The Rhetoric of Providence: Thomas Middleton's A Game at Chess *(1624) and Seventeenth-Century Political Engraving**

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This essay compares the rhetoric of providentialism in Samuel Ward's 1621 engraving To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce from ye Invincible Navie and ye Unmatcheable Powder Treason *with that in Thomas Middleton's 1624 play* A Game at Chess. *Both satirize the negotiations over the Spanish Match by using providentialist discourse to modulate and veil their more satirical, and polemical, intentions. Ward and Middleton employ a technique of historical retrospection, referring to past events in order to present a simultaneously diachronic and synchronic world view.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This essay reconsiders the nature of satire and political opposition in Thomas Middleton's (1580–1627) political drama on the subject of the Spanish Match crisis, *A Game at Chess*, by focusing on the play's polemical use of providential rhetoric.[1] The extensive use of the vocabulary of providentialism (that God is always present), apocalypticism, and anti-Catholicism in sermons, political pamphlets, satirical engravings,[2] and other printed tracts in early seventeenth-century England has been described by David Cressy and Alexandra Walsham.[3] Walsham conceives of providentialism

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[1]For a general historiographic discussion of the Spanish Match crisis, see Cogswell, 1989; Redworth; Samson. The Spanish Match was a proposed marriage between Prince Charles of England and the Infanta of Spain, Maria Anna, daughter of Philip III. It was initiated during the tenure of Count Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to England, in 1614, and came to a crisis during the years 1619 to 1623. In 1623, Charles and the Duke of Buckingham went to Spain in disguise to negotiate the match. They failed in their mission, but returned to England to find much public rejoicing, with bonfires, bells, and a national holiday of thanksgiving. See Cressy.

[2]Throughout this essay, I use the terms *engraving* and *political print*, or *print*, interchangeably. All of the prints described in this essay are also metal engravings.

[3]See Walsham; Cressy.

as manifesting a "Calvinist consensus" concerning God's influence over the destiny of the Protestant English nation, and she argues against any clear-cut Puritan opposition to the established church of England prior to the 1630s and the Laudian ascendency.[4] This essay sees Middleton employing the vocabulary of providentialism to express continued faith in the efficacy of providential narratives of divine retribution and deliverance in a way that supports Walsham's view. But it also shows how Middleton is skeptical about the possibility of princes acting in support of Protestant nationalism when under the influence of Machiavellian political agents of both Catholic and Spanish origin.

Middleton's play was very responsive to both the developing idiom of providentialism and the burgeoning medium of print. His reading of contemporary anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic pamphlets was extensive and included Thomas Scott's (ca. 1580–1626) *Vox Populi* (1620); Scott's *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624); John Gee's (1595/96–1639) *The Foot out of the Snare: With a Detection of Sundry Late Practices . . . of the Priests and Jesuits* (1624); Thomas Goad's (1576–1638) *The Friers Chronicle* (1623); André Rivet's (1572–1651) *The State-Mysteries of the Jesuites* (1623); John Reynolds's (ca. 1588–ca. 1655) *Vox Coeli, or Newes from Heaven* (1624); and Thomas Robinson's (fl. 1622) *The Anatomy of the English Nunnery at Lisbon* (1622). What Middleton learned from these texts is that providentialism and anti-Catholicism could be used to narrate divine judgment and caution against the possibility of divine wrath for Protestant subjects and Protestant kings alike.[5] He alludes to these pamphlets repeatedly in *A Game at Chess*, capitalizing on audience familiarity with the most controversial polemical literature of the age. At the same time, Middleton internalizes the polemic techniques of these pamphlets. He uses them in specifically literary ways to create more in-depth explorations of character, plot, and theme. While providentialist rhetoric appears in his play, it is both deeply ironic and cautiously affirmative. It is employed to confront the problem of Machiavellian dissembling by the figures of the Spanish court and the agents of Catholic and Spanish authority in England (including Jesuit priests and the Spanish ambassador himself), and to call attention to both the

[4]Walsham speaks of a "collective Protestant consciousness." The term "Calvinist consensus" refers to Nicholas Tyacke's thesis about the rise of Arminianism in seventeenth-century England: see Tyacke. This essay uses the terms *consensus vocabulary* and *consensus rhetoric* throughout in order to refer to what Walsham describes as the dominant and generally held belief in providentialism, apocalypticism, and anti-Catholicism in seventeenth-century England.

[5]For Middleton's sources, see Howard-Hill, especially "Appendix B: Middleton's Reading Reflected in the Play," 247–52, and "Appendix C: Other Possible Sources," 253–66.

powerful effects and the limitations of Catholic and anti-Catholic propaganda. It is also used to argue in favor of more open and straightforward strategies of diplomacy and political persuasion between Spanish Catholics and English Protestants, and to caution against complacence in the face of a national mythology concerning providential deliverance and God's seeming favoritism of the elect Protestant nation. Finally, Middleton draws on providentialism to underscore the potential for deception by one's enemies and to highlight the need to remain vigilant against Spanish, Jesuit, and Catholic threats — from both foreign and domestic sources — to the security and tranquility of the Protestant English nation.

In 1624, one year after the crisis over the Spanish Match had subsided following the return of Prince Charles (1600–49) and George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628), from Spain, Middleton's goal in revisiting these events was primarily exemplary. In the context of a satire of providentialist narratives, and of political and religious propaganda more generally, the play functions as a cautionary tale opposed to the idea that history can and does repeat itself. Providentialism suggests the possibility of continued divine favor and memorializes instances of divine intervention to reinforce the idea that God favors England and Protestantism exclusively. But Middleton warns against easy and unthinking acceptance of this dictum. Providence can favor, but Providence can also exert God's vengeance and wrath. It is up to individual actors, and especially the Parliament and the king, to ensure that the narrowly averted crisis over the Spanish Match does not recur, perhaps with different and more tragic consequences.[6]

In what follows, this essay compares Middleton's satiric strategy in *A Game at Chess* to a similar approach used in a political engraving from the period, Samuel Ward's (1577–1640) *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce*, a satire on the Spanish Match negotiations that Middleton almost certainly knew.[7] This essay demonstrates how political prints and drama responded to the crisis of the Spanish Match with similar polemical intentions and with comparable uses of providentialism for propagandistic

[6]This essay draws on the discussion of providential history in Fincham and Lake. Lake's essay on Thomas Scott has also been beneficial: see Lake, 1982.

[7]The print exists in three different states, noted in Stephens as British Museum Satires #41, #42, and #43. The original print, by Samuel Ward, is British Museum Satire #41. It is described in Stephens, 21–24. I have also examined the originals in the British Museum. Stephens's *Catalogue*, published in 1870, provides extensive descriptions of all of the political prints that are in the British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings, the central archive that I draw upon in this essay. Mary Dorothy George provides a useful summary of the political prints described in Stephens: see George.

ends. Political prints and drama used historical retrospection — framing topicality in the language of past consciousness — to present contemporary criticism of foreign and domestic policy and to exhibit a growing historiographical consciousness of the continuity of past, present, and future. Rather than participating in an explicit oppositional polemics, political prints and drama inhabit both conservative and radical ideological perspectives: they offer satire and criticism, but within the context of upholding the political and religious status quo.

2. The Play and Print Described

Much of the criticism of *A Game at Chess* has focused on externals. Critics have questioned the play's satirical and oppositional intentions and have considered the nature of the play's topical engagement with the Spanish Match. They have theorized its possible patronage and attempted to identify which figures at court might have shielded Middleton from immediate censorship and allowed the drama to be performed at all.[8] Even when the play is interpreted in more traditional literary ways, in terms of character, plot, and theme, the emphasis has still been on comprehending the political allegory. Critics have attempted to identify the play's symbolism in connection with the Spanish Match and have paired characters and events from the play with actual figures at the Jacobean and Spanish courts. A notable exception is Ian Munro's essay on *A Game at Chess*, which begins with a premise similar to that of this essay — that the play has been less read than "read through." Munro emphasizes the elements of secrecy and describes the thematic relationships among gossip, rumor, Machiavellian scheming, and the worlds of print and propaganda that operate throughout Middleton's drama.[9] Also relevant to the present study is the more recent work of Thomas Cogswell. In an article that situates the confessional politics of *A Game at Chess* in a historical continuum from the Armada to the Thirty Years' War, Cogswell engages with the providential themes of the drama. While Cogswell gestures outward, toward James I's (1566–1625) engagement with the religious and political demands of a national and international community, this essay considers the play's commitment to providentialism in the context of local and topical concerns with character and representation.[10]

[8]For criticism of *A Game at Chess*, see Howard-Hill; Heinemann; Limon; Tricomi; and Cogswell, 2011. While there are many other critical essays on the play, these books are the ones that are most relevant to this particular essay.

[9]Munro.

[10]See Cogswell, 2011.

A Game at Chess was performed in 1624 to sold-out crowds for nine consecutive days.[11] In the context of a chess allegory, Middleton illustrates the conflict between the White House, representing Protestant England, and the Black House, standing for Catholic Spain. One possible source for *A Game at Chess* is a political engraving by the Ipswich preacher Samuel Ward, a radical Puritan, published in 1621 at the height of the controversy over the Spanish Match (fig. 1). The full title of Ward's detailed, complex allegorical political engraving is *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce from ye Invincible Navie and ye Unmatcheable Powder Treason*.[12] The print, one of the earliest surviving examples of English pictorial satire on a contemporary political issue, has been described in some detail by Antony Griffiths, Helen Pierce, and Malcolm Jones.[13] *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce* critiqued James I's pro-Spanish foreign policies in the context of a conventional representation of the defeat of the Spanish Armada and prevention of the Gunpowder Plot. It used the allegory of a devilish conclave at the center of the print to satirize the Spanish Match crisis. In act 3, scene 1 of *A Game at Chess*, Middleton alludes to Ward's print. In this scene, the Black Knight, representing the Spanish ambassador Don Diego Sarmiento de Acũna, Count of Gondomar (1567–1626; known as Gondomar), boasts of the various plots that he has devised against the White House under the cover of pretended diplomacy and amity. The Black Knight revels in his effectiveness at preventing criticism of the Black House by the White House in the popular press. He has successfully censored English sermonizers, printers, and even political engravers:

> Whose policy was't to put in silenced muzzle
> On all the barking tongue-men of the time,
> Made pictures that were dumb enough before
> Poor sufferers in that politic restraint?[14]

[11]See Howard-Hill's introduction in Middleton, 1993, 1–59. This is the edition of the play used throughout this essay. Text references are to page numbers, followed parenthetically by act, scene, and line numbers.

[12]The full title also appears in Latin: *Deo trini-uni Britanniae bis ultori, In memoriam Classis invincibilis subversae submersae Proditionis nesandae detectae disiectae*. References to Ward's print in this essay are abbreviated as *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce*.

[13]See Griffiths; Pierce; Jones; and Walsham. My work is different from all of these studies in that its focus is not just on the prints, but also on the relationship between satirical engravings and topical political drama. Previous work on these prints has been the purview of art historians and historians, not literary critics.

[14]Middleton, 1993, 125 (3.1.100–03).

FIGURE 1. Samuel Ward. *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce from ye Invincible Navie and ye Unmatcheable Powder Treason.* London, 1621. © Trustees of the British Museum. Department of Prints and Drawings, Satire 41.

Whether Middleton had direct knowledge of Ward's engraving is unknown, but he certainly would have been familiar with Thomas Scott's allusion to the controversy over Ward's "pictures" because it was included in *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624), one of the primary pamphlet sources for Middleton's play. In the context of a fictive Spanish conclave, Scott depicts Gondomar, the leader of the cabal, describing in detail — in a way that is clearly echoed by Middleton in Gondomar's monologue — how he has attempted to silence any criticism of the Spanish Match. This includes his own effort to censor Ward himself: "I thinke Ward of Ipswich escaped not safely for his lewd and profane picture of 88. and their powder treason, one whereby my L. Archbishop I sent you in a letter, that you might see the malice of these detestable Heretiques, against the Holinesse of the Catholique church."[15]

Middleton probably also knew John Reynolds's reference to Ward's engraving in his pamphlet *Vox Coeli* (1624). Reynolds situates Ward's

[15]Scott, 1624, 17.

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picture among similarly controversial works on the Spanish Match crisis when he remarks that "I saw *Scott's* loyal *Vox Populi*, *Alured's* honest Letter, *D. Whiting*, *D. Everard*, and *Clayton's* Zealous sermons, and others, suppressed and silenced, as also *Ward's* faithful picture."[16] For Reynolds, the intentions of these Puritan authors have been misconstrued by the Jacobean authorities; all six men attempted to create works of honesty, zeal, and faithfulness. That the Privy Council sought to suppress and silence these voices was due to its belief in the seditious nature of these political pamphlets, sermons, and pictures, which stands in opposition to the conservative intentions of their writers. As Thomas Cogswell summarizes, "The most troubling and persistent criticism . . . came from the pulpits. . . . We know only that in 1622 a procession of clergymen, John Everard, Thomas Young, Thomas Winniffe, Mr. Clayton, Richard Randes and Samuel Ward were reprimanded for dealing in various ways with Spain and the Palatinate."[17] These writers spoke, wrote, or printed in opposition to James I's two proclamations of the 1620s against "excess of lavish and lascivious speech in matter of state" and against "unreverent speech."[18]

A parallel belief in the controversial and oppositional motives behind Middleton's play characterized the official response to *A Game at Chess*. Indeed, what is most striking about Ward's engraving and Middleton's play are the similarities between the Spanish hostility and the official Jacobean response to the two works. Both texts were objected to vehemently and publicly by the resident Spanish ambassador, Gondomar in the case of Ward and Don Carlos de Coloma in the case of Middleton. The ambassadors believed that their "master" (whether Philip III [1578–1621] in the first instance, or Philip IV [1605–65] in the second) had been slandered by Ward's and Middleton's topical political satires. Both objections led to the authors' imprisonment by the British Privy Council and the censorship or suppression of their work. Both occasioned wide speculation, in contemporary letters, diplomatic correspondence, and diaries, about the political, topical, and satirical intents being represented in the print and the play.[19]

What makes Ward's engraving especially relevant for understanding Middleton's play is that Ward employed providentialism to both affirm

[16]Reynolds, A4^{v} (italics in original).

[17]Cogswell, 1989, 27. See D. H. Wilson; and Fincham and Lake, 171–72.

[18]Cogswell, 1989, 20. See Larkin and Hughes, 495–96, 519–21.

[19]For the range of contemporary responses to Middleton's play, see Middleton, 1993, 192–213. Also see Shami; Braunmuller; Wagner; Moore; Phialus; and Bullough. The most complete description of the censorship of Ward's print is in Griffiths, 153–54. But see also Walsham, 255–58; and Pierce, 39–47.

God's providential blessing of England as an elect nation and, at the same time, to suggest the limitations of this providential view. This essay contends that, like Middleton, Ward used providentialist rhetoric to make both satirical and topical political points. This argument about the engraving differs from previous ones. Griffiths, Pierce, and Jones suggest that Ward's work is straightforwardly satirical, polemic, and oppositional. Walsham sees it in more generalized conventional and allegorical terms. In contrast, this essay underscores the simultaneity of satirical and conventional rhetorics in Ward's picture. John Wallace writes that political topicality often bridges the particular and the general in a way that provides a bridge term "in the axiomatic or perceptual middle between the particulars of poetry and the particulars of contemporary history."[20] This essay views providential rhetoric in Ward's engraving as occupying a similar in-between space. The lack of critical consensus about Ward's print evokes his original intentions: it reveals his shrewd understanding of the need to frame satire and polemic in conservative, conventional, and historical terms. Employing historical retrospection, a technique that would become one of the primary hallmarks of both pictorial and dramatic satire between the 1630s and 1650s and beyond, Ward looked to iconic events of the past — the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot — in order to position his critique of the Spanish Match in simultaneously historiographic (i.e., general) and topical political (i.e., specific) terms.

3. Ward's Engraving and Earlier Prints on the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot

In his 1621 print, Ward clearly builds upon earlier examples of woodcuts, engravings, and title-page illustrations that represented English Protestantism in the context of providential history. These include *The Powder Treason, Propounded by Sathan; Approved by Antichrist; Enterprised, by Papist; Practized, by Traitors; Reveled, by an Eagle; Expounded, by an Oracle; Founded in Hell; Confounded in Heaven* (London, ca. 1615), by Richard Smith, engraved by Michael Droeshout (fig. 2);[21] and *The Papists Powder Treason*, originally engraved about 1617 but only known through an impression from ca. 1679, now in the Huntington Library (fig. 3).[22] Both of these are heavily architectural, evoking the imagery of various frontispieces

[20]Wallace, 285. I thank Bradin Cormack for this reference.

[21]This is British Museum Satire #67, described in Stephens, 36–37. See also Hind, 342.

[22]See Walsham, 256, plate 34n. There is also a copy of this print in the Lambeth Palace Library: see http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/broadsideballad.

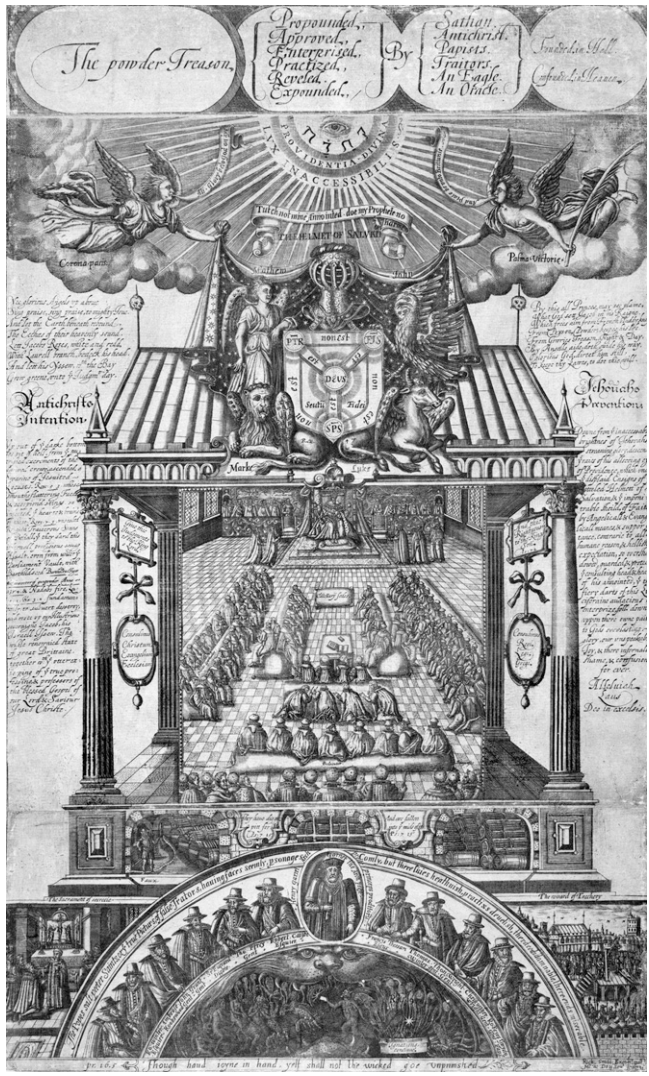

FIGURE 2. Richard Smith. *The Powder Treason, Propounded by Sathan; Approved by Antichrist; Enterprised, by Papist; Practized, by Traitors; Reveled, by an Eagle; Expounded, by an Oracle; Founded in Hell; Confounded in Heaven.* London, ca. 1615. © Trustees of the British Museum. Department of Prints and Drawings, Satire 67.

to folio volumes that were produced from the sixteenth century onward. They divide typologically along a vertical axis, with Protestantism, Truth, Virtue, and Christ at the top, and Catholicism, Error, Vice, and Antichrist at the bottom. The radiating eye of Providence recurs, along with the (usually transliterated) Tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew letters signifying the

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FIGURE 3. Anon. *The Papists Powder Treason.* London, [1679?]. By permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. RB 28300 IV.21.

name of God (in both prints these are at the top, in the middle, though the eye is clearer, and more pronounced, in *The Powder Treason, Propounded*). Allusions to Psalms and other books of the Bible are interspersed throughout. In the case of Psalms these emphasize a trajectory from complaint, petition, and lament to thanksgiving in the face of providential blessing and deliverance from the forces of Antichrist (Catholicism and other enemies). There is a strong language of Apocalypse, with multiple references to Revelation, the angel of the Apocalypse, and the helmet of salvation. In *The Powder Treason, Propounded* (fig. 2), specific historical scenes are also represented: at the center

is James I, seated in Parliament on a dais with the chancellor, treasurer, and royal family. At the bottom of the print are three cellars: one is filled with gunpowder, the other depicts Guy Fawkes (1570–1606; labeled "Faux," as in Ward), and the third holds individual Gunpowder plotters, while the lunette above shows the mouth of hell. Here the typological slides into the allegorical. The fate of the conspirators is shown literally, with their heads pierced by spikes, as well as figuratively, in the image of the hellmouth, symbolizing their ultimate fate in the afterlife.

In *The Papists Powder Treason*, by contrast, religious imagery exists side by side with such pagan symbols as the "Bonita divina," a metaphorical representation of the deity, and an allegorical depiction of "swifte Nemesis," or Justice (fig. 3).[23] As with *The Powder Treason, Propounded*, references to Psalms (18, 21, 46, 69, 94, 102, and 148) are inserted in placards, picture frames, the base of Ionic columns, the floor of Parliament, and even the tablecloth at which the Gunpowder plotters conspire. These allusions express joy at God's blessings and deliverances, strongly uphold and verify the power of prayer, and beseech God to punish the wicked and enact vengeful judgments upon those who persecute the faithful. But *The Papists Powder Treason* also embeds a more specific political criticism, even if evident only to the discerning reader. In a series of allusions to Kings 20:6 and Esther 3:6 and 7:3, the engraving cautions against the fate of good kings being deceived by bad ones and emphasizes the importance of having God on one's side when confronting one's enemies. It references King Ahab's deception by the King Ben-Hadad of Syria, but it also cites Esther's petition to King Ahasuerus, who, it is revealed, has himself been responsible for Esther's suffering as a result of his manipulation by Haman. The moral is clear: James I, who appears as a statue at the top of the engraving opposite his wife, Queen Anne of Denmark (1574–1619), runs the risk of being deceived by the Spanish king and by pro-Catholic forces in England. James I should learn the lessons of biblical history and remain vigilant against such overt and covert threats to English Protestantism. He must comprehend the dual lessons of providential history: the possibility of God's deliverance, but also of his judgment. In the face of actions that run counter to the narrative of providential and apocalyptic history — namely, the support of Catholicism and Spain over the interests of Protestant England, as James I seemed to be doing in the 1620s — there is always the possibility that God will turn against the Protestant nation and its king.

[23]For a more in-depth discussion of classical and mythological representations of divine justice, see Walsham, 8. The quotations are from ibid.

In this group of early seventeenth-century providentialist engravings, Ward's print stands apart. *The Powder Treason, Propounded* figures the narrative of the Gunpowder Plot in historical and apocalyptic terms, whereas *The Papists Powder Treason* implies a kind of topical political critique, albeit one hidden in the context of biblical allusions. By contrast, *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce* makes explicit what *The Papists Powder Treason* had merely encoded and obscured. It implies the need for kings, such as James I, to recognize that they are being deceived by their enemies, in this case King Philip III of Spain and the Spanish ambassador Gondomar. But it also exhorts the monarch to come to terms with the need to trust in God's Providence to redirect the king, his courtiers, and the English populace as a whole back toward a path of providentialism, apocalypticism, and anti-Catholicism, established by God as the true destiny of the elect English nation. Ward accomplishes this by including the devilish scene at the center of the engraving, complete with at least two figures who resemble contemporary personages.

While framing a specific, topical, and satirical criticism of the Spanish Match in the old language of providentialism, anti-Catholicism, and apocalypticism, Ward also subverts this consensus vocabulary. He does so by transforming the representational space of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal, thus radically altering the hierarchical import of the engraving. He similarly undercuts traditional providentialism through the inclusion of realistic historical details, representing identifiable contemporary figures in order to make clear that his political print is an explicit commentary on the contemporary Spanish Match negotiations. In so doing, Ward appeals to a common vocabulary of providentialism that would be easily recognized as such, and at the same time limits (or attempts to limit) the potential for critical and censorious responses to his work. In other words, he uses providentialism to suggest conventionality and conservatism but also to disguise satire and polemic.

The aspect of Ward's print that is most conventional is its representation of the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot. The print is divided into three languages (English, Latin, and Dutch), three separate historical scenes, and three columns of explanatory verses. To the left is the defeat of the Spanish Armada, complete with cherubim blowing winds, inscribed "I blow and scatter."[24] The horizon and ocean are labeled "88" for the year of the defeat, 1588. In crescent formation, the Armada is shown with a single English fire ship entering at the unclosed end.

[24]Original in Latin, English, and Dutch: "*Disslo Dissipo I blow and scatter Ich blaes en verstroy*" (italics in original).

"The plaything of the winds" appears in large letters in the middle of the circle.[25] Below and to the left of the Armada, "He has dispersed the multitude" is stated in minuscule print.[26]

On the right, black thunderclouds hover above "A deed of darkenes," alluding to the Gunpowder plotters' conspiracy.[27] From the Eye of Providence issues a ray inscribed "I see and smile";[28] it points to the cellars under the Houses of Parliament, in front of which Guy Fawkes appears with a lantern. He is labeled "Faux," a pun on Fawkes and false; "A trifle has undone him" is written on the ground.[29] On each end of the roof of the Houses, human skulls are displayed on spikes; this was the fate of the conspirators, brought up on charges of treason, then summarily hanged and decapitated. A popish conclave occupies the center of the engraving. It is depicted under a tent, inscribed "To the perpetual infamy of Papists," whose outer flaps are partially pulled up by two demons to reveal the secrets hidden beneath its exterior.[30] Stephens identifies the various figures as such: "Within [the tent] are seated at a table the Devil as president, holding a sealed paper, the Pope, a Cardinal, the King of Spain, a Jesuit, &c.; under it is written 'into the pit that they have dug.'"[31]

If Ward reproduces the convention of providentialism, he also strikingly departs from it, as revealed by even a cursory comparison of *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce* with earlier engravings that address the Armada defeat and the Gunpowder Plot. Immediately obvious is that there is no heavy architectural frame in Ward's engraving, no effort to contextualize these classic instances of providential deliverance by reference to the authority of the Ionic or Doric orders or to platforms, stages, edifices, buildings, scaffolds, or ceilings. The engraving also omits many of the crowded details and allegorical imagery of earlier works. It excludes references to Revelation and scripture as well as petition and prayer. With the exception of the single phrase concerning God laughing at his enemies ("I see and smile"), there are no biblical allusions. The print rejects allegorical figures of Justice and Nemesis

[25]Original in Latin: "Ventorum Ludubrium."

[26]Original in Latin: "Straverat innumeris, &c." From a congratulatory poem by Théodore de Bèze (1519–1605) to Elizabeth I on the victory over the Armada: see de Bèze. This is a single-sheet broadsheet. I thank Robert Dulgarian for this reference and for help in translating the Latin throughout this essay.

[27]Original in Latin and English: "Opus tenebrarum, A deed of darkenes."

[28]Original in Latin, English, and Dutch: "Video Rideo I see and smile Ich sie en lach."

[29]Original in Latin: "Quantillum absuit, Hoe nae, How nue."

[30]Original in Latin: "In perpetuam Papistarum infamian."

[31]Original in Latin: "In foveam quam foder[u]nt." See Psalm 7:16. Stephens, 21–23.

and classical and Christian representations of deities. There are no hellmouths or Dantean tortures, no apocalyptic beasts or images of the Gospel writers.

For the most part, Ward's picture is realistic, depicting the crescent formation of the Armada, the troops at Tilbury (where Elizabeth I delivered her famous speech), the figure of Guy Fawkes, and the Parliament House and the gunpowder beneath. If *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce* is fanciful at all, it is in its inclusion of such humorous elements as cherubim blowing the winds that scatter the warships, the demons peeping into the central canopy, and, in an obvious allegory, the horned figure of the devil presiding over the Spanish Match negotiations. As with the reference to God's laughter, however, the general tenor of these images is less apocalyptic or providential than satirical and tongue-in-cheek. Perhaps more important than all of these differences between Ward's picture and the engravings on the Spanish Armada and Gunpowder Plot that preceded it is the layout of the image. It shifts the frame of pictorial and spatial representation from a vertical and top-down method of organization, with an implicit emphasis on hierarchy, didacticism, and providential atemporality, to a horizontal and linear one that suggests equality, balance, comparison of similar elements, and specific historical as well as contemporary events.

No previous study of the engraving has discussed this aspect of Ward's print, and the significance of his spatial and representational shift is worth emphasizing. In their work on the "grammar of visual design," Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuven argue that European images generally follow specific rules of spatial organization, either left-to-right or top-down. In polarized compositions, the lefthand side or top of the picture represents the space of the known, the self-evident, and the given, while the righthand side or bottom of the picture is that of the problematic, the provisional, and the new.[32] According to this theory, the left of Ward's engraving should represent a known quantity or an earlier event, which it does: to the left is the crescent formation of the Armada in 1588. The right side should depict a more recent occurrence, and again it does, representing the treasonous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. From left to right, then, *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce* signals a sequential narrative from an earlier moment in history to an incident of more recent memory. But this horizontal fluidity is interrupted by the inclusion of the scene at the center, in which eight solemn and formally dressed figures engage in serious debate at a long table covered with a white tablecloth while little devils with horns and inquisitive looks

[32]Kress and Leeuven, 200.

peer at them from above. Griffiths tentatively identifies six of the individuals as a pope, a devil, a cardinal, a Jesuit, and two monks.[33]

If Ward undercuts traditional providentialism he does so most explicitly by including this focal scene. As Kress and Leeuven maintain, the decision to place a particular image at the center of a composition has the effect of transferring the domain of the problematic, the provisional, or the new from the righthand side to the middle.[34] It forces the viewer to evaluate this central scene in light of the thematic and political implications of the images that appear to either side of it. They must perform the work of contextualizing and questioning that is the domain of satire, polemic, and propaganda. The evidence of Ward's prosecution for libel by the Privy Council reveals that his purported satiric representation of Philip III was stridently objected to by Gondomar.[35] Extrapolating from this response, Frederick Stephens and Griffiths claim that the figure to the right of the devil, sporting a narrow-brimmed hat with a feather plume and a large, stiff white ruff and dark clothing, was meant to represent the Spanish king.[36] Drawing on the evidence of a contemporary manuscript, however, this essay suggests a different attribution for both the figure of the devil at the center of the engraving and the individual with the white ruff to his right.[37] The latter, shown in strikingly realistic contemporary dress and physiognomy, is, this essay surmises, George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham. Prince Charles and Buckingham were the two English delegates who negotiated Charles's marriage to the Spanish infanta. If any member of the engraved conclave is meant to represent the Spanish king, it is the devil in the middle, who presides over the proceedings just as Philip III would have done.

Harley 389 includes what Arthur Hind thinks are Ward's directions to the engraver — namely, a written description of the formal elements of the

[33]Griffiths, 152. While Stephens only sees a devil, the pope, a cardinal, the King of Spain, and a Jesuit, Griffiths adds "two monks" to the picture. Griffiths thinks that the devil at the center of the print is the King of Spain, and I concur.

[34]See Kress and Leeuven, 200.

[35]Griffiths; Walsham; Pierce; and Jones all discuss this prosecution in some detail.

[36]See Stephens, 24; Griffiths, 152.

[37]The manuscript is British Library, London, Harley MS 389, letters of Joseph Mead to Sir Martin Stuteville. According to Bryan Ball in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Between 1620 and 1631 [Joseph] Mede also wrote regularly and at length to his friend Sir Martin Stuteville. This extensive series of letters, filling two folio volumes in the British Library (Harley MSS 389 and 390), deals largely with current university issues and matters of local and public interest in England and abroad, throwing additional light on Mede as a man of his time, willing and able to comment on contemporary issues. The correspondence was brought to an end by Sir Martin's death in 1631": see Ball.

print along with a pictorial sketch on folio 13.[38] It also contains Joseph Mede's letter "To the right worth & his worthie freind Sr Martin Stuteville Knight these at Dalham." Mede's correspondence with Stuteville is headed, "I sent you by Mr Thomas a description of Mr Wards Table or picture. I heare he is but in the purseuants house."[39] According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Joseph Mede (1588–1638), the "Hebraist and biblical scholar" best known for his *Key of the Revelation* (1643), corresponded frequently with Samuel Ward, a fact that helps us understand why Ward's directions would have been sent to Mede in the first place.[40] The copy of Ward's directions that Mede sent to Stuteville also includes several manuscript additions, in which Mede instructs Stuteville about how to interpret the pictorial sketch and description of the engraving. Thus, alongside the instructions to the engraver is Mede's commentary, placed in parentheses throughout the text:

> Under the tent opened (as I sayd) be=for, is seene a Table. at the upper end whereof toward the right hand sitts the Pope; behind him stands a Friar unco=verd. At the lower end of the table out against the Pope sitts one in a gowne & a cornerd cap (perhaps Garnet or else the Generall of the Jesuites) with a Frier as be=fore standing behind. Next the Pope sitts a Car=dinall with a Pastorall staffe. Next him at the other end of the table (which I suppo=sed some such fellow as Garnet) sitts One of the Layitie with an hatt & a fether in it, his cloke cast under one arme, looking to him at the end next him (Gondomar, they say, says it is his master but he is liker an Englyshman & in a fine ruffe). He holds in his hand a writing with 2 seales. In the midst between him and the Cardinall sitts a graue Deuill with a paire of hornes, a great beard & in a gowne, holding a wri=ting, the seale hanging on the table. & a Frier barehead standing . . . looking over his shoulder Below the text: In foveam suam soderunt.[41]

In his annotations to Ward's directives, Mede conjectures the identities of the persons depicted on the basis of what he has heard others say and also his own rational judgment. With respect to the significant question of whether the

[38]This manuscript is referred to in Hind, 393–94 and plate 247. Hind's evidence that fol. 13 represents Ward's instructions is based on the observation that "the description of the group at the table is in reverse to the print. And the only part in the nature of a sketch consists of the cloud beneath the Holy Letters": see Hind, 394.

[39]British Library, London, Harley MS 389, fol. 12^{v}. Pierce also describes this letter, but with slightly different conclusions, on 44–46. I have examined this letter independently, and include my own transcriptions below. See also D. Randall.

[40]See Ball.

[41]British Library, London, Harley MS 389, fol. 13^{r}. My thanks to Alan Farmer for correcting my transcription.

member of the "Layitie with an hatt & fether in it, his cloke cast under one arme" is the Spanish king, Mede writes that even though Gondomar, "they say," believes it to be "his master," he disagrees; the nonclerical person at the right of the table is, in Mede's estimation, "liker an Englyshman & in a fine ruffe."

Mede's knowledge of the national character of the man with the "fine ruffe" may have been more imaginative speculation than actual fact. However, taking his interpretation seriously, it is possible that the realistic figure is not Philip III, but rather an "Englyshman" — the Duke of Buckingham. Griffiths suggests a possible connection between Ward and the radical pamphleteer Thomas Scott.[42] This essay proposes a further set of relationships: that not only did Ward, Scott, and Middleton all know one another, but they all used the same Dutch engraver to illustrate their works. This assertion is based on striking similarities between the figures in the popish enclave in the center of Ward's print and those engraved on the title page of Scott's *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (fig. 4) and the contemporary individuals represented on the title page of Middleton's *A Game at Chess* (fig. 5).[43] More specifically, the man with the narrow-brimmed plumed hat and large ruff who is shown beside the devil in the engraving is almost identical in dress to the figure of Buckingham on the title page to the 1625 edition of *A Game at Chess*.

On the play's title page, both Buckingham (White Duke) and Prince Charles (White Knight) are costumed in wide white ruffs and plumed hats, just like the person shown in *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce*. Furthermore, as portraits of Charles and Buckingham in the National Portrait Gallery reveal, both men were generally represented in this attire.[44]

[42]According to Griffiths, 152–53, "Scott and Ward were allies." Griffiths conjectures that Ward used Scott's connections in Amsterdam to get his design engraved.

[43]Hind attributes the engraving of the title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi* to Crispin van de Passe. The plate is 17(b): see Hind, 45–46, entry #4, for a description. Hind includes two different states of the title page of *A Game at Chess* as plates 245a and 245b, but attributes them only to an anonymous engraver: see Hind, 386–87, entries #56 and #57. It is possible that the same engraver made Ward's engraving, the title page of *The Second Part of Vox Populi*, and the title page of *A Game at Chess*. The figures are quite similar in appearance and dress and, as Griffiths, 153, suggests, "It may have been through Scott that Ward made the contacts to get his design engraved in Amsterdam."

[44]For images of the Duke of Buckingham in the National Portrait Gallery, London, see http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/portrait.asp?linkID=mp00614&rNo=0&role=sit and http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/portrait.asp?linkID=mp00614&rNo=5&role=sit. In the latter, an engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar, the ruff is quite pronounced. The National Portrait Gallery website gives the date "after 1628," but this is still contemporary with Ward's print. For pictures of Charles as Prince of Wales and later as King Charles I of England, see http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?search=ss&role=sit&LinkID=mp00840.

FIGURE 4. Title page of Thomas Scott, *The Second Part of Vox Populi*. London, 1624. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

The figure in Ward's engraving is more likely to be Buckingham than Charles for two reasons: there was a previous tradition of satirizing the duke, and it would have been much more controversial to lampoon the heir to the throne.[45] By contrast, in paintings from the period Philip III wears, for the most part, a straighter and less frilly collar, slightly turned up

[45]In *A Game at Chess*, Middleton appears to satirize Buckingham, although there is some critical controversy about the extent of this. See Heinemann; Howard-Hill; Limon; Tricomi; and Munro.

FIGURE 5. Title page of Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess*. London, 1625. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

at either side.[46] The large white ruff was an item worn by English men and women in the early seventeenth century.

Alastair Bellany's study of laudatory and satirical representations of Buckingham between 1617 and 1628 helps to confirm this point. He describes six different portraits of Buckingham, engraved by five different artists. These tended to present the duke in positive, even idealized, contexts, but Bellany also lists "three depictions of the duke that were integrated into more complex emblematic or allegorical images, all of them highly politicized."[47] Although he does not mention Ward's engraving, the three

[46]For paintings of Philip III, see The World of the Hapsburgs (Andres Lopez: King Philip III of Spain, after 1617, Kunsthistorisches Museum, primary collection): http://www.habsburger.net/en/media/andres-lopez-king-philip-iii-spain-after-1617.

[47]See Bellany, 217.

representations of Buckingham that he does describe prefigure Ward's appropriation of Buckingham for his own polemical devices. In addition to the frontispiece of *A Game at Chess*, with its figure of the White Duke as Buckingham, Bellany lists "a figure representing Buckingham as the destroyer of 'Briberie' and 'fire-brand Faction' in one corner of the frontispiece to Thomas Scott's 1624 pamphlet *Vox Dei* [fig. 6] published during the fleeting period when the duke was celebrated as a patriot hero; [and] a figure betraying the true faith in a complex coded engraving that accompanies *The Spy*."[48] To be sure, all of these images postdate *To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce*, but the continual use of Buckingham as a figure to be lauded or despised suggests that Ward's print may have been participating in a similar type of representation.

Assuming that this figure is Buckingham, the question arises as to why Ward would choose to represent him in realistic detail while depicting Philip III allegorically, as a devil with horns. As this essay has argued, Ward's polemical technique pushes the limits of satire and, at the same time, works to cover himself against accusations of seditious libel, or even treason. His strategy was to evoke the conventional consensus vocabulary of Protestant nationalism and providentialism. The same delicate balancing act characterizes the tension between pictorial realism and allegory in the central scene of the table. It is one thing to represent Buckingham at the negotiating table; although audacious, Ward could claim that he was simply showing the reality of the discussions, with Buckingham literally dealing with the devil, either Philip III specifically or Catholic Spain in general. It is quite another to show Philip III — a sitting Spanish monarch with whom England, in 1621, desired positive diplomatic relations — realistically and in a manner that could only be seen negatively, given the resistance of the English populace to the Spanish Match. Representing Philip III as a devil underscores the print's apocalyptic frame, but it also obscures the specifics of the engraving's topical satire by rendering the negotiations over the Spanish Match themselves in both allegorical and political terms. Although Ward clearly intended topicality — and the wealth of contemporary responses to the engraving more than confirms his success in achieving it — he also seems to have wanted to prevent censorship or accusations of libel.

To God, In Memorye of his Double Deliveraunce presents satire in the guise of convention, mixing Providence and topicality, allegory and lifelike detail, in a way that underscores the satirist's understanding of both the limits of political criticism and the possibilities for pushing beyond these

[48]Ibid.

FIGURE 6. Title page of Thomas Scott, *Vox Dei*. London, 1624. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

limits in the service of propaganda, polemic, and satire. The strategy failed: Ward was censored and sent to prison for making this particular satire on the Spanish Match; but this is less relevant than the point that Ward's polemical strategy depended, crucially, on the ambiguous blending of satire and convention, providentialism and topical political satire. By framing his satire in the established language of providentialism and with images of English Protestant deliverance from Catholic threats in the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot, Ward hoped to delimit and justify his more realistic and explicit satire of the Spanish Match negotiations. He wanted to obscure the topical political reference to Buckingham, Philip III, and the cabal of English and Spanish political agents negotiating the

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marriage of Charles and the infanta in 1621. What made his engraving less effective as an effort to cast a veil over his political satire, ironically, was the inclusion of realistic depictions of contemporary people that distinguished Ward's work from the images of the Armada and Gunpowder Plot that preceded him. What drew the attention of Ward's contemporaries, including the censoring body of the Privy Council, was the very realism of the representation. Providentialism might suggest a conventional reading of the print, but the novel strategy of representing contemporary figures made clear the satirical import of Ward's work.

4. Providentialism in *A Game at Chess*

As with contemporary engravings of the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot, Middleton's *A Game at Chess* is deeply invested in the rhetoric of national deliverance and providential history that dominated the early seventeenth century. At the same time, it is also concerned with a slightly different project: presenting both the potential and limitations of anti-Catholic propaganda. For Middleton, the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot were just two culturally charged examples.[49] Middleton's mouthpiece for this anti-Catholic prejudice is not, as might be expected, any member of the White House, representing Protestant England; rather, it is the converted Fat Bishop, whose renunciation of Catholicism and desire for preferment at the court of James I has led him to use anti-Catholic invective as a tool in his quest for personal advancement.[50] That Middleton assigns the authorship of anti-Catholic pamphleteering to a figure who is so clearly singled out for satire and ridicule is worth considering further. There is a question of why the author would choose the bishop.

Like Ward, Middleton concedes the culturally accepted notion that the Armada and Gunpowder episodes are worth remembering for their lessons about the dangers of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. They can also help counsel the English nation and its king to remain vigilant in the face of continued Catholic plots to establish dominion over Protestant countries. Yet Middleton's representation of these iconic events does not describe them in the universal, abstract, nationalistic, or historical terms that one finds in John Foxe (1516/17–1587; *Book of Martyrs*, 1563) and elsewhere. Instead,

[49]See Lake, 1997.

[50]For a detailed description of the identification of the Fat Bishop as Marc Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalato, see Howard-Hill, 54–62.

they become, in *A Game at Chess*, individualized and psychologized, turned into personal and particular metaphors for human intention in action. Middleton does not deny the effectiveness of anti-Catholic polemic, but he conceives of it, as well as Machiavellian scheming, as similar strategies of negative political engagement that have the potential to undermine the moral high ground of the true Protestant national cause.

As the Fat Bishop reveals, polemic — whether anti-Catholic or anti-Protestant — can be used by both sides, but the ability of invective to enforce political and religious difference also promotes slander and underhanded diplomacy instead of more positive and constructive efforts to effect political or religious change. For Middleton, the appropriate response to the threat of Catholicism occasioned by the Spanish Match crisis depends on understanding the abstractions and misapprehensions engendered by overreliance on the popular mythology of deliverance derived from the Armada and Gunpowder episodes. He implies that the use of anti-Catholic rhetoric to assuage anxieties and create a sense of security can obscure the actuality of the present danger to the Protestant nation itself. In the induction to the play, for example, Middleton suggests that focusing too narrowly on the problem posed by the influx of Jesuit seminary priests acting as agents of the Counter-Reformation has blinded England to the realities of the recent diplomatic crisis over the Spanish Match.[51] That he does so in the context of evoking the rhetoric of national holidays and the theme of providential deliverance signals that a major goal of *A Game at Chess* will be to use this vocabulary of remembrance in a way that substitutes skepticism and active vigilance for passivity, insularity, and parochialism in the face of continued Jesuit and Spanish threats.

The play opens to reveal Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556), the founder of the Society of Jesuits, addressing a soliloquy to the audience. The stage direction indicates that the personified figure of Error is "at his foot as asleep."[52] According to Loyola, in the interval of five years between his being "sainted" by these Jesuit priests, their being sent into England and Ireland, and the present day, the Jesuits in England have forgotten to "canonise" their "prosperous institutor"; in other words, they have failed to admit the founder of the Society of Jesuits into the calendar of saints:

[51]An induction is an explanatory scene, common in Renaissance-era plays, that stands outside the main action; its purpose is to gloss the plot.

[52]Middleton, 1993, 65 (induction, stage direction). This is similar to the prologue to Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (ca. 1589–90), which features the figure of Machiavel addressing the audience in order to justify his schemes for religious and political supremacy.

'Tis not five years since I was sainted by 'em;
Where slept my honour all the time before?
Could they be forgetful to canonise
Their prosperous institutor? When they had sainted me
They found no room in all their calendar
To place my name that should have moved princes,
Pulled the most eminent prelates by the roots up.[53]

As David Cressy has demonstrated, at the beginning of the seventeenth century the English Protestant calendar of national anniversaries was gradually replacing the older Catholic calendar of saints. Not only was the number of religious days of celebration reduced, but the calendar was to a certain degree "defestivalized." One bureaucratic response to the "thinning of the old festive calendar" and the removal of cherished saints' days and rituals from the lives of everyday Englishmen was to include days of prayer and celebration in honor of the accession of the queen on 17 November. Added to this royal calendar was one of "English Protestant thankfulness, watchfulness, and commemoration." As Cressy puts it, "Historic episodes involving Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and the fortunes of the Stuart kings were memorialized and commemorated as signs of God's interest in his Protestant nation. They formed landmarks in the development of English Protestantism and cumulative elements of the national memory."[54]

Loyola's diatribe ends with an angry gesture of intended violence, in which he confesses that his "wrath's up" — that is, he has no more patience for delays. In a line that cannot help but recall the intentions behind the Gunpowder Plot, although this time directed toward a Catholic rather than a Protestant target, Loyola warns that he just might "Blow up their [the Jesuits'] colleges."[55] This is extreme reasoning and clearly operates in opposition to Loyola's stated purpose of converting the world to Catholicism through more subtle, underhanded, and Machiavellian tactics of force and fraud. At the most literal level, it shows the indiscriminate nature of Loyola's anger, but the speaker's use of the cultural mythology of the Gunpowder Plot is also clearly ironic. He directs the rhetoric of blowing up against his own followers, the Jesuits, shifting the locus of destruction from a Protestant enemy, in the original Gunpowder Plot, to a Catholic one. In his revenge fantasy, Loyola imagines destroying the Jesuit colleges that

[53]Middleton, 1993, 66 (induction, lines 16–21).
[54]Cressy, 36.
[55]Middleton, 1993, 68 (induction, line 35).

have failed to honor him in an appropriately glorifying manner, either through the calendar of saints or the Jesuit mission in England. In this way, Middleton calls attention to what has been repressed in the national calendar of holidays. He suggests that it is important to remember not only God's providential power in thwarting Catholic plots against the nation, but also the plots themselves, which continue, unabated, to the present moment. In the figure of the ghost of Loyola, the playwright evokes the power of the past to shape the present and the future, until something occurs to change substantially the course of history.

If Middleton's induction alludes to the investment of early seventeenth-century English culture in the rhetoric and shared mnemonic of the Protestant national calendar, the performance date of *A Game at Chess* implies a different application of the same mythology. As Thomas H. Howard-Hill notes, the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert (1595–1673), licensed *A Game at Chess* on 12 June 1624. Contemporary letters by John Woolley and John Holles show that the company that staged the production was "his Maiesties seruants" and that the playhouse was the King's Men's Globe Theater. The title page of the first edition of the play states that the play "was Acted nine days to gether." The first performance was on Thursday, 5 August 1624, and the nine days were interrupted only by 8 August, a Sunday, "a day on which performances of plays were forbidden by law."[56] It has not, however, been noted previously that the play was first performed on the anniversary of the Gowrie conspiracy. Along with the anniversary of James's accession (24 March), his birthday (19 June), St. James's day (25 July), and Gunpowder Treason Day (5 November), 5 August had become part of the set of national anniversaries in the new Protestant calendar.[57] In a manner quite similar to that of 5 November, 5 August celebrated the day in the year 1600 when James, then sole ruler of Scotland, was riding on a hunting exhibition and narrowly escaped death at the hands of two conspirators, John Ruthven, Third Earl of Gowrie (ca. 1577–1600), and his brother, Alexander Ruthven (1580?–1600). The details of the Gowrie conspiracy remain a mystery.[58] What matters for the

[56]Howard-Hill in Middleton, 1993, 17.

[57]Cressy, 36.

[58]For the historiography of the Gowrie conspiracy, see Davies; Thomson; Lang; and Cowan. Current historiography suggests three different theories about the intentions and actual circumstances of the plot: first, that Gowrie and his brother intended to kidnap and murder James; second, that James sought to kill the two Ruthven brothers; and, finally, that the tragedy was the result of an unpremeditated fight between the three men, resulting in the deaths of the earl and his brother.

purpose of this essay is that there appears to have been a clear intention to perform the play on this anniversary, a day on which King James I was providentially delivered from the agents of pro-Scottish conspiracy who were treasonously seeking to murder him.

Middleton addresses the importance of calendars in establishing religious and political authority and memorializing instances of providential power and national deliverance; moreover, he embeds a critique of providentialism that is subtle and effective. The prevention of the Gowrie conspiracy, like the thwarting of the Gunpowder Plot, may be viewed as nothing more than conventional rhetoric in the service of national thanksgiving and the affirmation of divine-right monarchy. But the implication of the Gowrie conspiracy is quite different from that of the Gunpowder Plot because the Gowrie intrigue was not a Catholic plot against Protestant England. The conspirators charged with treason against the king were Scottish Protestants. Possible motives behind the conspiracy include that John Gowrie was a rival to James in the succession, that James and Buckingham had been behind the death of Gowrie's father, that James owed Gowrie a substantial amount of money, and that Gowrie's brother Alexander had been the queen's lover.

The Gowrie conspiracy was also widely questioned by James I's people. Loudest and most strident among these were a number of high-ranking church officials and ministers in Scotland. Many Kirk preachers doubted James's account of the Gowrie plot, even after the king's cross-examination. They believed that James had fabricated the conspiracy in order to provide a cover for his own scheme to destroy the Ruthven family. Thus, although Parliament had passed an act making 5 August into a national day of remembrance and thanksgiving, the act had "never received the sanction of the [Scottish] church," and many ministers refused to comply with it.[59] To be sure, 5 August was celebrated, especially in England, as a day of providential remembrance, often likened to the iconic defeat of the Armada and the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot. Multiple sermons and pamphlets from the 1610s to the 1620s and later testify to the English effort to connect these three events through an appeal to the consensus rhetoric of providentialism and apocalypticism.[60] But the

[59]See Morrissey, 116.

[60]See Stirling; Church of England; Gary, 1618a and 1618b; and J. Randall. An early pamphlet such as Samuel Gary's *Great Brittans Little Calendar* stresses the problematic aspect of faction, celebrates Buckingham (in its dedication), argues against the Papists and Jesuits, and affirms a belief in providential futures. By contrast, a later sermon, such as that by John Randall, emphasizes the issue of a nation divided against itself and the problematic nature of James I's monarchical rule. These two opposed sources suggest the different inflections of the Gowrie conspiracy that might have been available to Middleton.

very fact that the Gowrie conspiracy was not anti-Catholic, and that it was publicly questioned in a way that the Armada and Gunpowder events were not, makes the decision to perform *A Game at Chess* on the anniversary of the Gowrie conspiracy all the more surprising.

Opening the play on this date suggests a possible satire or criticism of James I. This is reinforced by the knowledge that James I was not present in London at the time; he was away on royal progress. Middleton asks both James I and the audience of *A Game at Chess* to consider the costs, whether religious, political, economic, or unambiguously personal, of turning a blind eye to the clear and present danger before them. He expresses the tension between a belief in the continued efficacy of divine Providence and the actions of individual human agents (Spanish, Jesuit, or Catholic) who pursue treasonous efforts against the Jacobean church and state. The significance of the Gowrie conspiracy hinges on just such a connection. On the one hand, it reveals a continued and pervasive belief in England's favored status and God's providential blessing of the Protestant English nation. On the other, it shows the reality of the monarch's potential vulnerability at the hands of unscrupulous Catholic and Jesuit agents, both at home and abroad. God's Providence is only part of the equation to keep kings safe from Catholic plots. Kings must themselves work to weed out anti-Protestant forces, joining political action to providential will. If they fail to do so, they run the risk of compromising the religious and political integrity of the nation or, more fatally, of turning God's Providence against it.

The fifth of November, however, did not refer only to the date of the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot. It was also established, in national memory, as an anniversary that encompassed both the fifth of October, when Charles and Buckingham returned from Spain, the former unmarried, to great national rejoicing, as well as the fifth of August, the anniversary of the Gowrie conspiracy. The continuity among the days of remembrance and providential deliverance that occurred on the fifth of the month is recorded in a satirical ballad from the period:

> The fift of August and the fift
> Of good November made a shift
> To make us sing and drinke merrily, ly, ly, ly.
> But shalbee treason to bee sober
> On the fift day of October:
> And will you knowe the reason why? why, why, why.
> The sonne of our most noble king
> wentt into Spayne to fetch a thing;
> perhappes you heard of it before; before, before, etc

> But there was such a doe about her, That hee is come agayne without her,
> And I am very gladd therefore, therefore, therefore.[61]

This suggests that the decision to perform *A Game at Chess* on 5 August was intended to satirize not only the Gowrie conspiracy, but also the return of Charles and Buckingham, an event that is specifically represented in act 5 of the play. The tension between providential acts of deliverance and historically retrospective accounts of these events, which recurs throughout the play and is implicit in the performance date of 5 August, implies that providentialism was being used both to affirm national holidays of deliverance and to incorporate topical political critiques of these episodes in the larger context of historical events, both pro- and anti-Spanish.

In *A Game at Chess*, Middleton explores the difference between the initial deception of Charles and Buckingham at the hands of the Spanish politicians and their later turning of the tables, a revision of Machiavellian scheming. Although 5 October was at first greeted as a national holiday, that Charles and Buckingham were originally intent on a pro-Spanish policy is not to be forgotten in the wake of national rejoicing at the desired end (the failure of the Spanish Match negotiations and return of the English protagonists). Although by 1624 Charles and Buckingham were advocating war against Spain in the new Parliament, there was always the possibility that latent pro-Catholic tendencies in both James I and Prince Charles could be reinvoked — a possibility that Middleton clearly hopes to avert.

Providential themes are important to Middleton's play, and not simply in terms of the circumstances of its production or its satire of Loyola's desire to remake the Protestant calendar to honor his continued service to Rome. Throughout *A Game at Chess*, Middleton employs the rhetoric of providentialism, anti-Catholicism, and apocalypticism mostly in satirical terms in order to call attention not only to the mythology of the Gowrie conspiracy, the Armada defeat, and the Gunpowder Plot, but also to the Machiavellian intentions that lay behind them. In doing so, Middleton shows how providentialism can be used in the service of promoting Machiavellian and pro-Catholic designs, but he also reveals the arrogance of the Black House (Catholic Spain), believing that their plots will proceed

[61]"Of Prince Charles his Voyage into Spayne": http://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/spanish_match_section/Nv18.html. The reference to this poem is from "Early Stuart Libels: An Edition of Poetry from Manuscript Sources," ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, 2005: http://purl.oclc.org/emls/texts/libels/. The original manuscript source is Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fols. 23^{v}–24^{r}. See Cressy.

unimpeded by divine Providence and failing to perceive the fallibility of their actions. He uses providentialism to make a satirical point about the limitations of Spanish machinations; he sees the Machiavellianism of the Black House as being at odds with God's (ultimate) providential will and cautions it against incurring God's wrath. He employs the discourse of providentialism to attack the hubris of the Black House, which believes it is operating as agents of God's Providence when, in fact, the opposite is true: God favors the White House (Protestant England) in his ultimate providential designs.

To unpack the assumptions that underlie the rhetoric of providentialism, Middleton opposes this discourse to that of Machiavellian scheming. He suggests that these are two sides of the same coin that views power as dependent upon the very polarities (Black-White, Catholic-Protestant, Spanish-English) that seventeenth-century engravings on the subjects of the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot employ. To complicate and question the cultural mythology of the Gunpowder and Armada episodes, Middleton shifts their monumental and allegorical meaning from abstraction — the relationship between good and evil, Protestant and Catholic — to a more personal metaphor involving the real human actors who stand behind the myth. He employs the rhetoric of providential deliverance to suggest the unstable nature of the Jesuit presence in England. The members of the Black House are constantly worried that their Machiavellian strategies of dissimulation and subterfuge will be exposed by the Jacobean White House. Middleton makes his goal clear by explicitly using metaphors of divine deliverance to express fear, anxiety, guilt, and incomprehension on the part of the political, religious, and sexual schemers of the Black House, principally the Black Bishop's Pawn, the Black Knight, and the Fat Bishop.[62]

An example of the use of Gunpowder or Armada metaphors to express psychological distress occurs in a scene involving the Black Bishop's Pawn. The Black Bishop's Pawn is actively engaged in the lustful pursuit of the chaste White Queen's Pawn and has attempted to lure her into having sexual relations with him. When faced with the knowledge that the object of his desire has been able to see through his rather obvious schemes to entrap her into surrendering her chastity, the Black Bishop's Pawn describes the potentially explosive nature of the situation by saying that: "Methinks I stand over a powder-vault / And the match now akindling. What's to be

[62]Middleton took this strategy directly from Thomas Scott, who uses metaphors drawn from the Gunpowder Plot and defeat of the Spanish Armada in a similarly psychological way. See Scott, 1620 and 1624.

done?"[63] In these lines, the Black Bishop's Pawn expresses his anxiety that his ruse has been discovered.

In a slightly different context, Middleton uses the metaphor of the Gunpowder Plot to illustrate the Machiavellian schemes of the Black House. He suggests, somewhat paradoxically, that it is anxiety over powder that makes the White House susceptible to manipulation by the crafty Black Knight. In a scene in which the Black Knight commands the Black Bishop, Marco Antonio de Dominis, bishop of Spalato, to bring him a "cabinet" filled with "intelligences," the Black Knight describes the "bawdy epistles" that the nuns at the convent in Whitefriars and the "Sisters of Compassion" in Bloomsbury have sent him.[64] He refers here to the association among Catholics, nunneries, and prostitution described in Thomas Robinson's *The Anatomy of the English Nunnery at Lisbon* (1622). Within this catalogue of lust and whoredom is also political intrigue: the Black Knight admits that one version of "state policy" that he has accomplished by Machiavellian means has been "'To sell away all the powder in a kingdom / To prevent blowing up.' That's safe, I'll able it."[65] Howard-Hill glosses these lines as referring to the Black Knight's desire to transport "ordinance and other warlike provisions to furnish the Spanish arsenals, even while the armies of Spain were battering the English in the Palatinate."[66] The reference is once again to the Gunpowder Plot, but, as was the case with the Black Bishop's Pawn, the use of Gunpowder rhetoric here is symbolic and psychological rather than literal. In both instances, Middleton has translated the sacred event of thanksgiving and awe of the divine justice that has delivered the English from destruction at the hands of their Catholic and Spanish enemies into a vocabulary that is more psychological than it is invested in a grand narrative of God's deliverances and judgments.

The Black Bishop's Pawn codes fear in the language of gunpowder; by contrast, the Black Knight proudly advertises how he has exploited English anxieties to achieve his own ends of securing military weapons for his private cause. He implies that he has been able to convince the English to sell him gunpowder because they do not want their enemies (that is, the Jesuits) in England to be able to use it to commit further acts of terrorism against the

[63]Middleton, 1993, 99 (2.1.157–58).

[64]Ibid., 101 (2.1.192–205).

[65]Ibid., 102 (2.1.208–09).

[66]See Howard-Hill in Middleton, 1993, 102nn208–09. See also A. Wilson; Chamberlain; and Reynolds.

English Parliament and monarch. In Middleton's telling, the Black Knight's Machiavellianism reveals the limitations of the cultural mythology of the Armada defeat and the Gunpowder Plot. This mythology is a shared system of value and implied consensus that uses metaphors, allegories, and emblems to repress anxiety and alleviate distress. Through the personal disclosures of the Black Bishop's Pawn and the Black Knight about their real intentions toward the English people, Middleton uncovers the very apprehension, unease, and disquiet that the cultural mythology is concerned with masking and denying.

According to Middleton, the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot should be remembered not only in universal terms, but also in particular ones. These events in England's national history were perpetrated by living human beings with the clear and overt purpose of establishing Catholicism as the dominant religion worldwide, and they should be remembered, retrospectively, as such. These agents of the Counter-Reformation are not simply historical personalities but rather individuals, and the Black Knight and Fat Bishop continue to represent a palpable danger to the English nation and its king. Middleton's dramatic use of the rhetoric surrounding earlier providential events both humanizes and psychologizes that rhetoric. He transforms the grand designs of the 1620s engravings about the Armada defeat and Gunpowder Plot into much more personal descriptions of intention, desire, self-interest, and political scheming. He does so in order to remind his audience that the abstraction represents a discernible reality, one they should not forget when considering the contemporary debate over the king's policies, even as late as 1624–25, of conciliation with Spain and extending toleration to Catholics.

Discussing his plot to expose the Fat Bishop as a turncoat and trimmer, the Black Knight invokes the cultural mythos of the Gunpowder Plot. He outlines his scheme to the Black Bishop, describing how the Fat Bishop

> shall be flattered with *sede vacante*;
> Make him believe he comes into his place
> And that will fetch him with a vengeance to us,
> For I know powder is more ambitious
> When the match meets it, than his mind for mounting.[67]

For the Black Knight, Machiavellian intentions are best realized not by letting the proud and arrogant mind of the Fat Bishop spontaneously conceive the idea of rising to a higher position in the Catholic church hierarchy; rather,

[67]Middleton, 1993, 109 (2.2.81–85; italics in original).

bringing the match to the powder, or deliberately implanting the notion in the Fat Bishop's brain, will be a much more effective and timely way of achieving the Black Knight's ends. He wants results, and he is willing to achieve them in any way possible. Throughout the play, the Black Knight is engaged in a political program that opposes the Fat Bishop's method of covering over the truth. The Black Knight acts under cover of diplomatic alliance to subvert the English church and state. In contrast to the Fat Bishop, who uses negative polemics to make his points, the Black Knight prefers the language of "diplomacy," spewing "mortal poison" into the souls who "took comfort to be cozened" by him.[68] He employs "pleasant subtlety" and "bewitching courtship," abusing all of his "believers with delight"[69] in order to achieve "the business of the universal monarchy."[70]

But Middleton's critique of a politics based on self-interest and his desire to both cover over and reveal the Machiavellian deceptions that prevent truth from coming to the fore is not confined simply to the playwright's satire of the Black House and its two principal agents, the Fat Bishop and Black Knight. He also demonstrates the effects of such actions in relation to the White Duke (George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham) and White Knight (Charles I). This is most clearly represented in act 5 of the play, which describes Charles and Buckingham's trip to Spain to negotiate with Philip IV for the hand of his daughter, Maria Anna. In critiques of the play to date, this scene has commonly been interpreted as a straightforward validation of providential deliverance: the prince had been deterred from any possible alliance with Catholic Spain.[71] Cressy discusses the way in which Charles's return from Spain unmarried occasioned much joy and celebration: "the City of London went wild with joy at the prince's return, with an extravaganza of celebration. Similar festivities were mounted in provincial towns. At no other time in the seventeenth century, with the possible exception of the Restoration, did the people of England greet their prince with such public enthusiasm. At no other time in his life did Charles Stuart enjoy such fervent popular acclaim."[72] It seems incorrect to interpret the scene in this way, however, given Middleton's desire to invoke religious and political

[68]Ibid., 86 (1.1.260).

[69]Ibid. (1.1.257–58).

[70]Ibid., 85 (1.1.243).

[71]In *Vox Dei*, Scott, 1623, 63, writes of Charles Stuart's return: "He returned *alone*, and showed by his single returning *alone*, that he loved us . . . this was still . . . our song of thanksgiving, *God be praised that he is come home ALONE*" (italics in original). Both Cressy and Cogswell discuss this aspect of the response to Charles's return in some detail: see Cressy, 93–109; and Cogswell, 1989, 6–12.

[72]Cressy, 93.

contexts to suggest possibilities for shortsightedness and unthinking acceptance of the too-literal surface of things. What the playwright seems to imply is that the White Knight and White Duke have failed to see through the manipulations of the Spanish court. Trusting too much to external signs and empty promises, the two men have made idols of the Spanish. They are incapable of comprehending how they are being deceived into accepting pro-Catholic policies that are detrimental to the Protestant English nation as a whole. Such a reading is confirmed by much of the recent historiography on the Spanish Match. James I's desire to find a diplomatic solution to his troubles with Spain clearly prevented not only him, but also Charles and Buckingham from clearly seeing the reality of the Spanish intentions. As Cogswell suggests, Spain seems never to have seriously considered finalizing the wedding negotiations. Instead, they spun them out as a means of exacting promises from James I to increase toleration of Catholics in England and to stay out of the crisis in the Palatinate, a secondary concern for England when approaching Spain about a marriage alliance.[73]

In act 5, Middleton describes the pageantry and display that accompanied Prince Charles and Gondomar's visit to Spain in pursuit of a marriage with the Spanish infanta. In a staged meeting of the White Knight, White Duke, Black King, Black Queen, and Black Duke "with pawns," the Black Bishop's Pawn entertains the company with a Latin oration: "If anything ever to mortal eyes opened a merry and welcome day, if anything ever brought joy to the most loving souls of friends, or begat happiness, most white and shining Knight, assuredly we confess that your happy arrival from the White House to the Black House has promised, has begotten, has brought it. All of us, most excited by your coming, with all gladness, joy, congratulation, and acclamation, with most respectful souls, most devoted feelings, and reverent allegiance, congratulate you on your safety."[74] In

[73]See Cogswell, 1989, esp. 15–18.

[74]Middleton, 1993, 168 (5.1.10–18). Original in Latin: "Si quid mortalibus unquam oculis hilarem et gratum aperuit diem, si quid peramantibus amicorum animis gaudium attulit, peperitve [sic] laetitiam (Eques Candidissime, praelucentissime) foelicem profecto tuum a domo Candoris ad domum Nigritudinis accessum, promisisse, peperisse, attulisse fatemur. Omnes adventus tui conflagrantissimi, omni qua possumus, laetitia, gaudio, congratulatione, acclamatione, animis observantissimis, affectibus divotissimis, obsequiis venerabundis, te sospitem congratulamur." The translation is given by Howard-Hill in Middleton, 1993, 168nn10–18, requoting "Brooke, substantially." The reference is to the Brooke and Paradise edition of the play. Howard-Hill in Middleton, 1993, 168n9.3, writes that "G. R. Price . . . identifies the oration as extracts from . . . Pope Gregory XV, *The Pope's Letter to the Prince [with] a Jesuit's Oration to the Prince, in Latin and English*. London, 1623. H1, H2^{v}–3." See also Price. William Prynne reprinted this in his *Hidden Works of Darkness*: see Prynne, 35–36.

a parody of the hyperbolic language of thanksgiving with which Charles and Buckingham were heralded upon their return from Spain without having secured a promise of marriage from the infanta and her father, Middleton constructs a scene predicated on irony and disjunction. As a testament to the love and reverence with which the Spanish hold Prince Charles and the King of England's favorite, the Spanish present an "altar" to Charles, "The seat of adoration, [which] seems to adore / The virtues you bring with you,"[75] clearly invoking Catholic symbolism. In an implicit allusion to the genre of the court masque, the altar is composed of statues and a personified musical Song, who interprets the image in the manner of a motto or an emblem, or of an explanatory and allegorical character in a masque or triumphal procession:

Song.
Wonder work some strange delight
This place was never yet without
To welcome the fair White House Knight,
And bring our hopes about.
May from the altar flames aspire,
Those tapers set themselves afire.
May senseless things our joys approve
And those brazen statues move
Quickened by some power above
Or what more strange, to show our love.
[*The statues move and dance.*][76]

This representation of the heathen worship of gods, with statues moving incandescently under the fiery spirit of some supernatural essence, is a framework that simultaneously evokes magic and superstition.[77] In the context of an appeal to Prince Charles and Buckingham, however, the implication of the allegory is that the two Englishmen are being lulled into idolatrous veneration of the Spanish infanta, whose marriage to Prince Charles will entail his conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism.

Middleton's view of anti-Catholic propaganda is that while it is effective in the first instance, it ultimately leads to passivity. Such polemic, he feels, has the effect of lulling the English populace into a complacent view of the threat of Catholicism even as that danger continues to gain virulence and

[75]Middleton, 1993, 169 (5.1.33–34).

[76]Ibid., 169–70 (5.2.36–45).

[77]For a similar magical animation of figures, see Friar Bacon's "glass prospective" in Robert Greene (1558?–1592), *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1594), fol. H^{r}.

traction against a cultural ethos that assuages fear with messages of providential deliverance and the divinity of kings. The whole scene with the White Knight, White Duke, and Spanish court is designed to expose the limitations of this ideology. But Middleton is also keen to critique Machiavellian action itself. Operating by disguise and dissimulation may be an effective means of achieving one's ends, but it also obscures the values of virtue, charity, and obedience that the White Queen's Pawn so admirably represents. Thus, while the White Knight and White Duke ultimately prevail in this scene, gaining the Black Knight and Black King by way of "checkmate by / Discovery,"[78] the game-winning move is brought about by the White Knight's manipulation of the Black Knight. By convincing him that they are brothers in Machiavellian scheming and deception, the White Knight tricks the Black Knight into confessing that he has operated in opposition to the White House and by means of "policy" and "dissemblance."[79] In response to the White Knight's feigned posture of being "an arch-dissembler,"[80] the Black Knight reveals all. He admits that his intention has been to divulge state secrets, acting as the "instrument that picks ope princes' hearts, / And locks up ours from them with the same motion."[81] In the process, the White Knight shows himself capable of manipulating others, and the Black Knight reveals the limitations of his own scheme: namely, that it is always on the verge of being discovered by those who are not in on the deception.

In the end, however, it is not Machiavellian diplomacy that prevails but rather the White Knight's anti-Machiavellian, providential, and nationalistic world view. Even though *A Game at Chess* is primarily concerned with critiquing the Black House's providentialism, Middleton seems, at the end, to reverse himself to an extent. In describing the end of the game, and the potential for the White House to move forward after learning the lesson of the negative effects of potential Protestant-Catholic détente, Middleton argues in favor of a providential world view — but only if it is aligned with Protestant political and religious sentiments. This can be seen in the figure of the reformed White Knight. Middleton implies that Charles has learned the lesson of Machiavellian deception through his interaction with the Black House and is now sufficiently far from any potentially pro-Catholic sympathies that God's Providence can return to its original position of favoring the elect Protestant nation. The White Knight counsels the White

[78]Middleton, 1993, 186 (5.3.160–61).
[79]Ibid. (5.3.151, 158).
[80]Ibid. (5.3.145).
[81]Ibid. (5.3.155–56).

Duke that they should "meet the rank insinuation" (Machiavellian deception) and Catholic plots of the Black House with virtue, honor, truth, and courage.

In the only direct usage by the White House of the rhetoric of Armada, Gunpowder, and providentialism, the White Duke expresses concern that the Jesuit and Catholic plots might succeed and that, in this game of chess, the White House will be defeated: "Sir, all the gins, traps and alluring snares / The devil has been at work since '88 on / Are laid for the great hope of this game only."[82] The White Knight replies with confidence that the efforts of the Jesuits and the Spanish to ensnare the White House in their nets will only make the triumph of truth that much more glorious and deserved:

> Why, the more noble will truth's triumph be;
> When they have wound about our constant courages
> The glitteringest serpent that e'er falsehood fashioned
> And glorying most in his resplendent poisons,
> Just heaven can find a bolt to bruise his head.[83]

The passage from Genesis (3–15) to which this quote refers emblematizes the reciprocity of redemption and death. It is traditionally interpreted to mean that Christ was the seed who would bruise the serpent's head, or that revenge will redouble upon one's enemies, in a final apocalyptic victory.[84] In the context of the White Knight's hopeful prophecy of the White House's victory, such providentialist rhetoric illustrates the positive outcome to be obtained from the apocalyptic struggle between White and Black, Protestant and Catholic, nobility and depravity, truth and falsehood. The greater the deceit, dishonesty, and poisonous thoughts and actions of their enemies, the stronger and more committed the forces of good will be to defeat them.

In this context, Middleton provides an example of providentialist rhetoric in contrast to its use by the Black House. The White Knight's response to the White Duke stands as a solitary testament to a perspective that exists outside the world of the play and simultaneously embodies the only real answer to the problems represented within it. It suggests that, ultimately, Providence will prevail, but without the assistance of propaganda or Machiavellian tactics of persuasion. With a bolt of lightning, the Eye of Providence will "bruise" the head of the serpent of Antichrist and foil all further Catholic plots against England. It will do so by acknowledging that

[82]Ibid., 160 (4.4.5–7).

[83]Ibid., 161 (4.4.8–12).

[84]See the Official King James Bible online: http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-3-15.

the cultural mythos of the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot does not point endlessly toward a future in which White and Black will continually fight each other, and in which the rhetoric of national deliverance will pile plot upon plot and deliverance upon deliverance. In a line that recalls the title of another Middleton play — his court masque *The Triumphs of Truth*, performed on 29 October 1613 — the White Knight prophesies a triumph of the (true) White House over the (false) Black one, and an end to the cycle that necessitates providential deliverance in the face of Catholic threats.[85] Most importantly, the White Knight's response indicates that the work of the devil "since '88" will no longer need to be remembered because the threat of Catholicism and Counter-Reformation will no longer be there.

Along with trust in Providence, one must be vigilant, attentive to contemporary political concerns, and able to see through propaganda to the truth that lies behind. Middleton asserts that the trust should be in God, not in the propaganda that supports the religion or the myth. This is not a desire to perpetuate the myth of the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot; rather, it is a plea to James I and his son, Charles Stuart, to move beyond a view that sees the rhetoric of providentialism, anti-Catholicism, and apocalypticism in terms of "this game only."[86] It involves an affirmation of Protestant national identity and an emphasis not merely on this world, but also on the next. And while it may appear to be a self-serving attempt to placate the king and prince in a kind of recuperative gesture intended to moderate the satire directed toward them in *A Game at Chess* as a whole, Middleton is less disingenuous than this reading implies. He has played a game on the stage and has suggested the limitations of Machiavellian diplomacy and the misappropriation of providential rhetoric by those who represent the forces of Antichrist rather than those of the true Protestant church. The game is over, and, as a result of the White Knight's rejection of Catholicism and any potential marriage alliance with Spain, Middleton indicates that both Providence and Charles Stuart have prevailed. As the White King summarizes:

> So, now let the bag close, the fittest womb
> For treachery, pride and malice, whilst we, winner-like,
> Destroying, through heaven's power, what would destroy,
> Welcome our White Knight with loud peals of joy.[87]

[85]Middleton, 1964.
[86]Middleton, 1993, 160 (4.4.7).
[87]Ibid., 191 (5.3.216–20).

It is not Providence that is the problem, but rather, as Middleton shows in his satire of the Black House, the misapplication of providential meanings to nonvirtuous actions and deceptions. Middleton worries that Providence can enforce complacence, and he sets out to embed within *A Game at Chess* a view of providentialism that complicates conventional accounts of England's status as an elect nation that has, and continues to be, favorably blessed by God. In his view, it is important to be open to criticism of self-satisfaction and contentment with one's present state in order to mitigate the kind of gullibility that led to the crisis over the Spanish Match in the past and that might, if unchanged, set the stage for problems in the future.

5. Conclusion

Samuel Ward and Thomas Middleton used providentialism to show their continuity with the tradition of using the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the prevention of the Gunpowder Plot to confirm the elect nature of the Protestant English nation. This artist and author are less concerned with affirming the status quo than with employing a consensus vocabulary of providentialism, apocalypticism, and anti-Catholicism in order to effect a satirical and critical assessment of the Spanish Match crisis. Political prints and political drama were deeply interconnected both in terms of the topics they chose to address and their retrospective historiographic perspective. Both genres responded to some of the most pressing political issues of the period, and they did so in a similar manner. They invoked common rhetoric and ideas and showed their obvious knowledge of and responsiveness to each other. Ward and Middleton provide a useful example of this confluence of genres and of the use of a shared, widely recognized, and fundamentally conservative discourse — providentialism — to present satirical and polemical perspectives on topical historical issues relevant to a broad population in early seventeenth-century England.

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