal good—he has brought Medea to a country where she can live under the enlightened application of political power, a fitting reward for the patricide she incited Pelias' daughters to commit, her murder of her brother, and the sufferings and exile she endured to be with Jason. In short, Medea views marriage as a personal contract, a promise that binds indefinitely and ineffably; Jason believes marriage is part of a political and legal world that has little connection to personal or familial emotions.

Although Medea is throughout the play described as driven by passion, filled with hatred, and excessive in her rage for revenge, her actions have a logical basis. If women in Greek society are encouraged to live "a life that finds its meaning outside the self and is fulfilled only in the institutions of marriage and maternity, which tie women to the world and lives of men,"[20] then Medea has complied with social expectations for her gender. She has so far conceded to this vision of women's place that she has sacrificed her primal blood ties to father, brother and birth-family in order to privilege the ties of marriage. Repeatedly she is characterized as isolated, having "no mother, no brother, no relative at all" to be her "haven from this disaster" (257–59). Having entered the "house" of her marriage at the expense of the home and family ties of her birth, she finds it easily dismantled by Greek law, the Corinthian ruling family, and her husband. This is the betrayal she avenges, a betrayal she makes clear is generalizable to all women: "Of everything that is alive and has a mind, we women are the most wretched creatures . . . We come to new ways of behavior, to new customs—and, since we have learnt nothing of such matters at home, we need prophetic powers to tell us specifically what sort of husband we shall have to deal with" (230–40). All women, not only those brought back to Greece from foreign lands, are outsiders in their husbands' houses; all women must learn new customs when they join a spouse's household. I would argue that the new customs Medea refers to include the custom that sets political favor and legal right above familial, emotional, or physical ties. Patriarchal culture valorizes marriage for women because within marriage they become tools to male dynasty-building, the preservation of wealth and the generation of fame; but if men can set aside marriage to pursue those goals without regard to wives' claims on their loyalty, then marriage is exposed as an empty institution that offers nothing to women in return for their obedient compliance, their sacrifice of self. Jason, having exposed just this to his first wife, compounds—and explains—his sin by imagining a world in which women do not have to exist at all: "The human race should produce children from some other source and a female sex should not exist. Then mankind would be free from every evil" (573–75). Behind the ideologies that dictate wifely submission, wives' invisibility through strict incarceration in the house, and wives' silence, lurks the desire to do away with wives and mothers altogether. In exchange for a world in which men procreate without women, however, Medea gives Jason a world in which women do not procreate *for* men, to preserve male institutions and male heredity. She kills his sons.

Medea's murder of her children might well have struck Renaissance readers as more reasonable than many similar cases of maternal infanticide involving a mother's actual madness, but nevertheless as monstrously unjust; it certainly strikes twentieth-century critics this way. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz argues that the children's murder is used to confirm Medea's excess and disrupt the audience's identification with her. In the scene immediately preceding the act, Medea herself vacillates. Thus "the victimized woman with whom we had felt sympathy is in combat with the victimizer, whom we abhor. By making her both for and against the murder, Euripides extends our sympathy for her, but at the same time, he casts the debate in such terms that she is threatening to the categories of male and female" (Rabinowitz 148). Euripides manages to shift audience identification back to Jason, who at the last shows the visceral love he denied his first wife by asking to touch the warm flesh of his dead sons. Medea, Rabinowitz suggests, achieves "a form of successful female subjectivity," but the play includes the infanticide in order to support "the continued control of actual women because it makes Medea's very freedom terrifying" (Rabinowitz 150). But there is another dimension to Medea's infanticide: as I have pointed out, Jason's betrayal has invalidated the social structures that define female roles, leaving Medea, who fully embraced and adhered to them in order to marry Jason, with less than nothing. His actions are prompted by the desire for power, especially political power, and the desire for a higher position within the rational, balanced, democratic state Greece epitomizes. His sons represent a sacrifice to that desire—and a sacrifice to that form of state. Despite Jason's fantasy that his marriage to Glauce will create a new family in which Medea's children will be brothers to his new offspring, legal reality in fifth century Greece dictated that the children of outsiders could not claim citizenship any more than could their foreign parents. Jason has in fact fully destroyed any status his sons could hope to hold; the fact that Creon initially decrees their exile shows how marginal they have in fact become. The interests of the state, in short, have for Jason supplanted the interests of blood. When Medea murders Jason's blood kin, she simply fulfills by action what his ideological stance regarding his first family has already accomplished. The internal conflict she displays arises from the paradox that to finish the deed she must join Jason in turning against her own flesh and blood. She suggests, however, that she has already been alienated from the children in all senses of that word: Jason promises to have Creon rescind the order for the boys to be exiled, and accept them into his new household, saying "you will yet live to prove the chief citizens of this land of Corinth with your brothers-to-be" (917–18). Medea

interprets their alienation thus: "You will look upon your mother with loving eyes no longer when your way of life has been changed" (1036–37). Like women who enter a new household upon marriage, the children will have to learn new customs. In so doing, they will be possessed—colonized, in effect—by the ideologies of their new home. Medea will lose possession of the sons she calls "my own ones" and "my beloved children." Killing them seals them instead to her. "Nobody is going to take them away from me" (792) she insists. She makes concrete Jason's legal annihilation of their identities through his new marriage; she literalizes his sacrifice of family to political ends; and she retains some dimension of proprietary control over what Jason—as do all men—believes belongs solely to them.

Medea is strongly connected to Aeschylus' Clytemnestra in a number of ways. Both women kill and are not legally punished for their crimes (although Orestes' murder will be retroactively justified, he kills without immediate legal sanction). Both are moved to murder by a husband's betrayal. Clytemnestra, however, although less commonly evoked directly in Renaissance drama, yet more clearly exemplifies the competing claims of family and state. The *Oresteia* links her irrevocably with the privileging of blood ties over the abstract structure of law, literally and metaphorically through the constant flow of blood that she produces. The origin of Clytemnestra's plot against Agamemnon lies in her grief over her daughter's death—Iphigenia, made sacrificial victim to masculine pursuit of war, who bore her mother's blood in her veins and was born with the rush of that same blood from her mother's womb. The mother claims blood for blood:

> So did he fall and quickly breathed away his life,
> and spouting out a sharp jet of blood
> he struck me with a dark shower of gory dew,
> while I rejoiced no less than the crop rejoices
> in the Zeus-given moisture at the birth of the bud.
> (ll.1388–92)[21]

Agamemnon's death pours a "libation of a fitting liquid" over the mother's body, restoring the interrupted cycle of birth, death and fertility.

Birth from a rain of blood is also the origin of the Erinyes, whom Clytemnestra invokes in *Agamemnon* and who return in the trial of the *Eumenides*. Their role is, as duBois puts it, "prehistoric" in that they defend the tribal links of family strictly understood as a primal, familial blood-relationship. When Apollo challenges them for ignoring Clytemnestra's

murder of her husband while pursuing Orestes, they distinguish her crime from his: "That would not be the shedding of one's own blood with one's own hand" (ll. 1212–13).[22] Clearly Aeschylus associates blood/family with a bodily connection established strictly through the mother. The trial of Orestes delineates the competing claims of the male—the marital union, which Medea saw was constructed for the convenience of male political ambitions, and the organization of law that can supersede familial loyalty and promote the interests of men devalued otherwise by the primal association of women with birth and blood. In effect, Athena's judgment in Orestes' favor permits a part of Jason's fantasy to come true: men can function in the new world of law and state interests largely without the interference of women, whose role as child-bearers will be limited and their political power marginalized. Apollo insists on such an "estrangement" of the mother: "She who is called the child's mother is not/its begetter, but the nurse of the newly sown conception . . . she as a stranger for a stranger/preserves the offspring" (658–61). Pallas Athena, the Erinyes' judge, is herself the embodiment of masculine procreation: born from her father's brain, she represents intellect, wisdom, masculine qualities that dominate her ostensibly feminine-gendered body. Athena facilitates the transition from pre-history to history by which the *Eumenides* marks the triumph of patriarchy over matriarchy, and the institution of ideologies that suppress the call of blood to blood.

This transition, of course, is presented as necessary for a new structure of government to succeed. Aeschylus writes in defense of a system that acts as a bulwark against tyranny and chaos—the system of human self-rule, the rational application of law. The state requires its citizens to think beyond the impulses of blood-lust and the appeal of tribal bonds, to accept instead an abstract, but orderly set of relationships to one another. To accomplish this in the *Eumenides* does not require the expulsion of blood ties, however; rather, the tribal commitments the Erinyes represent are suppressed, and the nature of their violent instincts redirected to the service of the state. Or, as one critic has observed, by the play's conclusion "The Erinyes have not changed their natures; they have changed their names because they have changed their relationship to the state. . . . The social form of fury is that sense of fear which prevents the knife from falling too easily into its victim's heart."[23] Their curse is turned into benediction; their voices are co-opted by the state to enforce its laws and approve its structure.

But, duBois reminds us, the Eumenides are by this transformation "buried, made insignificant to the political life of the city. They embody a metaphor that is seen and marked as archaic" but which is not per-

petual or reliable: "Eventually . . . women break their silence." Eventually, the original nature of the Eumenides will resurface; the state cannot suppress tribal blood loyalties or the mother's claims consistently or finally. As I've noted, the repetitive, ritual nature of drama itself should alert us to the difficulty of closure—the Erinyes resurface every time Aeschylus' cycle is repeated, every time the play is performed to educate its audience once again about the supremacy of the state. Early modern England would have recognized immediately the problem of buried or contained things on many levels: think only briefly of Spenser's Blatant Beast temporarily enchained and subdued, or of Hamlet's ghost—or if we are willing to give our imaginations more liberty, the general cultural impact of (sometimes literally) unearthed classical texts. Some of those classical texts, namely the plays I explored above, offered both a model for the renewal of the mythic conflict between tribe and state, and the pattern for its resolution, to be refracted, revised, and repeated in turn in Renaissance drama.

III.

The return of the Erinyes in Renaissance drama is in the case of *Gorboduc* quite literal: Videna's crime prompts the Furies' appearance in the dumb show that precedes Act 4: "there came for from under the stage, as though out of hell, three Furies, Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone . . . each driving before them a king and a queen which, moved by Furies, unnaturally had slain their own children." Among these walks Medea. *Gorboduc* produces the classical Furies in their original, pre-Eumenides form (more common in early modern myth and story) to indicate the primal nature of Videna's crime. Her murder of her own child, however, comes out of revenge for one child's murder of the other—her eldest son is killed by his brother only after Gorboduc divides his kingdom and creates jealousy and suspicion between the two. The blood ties of mother to child are complicated by the intervention of this political act. As in both Medea's and Clytemnestra's cases, the exigencies of the masculine political world place unbearable tension on the primal dyad of mother and child, interfering with and perverting the loyalties of blood. As I have already noted, however, it is Videna's incommensurate affection for the elder child that tips the scales so destructively. Early modern drama adds the complicating intangible of mother-love to the soup of conflicts already available in classical sources. Did Clytemnestra love Iphigenia inordinately? We have no reason to think so. Videna's irrational and inexplicable attachment to Ferrex emphasizes the resistance of women's "nature" to the rational dic-

tates of disciplined government. In the Greek plays women were "prehistoric" and so dangerous; in early modern drama they are situated as uncontrollable nature—nature, that is, turned monstrous when it escapes the net of social construction.

As I have noted, *Gorboduc* participates in a rich tradition of dramas which focus on the intersection of family and monarchy, mobilizing murderous mothers to suggest the barely repressed connection to blood that threatens rule by law. Like *Gorboduc*, many of these plays use the figure of the violent mother to critique just such an intersection. Lady Macbeth's linguistic violence toward her absent babes constitutes another instance of a "Medea-moment" with direct political impact:

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
> And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
> As you have done to this.
> (1.7.54–59)

Lady Macbeth's apparent lack of children and her capacity to over-write her mothering instinct with political ambition have been the subject of any amount of critical speculation. It is fair to say at a bare minimum that Shakespeare uses her present childlessness and her murderous speech to emphasize the unnatural role she adopts when she seeks to move out of the position of wife and mother and into the position of political advisor and schemer.[24] Whether they kill their children, or their husbands, or merely wreak havoc with political structures, women characters in such plays represent the internalized instability that inevitably accompanies any system founded in familial dynamics. The fact that in all the plays I consider here the family described is also a ruling family emphasizes the connection—family is at the heart of government structure, from the broadest ideological basis to the most specific individual case. Women's connections with the blood of birth and the loyalties of blood kin render masculine political organization incoherent. When Saturninus marries Tamora in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, he literally and metaphorically brings the alien, irrational, barbarous, bestial, tribal Other into the sanctum of the Roman ruling order: Tamora is a "tiger," a force of nature uncivilized and unrestrained by Roman values; she stands for all women whose priorities do not make sense in a world defined by men. Tamora's violence against Titus is initially prompted by her own child's sacrifice to

Titus's sense of religious obligation, much the same way Clytemnestra claims Iphigenia's death calls for the blood-bath in which Agamemnon dies. If we accept duBois' claims that "The *Medea* expresses a sense of the invasion of the city by difference," and that "the role of the animal, barbarian, exile bride is the fate of every Greek woman," who imports difference into the *polis* as she does into the family, we should be comfortable extending her analysis of Medea to one of Medea's Shakespearean sisters.[25] Appropriately, the bestial epithets applied to Tamora echo those hurled at Clytemnestra in the *Oresteia*, while Tamora's dual position as barbarian and woman reproduces Medea's.

Perhaps the most sustained Renaissance articulation of the threat mothers present to the organization of civil and political order comes in Fulke Greville's *Mustapha*. In that play, Soliman's second wife, Rossa, plots to turn her royal husband against his eldest son, Mustapha, in order to place her own son Zanger in line for the throne. The extended family created by marriage is destroyed from within by the new mother, whose ties to her own "blood" outweigh any and all claims. Greville suggests that marriage itself is a source of weakness within the ruling family: Soliman feels himself isolated and lonely, and in response to these human emotions and human desires has remarried, putting Rossa in the powerful position of an advisor close to the throne who has special access and a special hold over the monarch. "*Love is onely that which Princes covet*," laments Soliman, and because she supposedly loves him Soliman tells Rossa "I hold thee dear," and "my love hath made us one."[26] Where *Gorboduc* loosely aligned the failure of monarchs to heed good advice with the fragmentation of the family and the liberation of Videna's passions, *Mustapha* more explicitly pits a wife's role as supplement to the ruler against the state's rational administration. Renaissance religious doctrine held that husband and wife were one flesh—"And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" is how Genesis puts it (2. 23)—yet within the "one" a hierarchy yet had to be maintained, so that the wife did not rule the husband, or, where the husband was a ruler, rule with him. Soliman's councilor Achmat tries to intervene in Rossa's machinations, asking the King to make her children his heirs instead of Mustapha; likewise Camena, Rossa's daughter, asks Soliman to reconsider his hostility to his own son, but both attempts at advice must fail. Soliman is in an impossible position: he must either reject his wife or his son. He chooses to validate Rossa, persuaded by the dripping poison of her allegations which trade on his sense of mortality and isolation.

Camena's opposition to her mother's plot places her solidly on the side of rational order: "Are Kinde and Order growne precipitate," she

queries her father, reminding him that "*Kings, that, in their fearefull icie State,/ Behold their children, as their winding sheet,/ Doe easily doubt*" (II.iii.118–24). Camena's gender reminds us that women can and do uphold the structures of the state—she, rather like Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, is the idealized woman who embraces her ideological role and suppresses the links dictated by blood in favor of the state's abstract good. Doing so, however, plunges her into confusion—she discovers that passive service to the state's ideals gains her nothing:

> What I shall say, and say of holy Mother,
> Know I shall say it, but to right a Brother.
> My Mother is your Wife: Dutie in her
> Is love: She loves; which not well govern'd beares
> The evill Angell of misgiving Feares;
> Whose many eyes, whilst but it self they see,
> Still make the worst of possibility:
> Out of this Feare she *Mustapha* accuseth:
> Unto this Feare, perchance, she joynes the Love,
> Which doth in Mothers, for their Children move.
> (II.iii. 131–40)

Attempting to delineate competing ties of blood, marriage and dutiful love, Camena balances her need to support state order (embodied by her brother, who is in fact her step-brother) against her need to be a loving daughter (to a "holy" Mother). State order wins. However, imagining what might inspire Rossa's actions, Camena searches for an explanation that will not represent her mother as corrupt. She articulates a sequence—duty is love, love resists good "government," and is complicated by mother-child love—that neatly summarizes the problems with the family/state analogy. The translation of duty into love represents the odd nature of Renaissance marriage, in which both were assumed to co-exist; yet love cannot entirely be controlled by duty, and breaks out into "fears." Further, the mother-child bond is essentially different from the husband-wife bond, and may trump the latter—as any reader of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* could have confirmed.

Rossa's schemes could have no effect on Soliman, however, were he not already troubled by the contradictions in his supposedly compatible roles as patriarch of a family and patriarch of a nation. In Soliman's first speeches, love for his child wars with his princely duties: "Two states I bear; his Father, and his King; / These two, being Relatives, have mutuall bonds; / Neglect in either, all in question brings" (II.ii.15–17).

Renaissance notions of the patriarchal foundation for monarchy are unraveled in Soliman's debate: when family and government overlap, tensions between the two threaten to "bring *all* in question." In the most complete condemnation of familial ties, Soliman banishes "this Father-language" in favor of the abstract compulsions of "Justice" which "these misty doubts will clear" (II.ii. 38–41). The problem with blood ties, however, is that they do not answer to such banishment—Soliman's weakness toward family runs deeper than he thinks, allowing the legally and emotionally constituted familial tie to his wife to replace his blood tie to his son once he begins to distrust Mustapha.

Rossa as a Medea figure challenges all the principles of Renaissance hierarchy and ideologies of wifely submission. Because she is wife of a king, the challenge she represents connects family issues to issues of state authority. "O wearisome Obedience" exclaims Rossa at the opening of Act 3. Rosten, her fellow conspirator, advises that she "govern [her] thoughts" (III.i.11), but she rails that marriage serves her nothing if she cannot have her way. Although her character functions differently than Euripides' Medea, the two share their disillusion with marriage. Rossa has certainly a less legitimate complaint against her husband, but she too repudiates the role of the "servile sex" (III. i. 26):

> My chiefest end
> Is, first to fix this World on my Succession;
> Next so to alter, plant, remove, create,
> That I, not he [Mustapha], may fashion this Estate.
> (III.i. 150–53)

Greville uses language commonly associated with God's and the king's power—planting, creating, altering—to emphasize Rossa's intent to invert the power structure. Of course, she is also plotting to control succession, the prerogative of men and male monarchs, not wives, mothers or women generally. She has usurped the masculine role and masculine authority. She proves her "unnaturalness" by killing her own blood, Camena, to prevent the revelation of her plot. Again like Medea, Rossa's emblematic moment is her entrance in Act 4, scene 3 to announce "Thy Child is slaine. These hands imbrued are, / Even in her bowels, whom I nurs'd with care" (38–39). To Soliman she portrays the act as part of her duty to the state: "This Wretch conspir'd the ruine of the State" (44). The horror Rossa is meant to elicit at both her ambitions for her own blood, and her willingness to shed that blood as if it were her prerogative alone, resonates in a Renaissance readership committed to hierarchies of gov-

ernment and to the gender divisions that underwrite order: as she says about Camena's murder, "Who dare usurpe / To take this Kingdome of my selfe from me?" (IV.iii.2–3). Her assault on her own flesh and blood, and her assault on the prerogative of the king and father (to protect or punish what Renaissance audiences would have seen as *his* children) are one and the same. Like Medea, Rossa creates for herself a world in which women do not procreate *for* men, for male lineage or continuity of the monarchy, but for themselves alone.

Rossa, of course, is not precisely Medea or Clytemnestra. The parallels that join these classical sources to Greville's play are more indirect than that, filtered through the particular social, political and religious tensions of early modern England. Yet as much as Medea or Clytemnestra, or Videna, Lady Capulet, Lady Macbeth or Tamora, Rossa bodies forth all the contradictions, all the incommensurabilities of the family's role in sustaining and supporting the structures of the early modern state. For ancient Athens, tragedy "was an important means by which knowledge, values and reasoning became elements of a common culture."[27] Classical audiences could appreciate the challenge Medea's and Clytemnestra's values presented to the institutions that shaped the *polis*; tragedy emphasized the primacy of male decision-making, masculine institutions and patriarchal authority translated into democratic process. About Renaissance drama, Louis Montrose has similarly argued that "The actions of many Shakespearean plays resemble rites of passage which give a social shape, order, and sanction to human existence."[28] If we believe that plays like *Gorboduc* or *Mustapha* accomplish such a function, their goal seems to be to wean their audiences away from the blood-ties of family's privileging the alternative commitment to rationalized law, justice, and orderly political rule. In this respect, they carry on the tradition of exorcising the specter of the murdering mother in the interests of nation-building established by their classical sources, adapting Greek and Roman material to Renaissance social and political ends. The continuity of the classical and Renaissance dramatic tradition of mobilizing the terrifying figure of the murdering mother, however, also suggests that the political and cultural work these plays do is unfinished, perhaps unfinishable. The exorcism fails; the specter returns. Political and social change continually generate new pressures to which the analogy as ideological tool must respond, and with each new twist or turn fissures in its logic open, points of resistance, apertures through which the specter returns. What was buried resurfaces, and requires that drama continue to perform its social labor, casting women as murdering demons to drive a wedge between each new audience and its family ties.

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NOTES

1. Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. Irby Cauthen (Lincoln, NE: UP of Nebraska, 1970) 3. All references to the play are to this edition.

2. Senecan style dramas blend the dynamics of family with political commentary; for more on Senecanism, its attributes, and its appeal for Renaissance dramatists see H. B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1946); Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992); or Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985).

3. Betty S. Travitsky, "Child Murder in English Renaissance Life and Drama," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 6 (1993): 63–84. Travitsky covers a broader variety of plays than I have selected, including those that describe infanticide by males.

4. I use "family" where some critics use the term "household" only as a reminder that the extended household was organized according to the familial model. Robin Fox's essay "The Virgin and the Godfather: Kinship versus the State in Greek Tragedy and After," in *Anthropology and Literature*, ed. Paul Benson (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993) 107–50, argues against the usual critical assumption that has the individual functioning in opposition to structures of government and religion. Reading from the Greeks (primarily the *Antigone*) forward to twentieth-century films about the Mafia, Fox instead presents the case that the family is the real site of resistance—that individuals, even the nuclear family (because it "pares down" the kinship unit) serve the state rather than resist it. The extended family, the tribe, the complicated and often messy network of "consanguineal or pseudo-consanguineal" ties (109) is what inspires paranoia. Her persuasive arguments have significantly influenced my own work in this essay. An equally suggestive reading of the *Oresteia* specifically in terms of modern familial structures can be found in Valerie Hartouni's "Reproductive Technologies and the Negotiation of Public Meanings: The Case of Baby M" in *"Provoking Agents": Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice*, ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1995) 115–32.

5. While John Locke's *Treatises on Government*, with their more complete articulation of consensual rule, do not appear until the late seventeenth century, many earlier attempts to explain the monarch's power, even those most deeply invested in its link to divine authority, suggest reciprocal, almost contractual exchanges upon which the monarch's rule is based. For complications to the critical and historical tendency to read the monarchy as "absolutist," vs. an institution involving consent or negotiation, see Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996) 17–62, esp. his discussion of "assent" in limiting kings' power (44–6).

6. Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary Dewar (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 59.

7. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. 59 Louis le Roy (1598) 58.

8. On Filmer and James I, see Gordon Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).

9. *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches In the Time of Queen Elizabeth I (1547–1571)* (Gainesville: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1968) 69.

10. Cit. in Robert B. Pierce, *Shakespeare's History Plays: The Family and the State* (Ohio: Ohio State UP, 1971) 6.

11. The analogy is the focus of two such examinations of particular note: Susan Amussen's *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) 34–66, and Constance Jordan, "The Household and the State: Transformations in the Representation of an Analogy from Aristotle to James I," *Modern Language Quarterly* 54 (1993): 307–26.

12. Amussen also interestingly notes that relations between households could become something like "foreign affairs," given the importance of the integrity of the family unit (47).

13. Deborah Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990), esp. "Nursing Fathers: Patriarchy as Cultural Ideal," 218–49.

14. Such an overview of the Elizabethan State is offered in Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer's *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985). For instance, they characterize the Elizabethan era as marked by a "shift [in] the basis of aristocratic power from manred to political influence and office" (70), in essence a transition from feudal organization to something more approximately resembling the modern nation-state.

15. *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et. al., (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) 908. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays are from this edition.

16. See for instance critics cited in note 2 above. Critical tendency to assume dramatists worked with Roman interpretations of Greek plays is usually justified; I am only suggesting that it may lead us to overlook other areas of influence.

17. Page duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 68–69.

18. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993) 126.

19. Euripides, *Medea and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood (New York: Oxford UP, 1998) 15. Further references to the play are to this edition.

20. Nicole Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, trans. Anthony Forster (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1987) 223.

21. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones (New York: Prentice, 1970) 91–92.

22. Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones (New York: Prentice, 1970) 24. Further references are to this edition.

23. Marty Roth, "'This Blood That Fury Breathed': The Shape of Justice in Aeschylus and Shakespeare," *Comparative Literature Studies* 29 (1992): 141–56, 152.

24. Lady Macbeth's character has attracted numerous feminist scholars, who have examined the connections between her murderous nature and the witches, or have explained her role as the focus for male anxieties about mothering generally. See for example, Janet Adelman's "'Born of Woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in *Macbeth*," in *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987), 90–121; or for a quite different take on the subject of Lady Macbeth's children, see Alice Fox, "How Many Pregnancies Had Lady Macbeth?" *University of Dayton Review* 14 (1979–80): 33–37.

25. Page duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982) 116.

26. Fulke Greville, *Mustapha*, I. i. 75–7 and I. ii. 73, in *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, Vol. 2, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (New York: Oxford UP, 1945). References to the play are to this edition.

27. This description is J. Peter Euben's in *The Tragedy of Political Theory: The Road Not Taken* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990) 55. Euben also notes that "tragedy's distance from the urgency of daily decisions—which drove the council, assembly and juries—allowed it to develop a uniquely 'theoretical' perspective," (56) a claim with which I agree absolutely. However, I should note that Euben's project, which argues that Greek tragedy "uses the politics of gender and sexuality to make 'larger' points about 'the human condition'" [92] the quotations marks are Euben's, meant to signal his recognition of the politics involved in these terms) is the opposite of my own, which insists that politics grows out of family, relies on gender, and is never "larger" than these terms.

28. "The Purpose of Playing: Reflections on a Shakespearean Anthropology," *Helios* 7 (1979–80): 51–74. Greville's plays were not performed before a general audience; on the other hand, reading plays allows exactly the kind of repetition and imaginative investment Montrose describes, and actually suggests more powerfully the internalizing of values, and the problems with those values, that staged drama initiates.