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<mt>'JESUS WEPT' BUT DID THE ENGLISHMAN? MASCULINITY AND EMOTION
IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND* </mt>

In June 1600 the earl of Essex appeared before the Privy Council 'to answer his contempts and misgovernment'. There, 'humble confessing his errors with teares', he pleaded that 'the teares of his heart had quenched the sparkles of pride that were in him'. The earl's lachrymose submission, stripping away his masculine bravura, handed the council a weapon it seized with relish. The lord keeper promptly recounted the scene to the judges assembled in Star Chamber, for wider dissemination.¹

While Jesus had been ready to shed public tears (John 11: 35), elite Englishmen found them deeply problematic. The public expression of emotions is shaped by each society's cultural values, and in early modern England a new code of civility demanded emotional self-control. Where medieval 'courtesy' had focused on behaviour within the context of lordship and service, civility imposed strict rules governing every aspect of elite conduct. Men were to control their emotions and behave 'with as much decency and as little conformity with the Beasts as is possible'. Failure constituted a shameful lapse into plebeian, even animal, behaviour. This was an elite and essentially male code; civility played little part in the 'subordinate masculinity' of the lower sort, and guidance on 'Decency in Conversation amongst Men' often made explicit the homosocial context authors had in mind.²

* I should like to thank friends, especially Anu Korhonen, Angela McShane, Dave Postles and Tim Reinke-Williams, for supplying helpful references, and audiences at Oxford, Southampton and Warwick for their suggestions.

¹ *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1939), i, 97.

² Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility: or, Certain Ways of Deportment Observed in France amongst All Persons of Quality upon Several Occasions* (London, 1678), 14–15; *Youths Behaviour: or, Decency in Conversation amongst Men*, trans. Francis Hawkins (London, 1672), title page. See also Edward Reynolds, *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man:*

In this new cultural milieu, male tears represented an embarrassing loss of self-control. As William Bell observed in 1657, ‘Wee speake as of a strange thing when we tell of a Man weeping like a childe’.³ The Elizabethan George Puttenham observed that ‘to weepe for any sorrow (as one may doe for pitie) is not so decent in a man: and therefore all high minded persons, when they cannot chuse but shed teares, will turn away their face as a countenance undecent for a man to shew’.⁴ With self-restraint now established as an essential component of honour and identity, tears indicated effeminacy. When Shakespeare’s most ‘manly’ hero, Coriolanus, in league with Rome’s enemies, is finally moved to tears of pity by the desperate pleas of his mother, wife and children, they are immediately interpreted as weakness and treachery. The Volscian general responds with disgust:

<py>

At a few drops of women’s rheum, which are
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour
Of our great action: therefore shall he die.

</py>

With the Severall Dignities and Corruptions Thereunto Belonging (London, 1647), 43–4;
Alexandra Shepard, ‘From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500–1700’, *Journal of British Studies*, xlv (2005), 295 and *passim*; Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011), esp. 30–50. On ‘hegemonic’ and ‘subordinate’ masculinities, see R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2005), 76–9.

³ William Bell, *Incomparable Company-Keeping: or, A Conversation on Earth in Heaven. Held Forth in Sundry Sermons Which Are Now Digested into a Treatise* (London, 1657), 53; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven, 1995), chs. 6–7, 15–16; Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998).

⁴ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie: Contrived into Three Bookes: The First of Poets and Poesie, the Second of Proportion, the Third of Ornament* (London, 1589, STC 20519), 243.

No longer a leader of men, no longer even a man, Coriolanus is dismissed as ‘thou boy of tears’ and pays for such weakness with his life.⁵

Physicians approached tears from a different perspective. Medical science, still rooted in Galenic teaching, positioned tears within the traditional framework of humoral physiology. Timothy Bright’s influential *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) devoted five chapters to tears, and described how sorrow, fear and other passions sent blood and ‘spirits’ flooding from heart to brain, producing a dangerous compression. As ‘the excrementitious humiditie of the brayne’, tears enabled the body ‘to purge the head’. Bright presented melancholy as a medical affliction, with tears a natural physiological response. Robert Burton offered a similar view.⁶ Bright explained that women and children were more susceptible for they possessed ‘a moist, rare, and tender body, especially of brayne and heart’. Men’s heat and dryness generally produced a drier, harder body, until the physiological changes associated with old age increased their own susceptibility.⁷

⁵ William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, v. vi. 46–8, 101.

⁶ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie: Containing the Causes Thereof, and Reasons of the Strange Effects it Worketh in our Minds and Bodies. With the Phisicke Cure, and Spirituall Consolation for such as Have Thereto Adjoynd an Afflicted Conscience* (London, 1586, STC 3747), 1–2, 21, 144–7; Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy: Now for the First Time with the Latin Completely Given in Translation and Embodied in an All-English Text*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1938), 129, 218. See also Philip Barrough, *The Method of Physick: Containing the Causes, Signes, and Cures of Inward Diseases in Mans Body, from the Head to the Foote. Whereunto Is Added, the Forme and Rule of Making Remedies and Medicines, which our Phisicians Commonly Use at this Day, with the Proportion, Quantity and Names of Each Medicine*, 3rd edn (London, 1601, STC 1511), 45–8, 53–4, 58–60; Marjory E. Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance* (Leiden, 1996), ch. 1.

⁷ Bright, *Treatise of Melancholie*, 144, 147; Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing, 1951), 10–12, chs. 2–3; Walter Charleton, *Natural History of the Passions* (London, 1674), 157–8.

Contemporaries viewed women as less able, by their very nature, to govern their emotions. Their constitutions, cool and moist, made them more compassionate and more easily moved to both pity and piety. Men often admired these qualities; Puttenham commended women's ready tears as 'a most decent propertie for that sexe'.⁸ Satirists, by contrast, dismissed them as expressions of weakness and vexation, or manipulative. 'Why doe women weepe more then men?', asked the Jacobean pamphleteer Nicholas Breton, and answered: 'Because they cannot have their wils to governe'. 'Woman is seldome pitied for her teares', observed Thomas Gainsford, 'for they commonly proceede either from anger, or deceit'. Such gibes were commonplace.⁹

Medieval society had looked more tolerantly on male tears. 'Public emotion on the part of knights and great lords was not frowned upon but indeed admired', writes Ruth Mazo Karras. Chivalric heroes, including King Arthur and his knights, openly shed tears of grief or

⁸ Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 243; John Featley, *A Fountaine of Teares Emptying It Selfe into Three Rivelets, viz. of (1) Compunction, (2) Compassion, (3) Devotion: or, Sobs of Nature Sanctified by Grace. Langued in Severall Soliloquies and Prayers upon Various Subjects, for the Benefit of All that Are in Affliction, and Particularly in these Distressed Times of Warre* (Amsterdam, 1646); Raymond A. Anselment, 'Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, and the Gift of Tears', *Seventeenth Century*, xxii (2007); Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England*, 384.

⁹ B.N. [Nicholas Breton], *Crossing of Proverbs: The Second Parts. With Certaine Brief Questions and Answeres* (London, 1616, STC 3644), sig. A4^v; T[homas] G[ainsford], *The Rich Cabinet Furnished with Varietie of Excellent Discriptions. Whereunto Is Annexed the Epitome of Good Manners, Extrracted from Mr. L. del la Casa* (London, 1616, STC 11522), fo. 164. See also John Lesly, *An Epithrene: or, Voice of Weeping. Bewailing the Want of Weeping. A Meditation* (London, 1631, STC 15510), 48; *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*, ed. James M. Osborn (London, 1962), 44.

compassion at times of emotional intensity.¹⁰ As late as 1530, the fall of Cardinal Wolsey was played out within this medieval spirit. As his servant George Cavendish recalled, the cardinal made no attempt to hide his distress, and sitting at dinner ‘wold many tymes burst owte sodenly in teares’. Cavendish added, moreover, that ‘there was not a drie eye among all the gentilmen sytting at the table wt hyme’. He recorded these tears, and many others, without surprise or disapproval.¹¹

The humanist code of civility swept away such tolerance. The Greek and Roman texts which dominated higher education condemned unbridled passions. Cicero had demanded rhetorically, ‘What is more disgraceful for a man than womanish weeping?’ Refined manners and emotional self-control were now expected to accompany traditional manly attributes, making it unacceptable to give free rein to any passion, whether of grief, joy or anger. Decency and propriety became the badges of civility.¹²

Medical science may have reinforced this new culture of emotional self-control. The Galenic theory of the ‘one-sex body’, resurfacing in the sixteenth century after centuries of oblivion, presented men and women as essentially similar, with male and female sexual organs merely inverted versions of each other. Such a view, placing male and female bodies on a single continuum, rendered sexual identity potentially unstable. While this was only one

¹⁰ Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2003), 65; Bonnie Wheeler, ‘Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes’ Psychic Pain’, in Jennifer C. Vaught with Lynne Dickson Bruckner (eds.), *Grief and Gender, 700–1700* (New York, 2003); Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization, 400–1500* (Oxford, 1990), 349.

¹¹ George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*, ed. Richard S. Sylvester (Early English Text Society, ccxliii, London, 1959), 160; see also 31, 42, 46, 104–5, 107, 158.

¹² Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, II. 24; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*; Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England*, chs. 14–16; Rosemary O’Day, *Education and Society, 1500–1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (London, 1982); Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (London, 1999).

of several competing theories, for those who accepted the instability of the sexual body it was imperative for men to behave in an overtly ‘manly’ style.¹³ It was widely accepted, moreover, that young boys were in many respects ‘effeminate’, and many elite families thought it essential to remove them from the ‘dangerous’ influence of their mothers at an early age. And whereas a medieval boy might be placed in a nobleman’s household to learn the precepts of lordship and service, the harsh regime of grammar schools was designed to instil both physical and emotional endurance alongside the accomplishments of a refined gentleman. Young boys were conditioned to bear pain and disappointments with fortitude.¹⁴

While the demands of civility and ‘manliness’ might appear to pull in opposite directions, both identified rigorous self-control as an essential masculine attribute. Sir Thomas More, lord chancellor and humanist, embodied very different cultural values from those of his predecessor. Whereas Wolsey had bewailed his fall with an open display of grief, More faced his own downfall and death with dignified composure. One early account praised him, tellingly, as our ‘new, Christian Socrates’.¹⁵

We might see this cultural shift as another phase in Norbert Elias’s ‘civilizing process’, and the triumph of what William Reddy would label a new ‘emotional regime’.¹⁶

¹³ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Katharine Park, ‘Cadden, Laqueur, and the “One-Sex Body”’, *Medieval Feminist Forum*, xlvii (2010). See also Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England*, chs. 2–5; Dror Wahrman, ‘Change and the Corporeal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Gender History: or, Can Cultural History Be Rigorous?’, *Gender and History*, xx (2008), 586–9.

¹⁴ Obadiah Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen: In Two Parts* (Oxford, 1673), 51–2, 55, 68; Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England*, 300–10.

¹⁵ Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance*, 6–15.

¹⁶ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, new edn (Oxford, 1994); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), 55, 128.

But as others have cautioned, the histories of civility and masculinity are far from unilinear.¹⁷ The same is true of male tears. Civility demanded both ‘decency’ and compassion and, as George Puttenham recognized, in the case of tears these appeared incompatible. Some contemporaries prioritized manliness over civility, or vice versa. Others looked for guidance on the fine line between emotional sterility and excess. Tears can thus offer a valuable insight into the broader intersecting histories of civility, emotional expression and masculinity.¹⁸

Educational treatises and conduct books generally avoided the issue of tears. Serious discussion occurs mainly within religious and literary texts, and drama, supplemented by numerous casual references in more popular fare. But the issue, like masculinity itself, demands social as well as cultural analysis.¹⁹ We need to look beyond literary and prescriptive texts to examine personal and social behaviour, in a wide range of contexts, by men occupying positions across the social, political and religious spectrum. This survey focuses on the Elizabethan and Stuart period, with a brief assessment of eighteenth-century developments.

I

Disapproval of male tears was never absolute. While writers such as Bright and Burton presented melancholy as an affliction, Elizabethan and Jacobean elites viewed it as a fashionable symptom of their leisured and refined world. ‘Sweetest melancholy’ pervades the poetry and music of the period.²⁰ A stream of wealthy, melancholy clients turned for help to

¹⁷ Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, chs. 6–7; Shepard, ‘From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen?’, 289–5.

¹⁸ For a critical survey, see Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, ‘What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950’, *Journal of British Studies*, xlv (2005).

¹⁹ See Shepard, ‘From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen?’, 289.

²⁰ Babb, *Elizabethan Malady*.

Richard Napier, the astrological physician, and Burton considered the nobility and gentry especially susceptible to ‘sullen fits [and] weeping fits’.²¹

Classical influences were themselves ambiguous. Ancient writers had recognized the tensions between manliness, grief and compassion, and offered numerous examples of tearful men, most notably Homer’s Achilles. The Elizabethan translator George Chapman came to Achilles’ defence, while acknowledging that many considered such tears ‘unworthie and fitter for children or women than such an Heroe’.²² Seneca had urged a middle course between emotional indulgence and total suppression. Recognizing the Stoic ideal as impossible, he admitted having been overwhelmed by the death of a close friend, and considered tears at such times as natural and appropriate, within moderation: ‘Let not the eyes be dry when we have lost a friend, nor let them overflow. We may weep, but we must not wail’.²³ That sums up most humanist and indeed Christian opinion. To Robert Burton, and many others, he was ‘that divine Seneca’. Francis Bayly held that ‘love indeed commands a tear, but faith forbids a deluge’, adding that Seneca’s teaching ‘may serve for a Christians imitation’.²⁴

²¹ Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*, 1st paperback edn (Cambridge, 1981), 150–60; Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 94.

²² *Chapman’s Homer: The Iliad, the Odyssey and the Lesser Homerica*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll, 2 vols. (London, 1957), i, 44.

²³ Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, lxxiii, ed. and trans. Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols. (London, 1917–25), i, 429–37; Paul Schulten, ‘To Cry or Not to Cry: Public Emotions in Antiquity’, *Cultural and Social History*, ii (2005).

²⁴ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Dell and Jordan-Smith, 16, 23; Francis Bayly, *An Antidote against Immoderate Sorrow for the Death of our Friends: Taken from an Assured Hope of our Resurrection to Life and Glory. Delivered in a Sermon Preached in the Parish-Church of North-*

Scripture, too, discouraged the blanket condemnation of tears. The Old Testament is full of weeping men and women, while the New Testament offered St Peter, St Paul and Christ himself, weeping over the death of Lazarus and the fate of Jerusalem. Moreover, as one commentator emphasized, Christ's tears had been 'public, in the view of passers-by'.²⁵ George Chapman offered Christ's distress as a precedent sufficient to make 'the fitness of great men's teares . . . utterly unanswerable'.²⁶ Preachers vigorously repudiated Stoic extremism. John Howes thought that to shed no tears for those we have loved would be 'a heathenish sin . . . a Stoical dulnesse'.²⁷ Others pronounced it 'blockish senselessness', 'stoicall stupiditie', 'Stoical Superciliousness and Morosity'.²⁸ John Donne, who delivered the only published sermon on the text 'Jesus wept', demanded to know 'what shall God have to doe with eye that never wept?'²⁹

With compassion both a Christian virtue and a badge of civility, how was it to be reconciled with emotional self-control? For humanist and religious writers alike, the answer

Wraxall in Wiltshire, the 12th of Aprill 1660. At the Funeral of Sr William Button Baronet (London, 1660), 21.

²⁵ Theophilus Gale, *Christ's Tears for Jerusalems Unbelief and Ruine: Now Humbly Recommended to England's Consideration in this her Day of Tryal and Danger* (London, 1679), 54.

²⁶ *Chapman's Homer*, ed. Nicoll, i, 44.

²⁷ John Howes, *Real Comforts Extracted from Moral and Spiritual Principles: Presented in a Sermon, Preached at the Funeral of that Reverend Divine Mr. Thomas Ball Late Minister of Gods Word at Northampton, upon the 21. Day of June, A.D. 1659* (London, 1660), 3.

²⁸ Henry Hibbert, *Waters of Marah: Drawn Forth in Two Funerall Sermons, October, 1653* (London, 1654), 63; William Bell, *Incomparable Company-Keeping: or, A Conversation on Earth in Heaven. Held Forth in Sundry Sermons Which Are Now Digested into a Treatise* (London, 1657), 52; John Corbet, *The Kingdom of God among Men; a Tract of the Sound State of Religion* (London, 1679), 111. See also Richard Hooker, *A Remedie against Sorrow and Feare, Delivered in a Funerall Sermon* (London, 1612, STC 13722), sig. A3.

²⁹ Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance*, 177; see also 173–85.

lay in moderation and propriety. The passions were to be governed rather than suppressed, and allowed when they did not offend against reason and decency.³⁰ The challenge, of course, lay in the practical application of such generalizations. Were tears permitted, and if so, when? Commentators recognized that they could express a huge range of emotions, from anger, self-pity, fear, grief and remorse to hilarity and exultation. Only if they were the right sort of tears, shed in an appropriate place, and in moderation, could they be acceptable. George Chapman was careful to discriminate. ‘Who can denie’, he demanded, ‘that there are teares of manlinesse and magnanimitie as well as womanish and pusillanimous?’ He defended Achilles’ problematic tears (when forced to surrender a beautiful female captive acquired among the spoils of war) as tears of manly anger, the natural ‘effects of greatest and most fierie spirits’.³¹ Theophilus Gale judged Christ’s own tears ‘rational . . . very judicious, and wel-grounded’, while condemning the ‘foolish, irrational’ sort he pronounced far too common.³² The lachrymose preacher Thomas Playfere conceded that ‘immoderate’ tears offended against nature, reason and religion, adding tartly that Heraclitus, the ‘weeping philosopher’, had eventually ‘dyed of a dropsie, and so (as I may say) drowned himself in his owne teares’.³³

³⁰ Shagan, *Rule of Moderation*, 34–51; Reynolds, *Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul of Man*, 43–57 and *passim*; J. F. Senault, *The Use of Passions*, trans. Henry, earl of Monmouth (London, 1649).

³¹ *Chapman’s Homer*, ed. Nicoll, i, 44–5. Achilles himself chides his friend Patroclus for shedding ‘unseemely teares’, ‘so like a girle’: *ibid.*, i, 322.

³² Lesly, *Epithrene*, 47–8; Gale, *Christ’s Tears for Jerusalems Unbelief and Ruine*, 48.

³³ Thomas Playfere, *The Meane in Mourning: A Sermon Preached at Saint Maryes Spittle in London on Tuesday in Easter Weeke, 1595* (London, 1597, STC 20016), 5, 8, a gibe repeated by Lesly, *Epithrene*, 61–2.

How then did contemporaries categorize and judge tears? Some they condemned out of hand, especially hypocritical, or ‘crocodile’, tears.³⁴ Oliver Cromwell, rare then as now as a lachrymose politician, faced repeated attacks on this score. A Leveller opponent complained bitterly that he and his son-in-law Henry Ireton would ‘cry, and howl, and bedew their cheeks with the tears of hypocrisie and deceit’ and ‘then, as soon as they had wiped their eyes’, cynically dispatch their victims.³⁵ The journalist Marchamont Nedham charged the young king of Scots with similar deceit, sneering in 1650 that he had wept on the execution of the duke of Montrose ‘like a young Crocodile upon the Banks of Nilus’.³⁶

Tears on the stage, ‘feigned’ by definition, also attracted criticism, though mainly from Elizabethan puritans. One writer accused playwrights of cynically deploying false emotions ‘to make our affections overflow’. Tragedies, he complained, effeminate spectators by driving them to ‘womanish weeping’. A generation later, William Prynne continued to link the stage with effeminacy.³⁷

³⁴ Lesly, *Epithrene*, 46–7; T[homas] M[eriton], *The Wandering Lover: A Tragy-Comedie* (London, 1658), 14; Charles Croke, *Fortune’s Uncertainty: or, Youth’s Unconstancy* (London, 1667), 17.

³⁵ Joseph Frank, *The Levellers: A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth-Century Social Democrats, John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 193–4. See also Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. John Sutherland (London, 1973), 211; [George Joyce], *A True Narrative of the Occasions and Causes of the Late Lord Gen. Cromwell’s Anger and Indignation against Lieut. Col. George Joyce: (Sometimes Cornet Joyce, who Secured the King at Holmby) and his Proceedings against him to Cashier him from the Army, and Imprison and Destroy him in his Estate* (London, 1659), broadside; *A Copie of Quaeries: or, A Comment upon the Life, and Actions of the Grand Tyrant and his Complices. Oliver the First and Last of that Name, not Unfit, nor Unworthy of thy Perusall* (London, 1659), 3.

³⁶ *Mercurius politicus*, iii (20–7 June 1650), 45; see also xii (22–9 Aug. 1650), 180.

³⁷ Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven, 2002), 441–8, 460–1; William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie . . . Wherein It Is Largely Evidenced, by Divers*

Tears triggered by self-pity or fear also suggested feminine weakness and attracted more general contempt. Tearful cuckolds and hen-pecked husbands (viewed as almost synonymous) found themselves subjected to merciless ridicule.³⁸ In 1649 a royalist wit exploited the same trope to mock General Fairfax after his wife interrupted the king's trial to signal her dissent. 'I am so troubled in my sleep', Fairfax laments. 'My wife afflicts me too, which makes me weep'.³⁹ In Shakespeare's *Lear*, the old king cannot hold back tears of self-pity and vexation when Goneril takes away his retinue, and recognizes their demeaning impropriety. 'I am ashamed', he rages, 'That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus'.⁴⁰ If impossible to resist, contemporaries expected tears of vexation, self-pity or fear to be kept hidden from view. Archbishop Cranmer, buffeted by court politics, concealed his distress in public, though 'privately, with his secret and special friends', he 'would shed forth many bitter tears'.⁴¹ Any sign of fear in political leaders invited contempt. Lucy Hutchinson heaped scorn on the regicide Colonel Ingoldsby, who saved his life at the Restoration by claiming that Cromwell had seized his hand and forced him to sign the king's death warrant. She sneered that 'with many tears [he] professed his repentance, and made a most lamentable

Arguments, by the Concurring Authorities and Resolutions of Sundry Texts of Scripture . . . that Popular Stage-Playes . . . Are Sinfull, Heathenish, Lewde, Ungodly Spectacles, and Most Pernicious Corruptions (London, 1633, STC 20464), 155–61, 167–73.

³⁸ M[artin] P[arker], *Houshold Talke, or; Good Councell for a Married Man* (London, 1628–9, STC 19246), broadside; Nicholas Breton, *The Good and the Badde: or, Descriptions of the Worthies, and Unworthies of this Age. Where the Best May See their Graces, and the Worst Discerne their Baseness* (London, 1616, STC 3656), 34.

³⁹ *The Second Part of a Tragi-Comedy, Called New-Market-Fayre or Mrs. Parliaments New Figaryes* (London, 1649), 11.

⁴⁰ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, I. v. 320–3.

⁴¹ Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 188.

whining recantation’.⁴² Gilbert Burnet, Whig bishop and historian, described numerous public figures shedding tears, including Cromwell, Charles II, James, duke of York, and leading Tories, and dismissed them all as weak, base or hypocritical.⁴³

Most fallen leaders attempted to maintain a rigid self-control. Archbishop Laud reacted to his sentence of death with studied composure, his biographer reported; ‘he neither entertained the news with a Stoical Apathy, nor wailed his fate with weak and womanish Lamentations (to which Extremes most men are carried in this case)’.⁴⁴ A generation later Burnet described how his Whig hero Algernon Sidney, condemned on perjured evidence, had retained his composure on the scaffold, emulating his hero Marcus Brutus.⁴⁵ Not all achieved such self-mastery, and a royalist newspaper conceded that the duke of Hamilton, executed in 1649, had wept on the scaffold. Struggling to find a positive interpretation, it noted that the duke had spent an hour praying with his chaplains, and in all that time ‘did never seem daunted, but kept his ordinary countenance’; his tears must therefore have been spiritual, not prompted by fear. Lord Capel, beheaded the same day, displayed more aplomb: ‘perceiving some of his servants to weep, he said “Gentlemen, refrain your selves”’.⁴⁶

⁴² Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. Sutherland, 228.

⁴³ Gilbert Burnet, *History of his Own Time*, abridged by Thomas Stackhouse, intro. David Allen (London, 1979), 14, 23, 82, 85, 115, 128, 162, 198–200.

⁴⁴ Peter Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicanus: or, The History of the Life and Death, of the Most Reverend and Renowned Prelate William [Laud], by Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury . . . Containing also the Ecclesiastical History of the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland from his First Rising till his Death* (London, 1668), 529.

⁴⁵ Burnet, *History of his Own Time*, abridged by Stackhouse, intro. Allen, 205.

⁴⁶ *Mercurius pragmaticus*, xlv (6–13 Mar. 1649); *The Several Speeches of Duke Hamilton Earl of Cambridg, Henry Earl of Holland and Arthur Lord Capel, upon the Scaffold immediately before their Execution on Friday the 9. of March* (London, 1649), 36.

Several other categories of tears also invited disapproval. Timothy Bright had explained the physiological link between laughter and tears, but genteel society deplored such a breach of decorum and self-control. ‘Laugh not too much, or too loud’, one conduct book instructed; another advised that ‘A little laughter is permitted, moderate smiling commended’. Uncontrolled laughter was vulgar, ‘dissolute and unmannerly’.⁴⁷ When a character in a Restoration play described a nobleman ‘with his eyes flowing in tears of laughter’, such an incongruous image would have aroused the audience’s suspicions; and the report is soon revealed as slander.⁴⁸ Tears of laughter suggested vulgarity, and they generally appear in a plebeian context. A jest-book tells how one morning a London milliner ‘could hardly open his shop for laughing, the tears ran plentifully over his Eyes’. He is quickly exposed as the butt of his own jest: having invited a friend to share his bed after a night on the town, he has left him lying next to his own unsuspecting and sleeping wife, anticipating their mutual astonishment and naively oblivious to the dangers.⁴⁹

In all these contexts, contemporaries viewed tears with disapproval. Total self-control, of course, was an ideal not even the elites could always sustain, and in situations of emotional intensity tears might find a sympathetic response. Thus, the news writer John Chamberlain reported in 1613 how the eminent lawyer Sir Edward Coke, forced out of his place in the Court of Common Pleas, left ‘not only weeping himself, but followed with the teares of all

⁴⁷ Bright, *Treatise of Melancholie*, 147–53; *Youths Behaviour*, trans. Hawkins, 10; W[illiam] F[iston], *The School of Good Manners: or, The New School of Vertue* (London, 1609, STC 10923), sig. A7^v; Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen*, 216; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 237.

⁴⁸ Thomas D’Urfey, *The Injured Princess: or, The Fatal Wager* (London, 1682), 15.

⁴⁹ *London Jestes: or, A Collection of the Choicest Joques and Repartees, out of the Most Celebrated Authors Ancient and Modern. With an Addition of Above One Hundred Never Before Printed* (London, 1684), 110–12.

that bench and most of the officers of that court'. He also reported a tearfully defensive speech in the Lords by Richard Neile, bishop of Lincoln, and in 1621 described how the lawyer Thomas Richardson was so dismayed to be nominated speaker of the Commons 'that seeing no excuse wold serve the turne he wept down-right'.⁵⁰ A critic could have mocked all these displays of self-pity or fear, but only in the last instance does Chamberlain's wording hint at disapproval.

In other contexts, too, contemporaries might lay aside their customary disapproval. Gentlemen were expected to express joy and relief, for example, with moderation and decorum, but in extreme circumstances few criticized more emotional reactions. When Prince Charles and Buckingham reached home safe from their reckless jaunt to Spain in 1623, Chamberlain reported without any hint of disapproval that the king 'fell on their neckes and they all wept'.⁵¹ We hear too of a 'young lad' captured by bandits, miraculously rescued, and reunited with his father with 'mutuall teares of joy', a scene described with evident approval.⁵² A journalist could also report without criticism how a young arsonist had 'burst forth into a . . . passion of weeping' when granted a last-minute reprieve at the gallows.⁵³ Self-control was not expected of the poor, of course, even in far more mundane circumstances. When an Essex preacher remarked that it was pleasant to 'see a poore man cry

⁵⁰ *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, i, 481–2, 537, ii, 338.

⁵¹ Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman: Containing Sundry Excellent Rules or Exquisite Observations, Tending to Direction of Every Gentleman, of Selecter Ranke and Quality. How to Demeane or Accommodate Himselfe in the Manage of Publike or Private Affaires* (London, 1630, STC 3563), 344–5; *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, ii, 516; Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592–1628* (London, 1981), 165. See also Bright, *Treatise of Melancholie*, 148–50.

⁵² *Autobiography of Thomas Raymond, and Memoirs of the Family of Guise of Elmore, Gloucestershire*, ed. G. Davies (Camden Society, 3rd ser., xxviii, London, 1917), 41–2.

⁵³ *Publick Intelligencer*, cxxxiii (5–12 July 1658), 669.

for joy, at the receipt of an unexpected two pence, or three pence', his words suggest the very different cultural expectations applying to rich and poor.⁵⁴

Tears of joy might also be acceptable in other circumstances, especially in a religious context. Puritan and nonconformist writings frequently show men and women overwhelmed by religious euphoria, and confident that their spiritual tears were fully approved among the devout.⁵⁵ Nicholas Breton, recalling popular devotion to Queen Elizabeth, could also exclaim with admiration, 'What teares of ioye have bene shedd at the sight of her?'⁵⁶ In the absence of mortal danger, religious passion or patriotic fervour, however, approval was less easily forthcoming. Oliver Cromwell might sing the praises of his son Henry 'with tears of joy on his cheekes', but most contemporaries would have disapproved of such behaviour. And a

⁵⁴ Edward Symmons, *Foure Sermons Wherein Is Made a Foure-fold Discovery: Viz. of Ecclesiasticall Selfe-Seeking. A Wisemans Carriage in Evill Times. The Benefit of Christian Patience. The Right Nature and Temper of the Spirit of the Gospel* (London, 1642), 39.

⁵⁵ Lesly, *Epithrene*, 53–4; *The Diary of Samuel Rogers, 1634–1638*, ed. Tom Webster and Kenneth Shipp (Church of England Record Society, xi, Woodbridge, 2004), 28, 92; Thomas Hotchkis, *An Exercitation Concerning the Nature of Forgiveness of Sin: Very Necessary (as the Author Humbly Conceiveth) to a Right Informaion [sic], and Well Grounded Decision of Sundry Controversal [sic] Points in Divinity now Depending* (London, 1654), 307–8; Robert Fowler, *A Quakers Sea-Journal: Being a True Relation of a Voyage to New-England* (London, 1659), 7; Samuel Speed, *Prison-Pietie: or, Meditations Divine and Moral. Digested into Poetical Heads, on Mixt and Various Subjects. Whereunto Is Added a Panegyrick to the Right Reverend, and Most Nobly Descended, Henry Lord Bishop of London* (London, 1677), 8–9; Charles Doe, *A Collection of Experience of the Work of Grace: or, The Spirit of God Working upon the Souls of Several Persons* (London, 1700), 45, 52.

⁵⁶ Nicholas Breton, 'Character of Queen Elizabeth', in Nicholas Breton, *The Works in Verse and Prose*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1879), i, 6.

report of the pope weeping for joy over a secret letter from the duke of York, a Catholic convert, was surely intended to trigger alarm and disgust among Protestant Englishmen.⁵⁷

The tears of unhappy lovers elicited a more complex response. Among the elite they were, for the most part, acceptable only on the page. Male tears featured prominently in song and poetry, especially in Elizabethan verse miscellanies and John Donne's love poetry. But as Marjory Lange explains, this was essentially 'a play-language of dalliance'. Such 'rhetorical tears, parts of a rhetorical game played according to rhetorical rules',⁵⁸ did not represent real emotional situations. Burton devoted a whole section of his *Anatomy of Melancholy* to 'love melancholy', and described the tears of the rejected (of both sexes) with considerable sympathy.⁵⁹ But in other genres, such as ballads and comedy, lovesick swains are often depicted as weak and unmanly. When the protagonist of the Tudor comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* bursts into tears, a friend chides, 'What, weepe? Fye, for shame! And blubber?' For Nicholas Breton, a weeping lover was an 'Effeminate Foole'.⁶⁰ And when Shakespeare's Romeo falls to the ground, 'blubbering and weeping', on being parted from Juliet, Friar Laurence reacts with disgust. 'Art thou a man?', he demands. 'Thy tears are womanish'. They signalled weakness and self-pity.⁶¹ A lover's imagined tears were acceptable in genteel verse; any real tears should be hidden from sight.

⁵⁷ *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.: Secretary, First, to the Council of State, and Afterwards to the Two Protectors, Oliver and Richard Cromwell*, ed. Thomas Birch, 7 vols. (London, 1742), vi, 37; *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby: The Complete Text and a Selection of his Letters*, ed. Andrew Browning, 2nd edn. (London, 1991), 178.

⁵⁸ Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance*, 63; see also ch. 2 and pp. 187–204.

⁵⁹ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Dell and Jordan-Smith, 617–820; see also 41.

⁶⁰ Nicholas Udall, *Ralph Roister Doister*, III. iv. 1176–7, in *Four Tudor Comedies*, ed. William Tydeman (Harmondsworth, 1984); Breton, *The Goode and the Badde*, 30–1.

⁶¹ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III. iii. 86, 108–9.

II

When we turn to tears of grief over the loss of a wife, child or intimate friend, we find, by contrast, almost universal acceptance. But here we also find most debate, focused on issues of scale and duration: when did appropriate grief degenerate into effeminate or vulgar excess?⁶² One commentator condemned the public display of grief as vulgar, and urged that any tears be quickly curbed. Most preachers sought to balance compassion with the demands of religion and propriety, condemning excessive tears as ‘uncomely’ and ‘a great indecency’.⁶³ Uncontrolled grief was also irreligious, for it disparaged God’s providence and disturbed souls now at rest. As one preacher observed, ‘violent Passion, or unremitting Sorrow, is most unbecoming the blessed Hope assur’d us in the Gospel’.⁶⁴ Pushing this idea to an unsettling conclusion, another writer declared that a young aristocrat would be cruel to shed any tears for his dead wife, for they ‘would show he did not love her’. Her parents should also refrain, ‘unless they weep for Ioye’.⁶⁵

Not all contemporaries favoured moderation, and the competing demands of compassion and decency could occasionally produce a jarringly contradictory message. One sermon condemning exorbitant grief appeared in print alongside a tribute that urged tears in

⁶² Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998), ch. 8.

⁶³ Senault, *Use of Passions*, 488; Thomas Lye, *The King of Terrors’ Metamorphosis: or, Death Transform’d into Sleep. A Sermon, Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. E. Nicoll* (London, 1660), 1–2.

⁶⁴ William Bates, *A Funeral Sermon, Preached upon the Death of the Reverend and Excellent Divine Dr. Thomas Manton, who Deceas’d the 18th of October, 1677* (London, 1678), 62.

⁶⁵ [John Eliot], *Poems: or, Epigrams, Satyrs, Elegies, Songs and Sonnets, upon Several Persons and Occasions* (London, 1658), 36.

torrents.⁶⁶ On another occasion a poet declared, ‘A flood (meethinks) too little to condole | Our loss’, though the funeral sermon had delivered a very different message. ‘Tears are pearls’, the preacher insisted; ‘do not prodigally cast them before swine’. Mourners should not let ‘carnal sorrow’ encourage worldly men to focus on this life rather than the next.⁶⁷

In the face of bereavement the elites generally sought to follow this counsel of moderation. Monarchs similarly tried to confine grief to their private chamber.⁶⁸ James I, however, could not hide his distress at the death of his son Prince Henry, and his favourite, Buckingham, proved equally emotional. In 1625, when news of the king’s death reached the royal chapel, Buckingham collapsed in such paroxysms of grief that William Laud had to break off his sermon and suspend the service. Charles I, by contrast, took pains to preserve royal dignity and decorum. When word of Buckingham’s assassination reached him, also during a service in the royal chapel, ‘the king remained unmoved, without the least change in his countenance, till prayers were ended’; only then did he retire to his chamber and give way to floods of tears.⁶⁹

Moderation applied to location as well as scale: tears should be shed in private, and their public display was unseemly. At the funeral of the earl of Mulgrave in 1658, the preacher imagined rivers of tears but coupled this effusion with a firm call for restraint. He advised the earl’s kinsfolk that the ‘whole family, when you come home anon, may have your

⁶⁶ Thomas Case, *The Excellent Woman: A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Scott* (London, 1659), 76–8 and *passim*.

⁶⁷ James Bedford, *The Perusal of an Old Statute Concerning Death and Judgment: As It Was Lately Delivered in a Sermon at the Funeral of Mrs. Frances Bedford* (London, 1657), sig. A4^v, a4.

⁶⁸ Ralph Houlbrooke, ‘Royal Grief in England, 1485–1640’, *Cultural and Social History*, ii (2005).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 72–3; D. Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956), 285. For other emotional outbursts, see *ibid.*, 286, 444–5; William Laud, *The Works*, ed. William Scott and James Bliss, 7 vols. (1847–60; Hildesheim, 1977), iii, 158; Lockyer, *Buckingham*, 234, 454.

mouths and hearts' full of tears and mourning. The public funeral demanded restraint in the interests of piety and decorum; in private, they could vent their true feelings.⁷⁰ The nonconformist Gervase Disney confessed to 'floods of tears and violent Passion' at his wife's funeral in 1686, but felt embarrassed that his behaviour had been both socially and spiritually inappropriate. He begged God to pardon his 'unbecoming Carriage to her'.⁷¹

Christ's own tears, shed over Lazarus and the fate of Jerusalem, had been tears of compassion rather than loss. Such tears, many argued, demonstrated humanity and a refined sensibility. The translator John Ogilby judged them 'infallible signes . . . of good disposition', whereas 'hardnesse to weep, is a certaine symptome of a harsh and cruell nature, and argues a base extraction'.⁷² Obadiah Walker agreed, remarking that 'Those who are apt to shed tears, are of a softer and lovinger disposition'.⁷³ Such views anticipate the genteel sensibility prevalent in the mid eighteenth century. John Lesly could even defend compassionate tears for one's own sufferings. If biblical figures had 'wept in Compassion of others', he asked, 'may not I in Passion of my selfe'?⁷⁴ Most commentators would have frowned on such self-indulgence.

Tearful compassion is reflected in elite behaviour as well as normative literature. When privy counsellors discussed the Amboyna massacre in 1624, 'they were so moved, that . . . some of them shed teares', and an account of the horrors of the Thirty Years War elicited

⁷⁰ Edward Boteler, *The Worthy of Ephratah: Represented in a Sermon at the Funerals of the Right Honorable Edmund Earl of Mulgrave* (London, 1659), 3–5.

⁷¹ Gervase Disney, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Holy Life and Death of Gervase Disney, Esq.: To Which Are Added Several Letters and Poems* (London, 1692), 156–7.

⁷² Carolyn D. Williams, *Pope, Homer, and Manliness: Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Classical Learning* (London, 1993), 106.

⁷³ Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen*, 90.

⁷⁴ Lesly, *Epithrene*, 48–9.

a similar response from an Oxford audience.⁷⁵ The puritan attorney Robert Woodford was moved to tears by the desperate plight of some pauper women and also, more unusually, by chancing upon a pack of hounds in hot pursuit of ‘a poore timorous hare’.⁷⁶ The pathos of the fiery High Churchman Henry Sacheverell, on trial for treason in 1710, triggered tears of pity even from a group of hardened Tory politicians.⁷⁷ Far more common were compassionate tears over emotional partings or reunions. James I wept when his newly-wed daughter Elizabeth left for Germany in 1613, knowing they might never meet again. The royalist Sir Richard Fanshawe wept on leaving his wife and newborn infant in Oxford at a desperate juncture of the civil war.⁷⁸ A final parting could prove even more emotional. In 1555 Bishop Hooper, facing death at the stake for heresy, received a visit from Sir Anthony Kingston, appointed to oversee the burning. Kingston ‘burst forth in tears’ on greeting his former friend and mentor, and on parting both shed tears.⁷⁹ Tearful farewells were common among ordinary people. The young Quaker William Caton and his friends shed plentiful tears as he set off on a missionary tour, and when John Cannon left his family and friends in 1707 to begin a new career as an excise officer, ‘nothing but sobbing & tears appeared’.⁸⁰ In a

⁷⁵ *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, ii, 570; *The Diary of Thomas Crosfield M.A., B.D., Fellow of Queen’s College Oxford*, ed. Frederick S. Boas (London, 1935), 31.

⁷⁶ *The Diary of Robert Woodford, 1637–1641*, ed. John Fielding (Camden Society, 5th ser., xlii, London, 2012), 205, 256. See also his tears of joy over peace with the Scots in 1639: *ibid.*, 312.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London, 1973), 200.

⁷⁸ Willson, *King James VI and I*, 286; *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. John Loftis (Oxford, 1979), 114.

⁷⁹ John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments*, ed. George Townsend and S. R. Cattley, 8 vols. (1837–41; New York, 1965), vi, 534–5.

⁸⁰ William Caton, *A Journal of the Life of that Faithful Servant and Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Will. Caton* (London, 1689), 11; *The Chronicles of John Cannon Excise Officer and*

particularly poignant scene, a felon hugged his little daughter at the Tyburn gallows and ‘wept bitterly’ as she was carried away.⁸¹

Yet many contemporaries felt that even compassionate tears breached the codes of civility and decorum, however distressing the circumstances. Adam Martindale’s diary records that he ‘wept plentifully’ during Booth’s rebellion in 1659, dreading that friends might perish. But he confined his tears to his private closet, and reminded himself that ‘my constitution is not apt to teares’.⁸² Dramatists found rich opportunities in such battles between compassion and self-control. Shakespeare repeatedly showed kings and nobles overwhelmed by grief and anguish but embarrassed by the affront to social and gender proprieties. When Laertes finds his sister Ophelia drowned, he struggles in vain to control his emotions:

<py>

<range on end of next line>I forbid my tears; but yet

It is our trick, nature her custom holds,

Let shame say what it will.

</py>

Writing Master, ed. John Money, 2 vols. (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., xliii–xliv, Oxford, 2010), i, 73.

⁸¹ *The Speeches and Confession of Arthur Knight, and Thomas Laret, at the Places of Execution in Russel Street neer Covent-Garden, and at Islington, on Wednesday Last, Being the Second of this Instant March, 1653* (London, 1653), 7–8. See also *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford 1632–1695, Described by Himself*, ed. Andrew Clark, 5 vols. (Oxford Historical Society, xix, xxi, xxvi, xxx, xl, Oxford, 1891–1900), ii, 553.

⁸² *The Life of Adam Martindale, Written by Himself, and Now First Printed from the Original Manuscript in the British Museum*, ed. Richard Parkinson (Chetham Society, 1st ser., iv, Manchester, 1845), 139.

Even in the extremity of grief, he feels them unmanly. So does the duke of Exeter, on finding two comrades on the battlefield of Agincourt dying in each other's arms. The sight, he admits,

<py>

<range on end of next line>forc'd

Those waters from me which I would have stopped;

But I had not so much of man in me,

And all my mother came into mine eyes

And gave me up to tears.

</py>

A battlefield alarm soon calls him back to action; Laertes brushes aside his tears to vow revenge; and Macduff, initially overwhelmed by the murder of his wife and infants in *Macbeth*, soon follows a similar course.⁸³ Their compassionate tears are replaced by a more manly response. In similar vein, an elegy for Charles I begins with tears but warns that these 'tears doe call | For vengeance, you by blood must right his fall'.⁸⁴

Dramatists were not alone in exploring tensions between compassion and emotional repression.⁸⁵ Writers describing a harrowing scene would often contrast the protagonist's

⁸³ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, IV. vii. 187–9; *Henry V*, IV. vi. 7–35; *Macbeth*, IV. iii. 219–34. For similar attitudes in Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia*, see Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Aldershot, 2008), 123–4.

⁸⁴ *The Scotch Souldiers Lamentation upon the Death of the Most Glorious and Illustrious Martyr, King Charles: Shewing, that the Authors thereof Have Outdone All, even Korah, Dathan and Abiram, in Rebellion. And Himselfe Went Likewise Beyond All, but Our Blessed Saviour whom he Imitated, in his Sufferings* (London, 1649), 36.

⁸⁵ Jennifer Vaught has argued that in many literary genres male tears were presented as 'empowering, liberating, dignifying', though the evidence cited often suggests deep anxieties over the issue: Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature*, 1–2 and *passim*.

heroic composure with the distress of his family and friends. John Foxe described Marian martyrs going to the stake with calm resolution while around them, as at John Rogers's burning, 'there was nothing to be seen but weeping and sorrowful people'.⁸⁶ Quaker narratives report onlookers weeping as a Friend is sentenced, whipped or abused, while the sufferer remains undaunted.⁸⁷ Some narratives also hint at the social exclusivity that might underpin such self-control. When the regicide Colonel John Hutchinson was arrested and carried away, his wife, Lucy, described their servants, labourers and tenants shedding bitter tears while the colonel remained unmoved. She did not criticize their 'weakness', for she would not have expected them to match his self-discipline, the product of superior breeding and faith.⁸⁸ The poet Richard Flecknoe displayed similar indulgence in a far more mundane, indeed comical, context. Telling how he had watched a simple farmer selling his favourite cow at market, bidding it farewell with a kiss and a few tears, Flecknoe describes the scene in

⁸⁶ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, vi, 653, 657, 695, 697–8.

⁸⁷ George Bishop, *A Manifesto Declaring What George Bishope Hath Been to the City of Bristoll and the Particular Persons Now in Authority Therein and What Hee Hath Received from Them in Recompence: Occasioned by the Late Sentence of Banishment Pronounced Upon Him by Them, 16th, 7th Mon., 1665, and Other Useages for his Conscience to God* (London, 1665), 25; John Stubs and William Caton, *A True Declaration of the Bloody Proceedings of the Men in Maidstone in the County of Kent . . . against John Stubs, William Caton: Who by the Scornful Generation of Men Are Called Quakers* (London, 1655), 4; George Whitehead, *The Christian Progress of that Ancient Servant and Minister of Jesus Christ, George Whitehead: Historically Relating his Experience, Ministry, Sufferings, Trials and Service, in Defence of the Truth, and God's Persecuted People, Commonly Called Quakers* (London, 1725), 105.

⁸⁸ Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. Sutherland, 248.

a gently patronizing rather than critical spirit. He too would not have expected emotional self-control or decorum from rustics.⁸⁹

Tears of grief or distress were clearly acceptable in a rhetorical context, where they feature prominently in print, on the stage and from the pulpit. On a title page they signalled that the subject required a solemn and emotional response. *New Englands Teares, for Old Englands Feares* appeared in the tense year 1641, while Charles I's execution prompted *The Teares of Sion* amid a flood of lachrymose verse. 'Reader', its author began, 'I present to you those Teares, which (if you be truly Christian) were once in your own eyes'.⁹⁰ Popular writers employed similar rhetorical devices. A balladeer began his tale of the Waldensian massacre in Piedmont 'With bleeding heart & mournful tear'.⁹¹ Tears played a similar role in the rhetoric of stage and pulpit. Shakespeare's Mark Antony, describing Caesar's murder, moves both himself and his audience to tears. 'Poor soul!', one citizen exclaims, 'his eyes are red as fire with weeping'.⁹² Christ's tears for Jerusalem prompted rhetorical tears for the miseries facing the Church or nation, and in 1637 the Essex minister Edward Symmons could picture the Church itself in tears: 'the Church in Babylon being in a lamentable condition, sat weeping and alone, by the rivers there'.⁹³

⁸⁹ Richard Flecknoe, *The Diarium, or Journall: Divided into 12 Jornadas in Burlesque Rhime, or Drolling Verse, with Divers Other Pieces of the Same Author* (London, 1656), 46.

⁹⁰ William Hooke, *Old Englands Teares, for Old Englands Feares: Preached in a Sermon on July 23, 1640* (London, 1641); *The Teares of Sion upon the Death of Josiah: Distilled in Some Country Sermon Notes on Febr. 4 and 11, 1649* (London, 1649), sig. A2.

⁹¹ *A Dreadful Relation, of the Cruel, Bloody, and Inhumane Massacre and Butchery, Committed on the Poor Protestants, in the Dominions of the Duke of Savoy* (London, 1655), broadside.

⁹² William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, III. ii. 121, 174.

⁹³ Symmons, *Foure Sermons Wherein Is Made a Foure-fold Discovery*, 71.

It would be wrong, however, to draw a sharp line between rhetorical and genuine emotion. Appeals for penitential tears in the face of national disaster were often more than merely rhetorical. John Sherman, appalled by the regicide, called on a sinful nation to beg God for mercy. ‘Tears with prayers do excellently’, he urged; ‘they make our prayers . . . more acceptable to heaven’.⁹⁴ Thomas Fettiplace used a treatise on the place of tears in private devotion to urge readers to weep for the nation’s sins as well as their own.⁹⁵ Many preachers, as we shall see, set out to move both themselves and their auditors to real tears. ‘I speak to Brethren with Tears’, one preacher declared in a funeral sermon, while another broke off, explaining that ‘My Grief and Tears stop my Speech’. Their reappearance on the printed page was clearly a rhetorical device, but the original tears may well have been genuine.⁹⁶ Even the court-room might witness a fusion of rhetorical and genuine emotion. Presiding at the trial of plotters for planning Cromwell’s assassination, John Lisle declared, ‘Before judgement be pronounced against you, I shall, as well as tears will give me leave, speak a few words’.⁹⁷ Whether feigned or genuine, his tears heightened the impact of his disquisition on their crime.

III

⁹⁴ John Sherman, *White Salt: or, A Sober Correction of a Mad World, in Some Wel-Wishes to Goodness* (London, 1654), 122, 134–7.

⁹⁵ Thomas Fettiplace, *The Sinner’s Tears, in Meditations and Prayers* (London, 1653), 154 and *passim*.

⁹⁶ John Quick, *The Dead Prophet Yet Speaking: A Funeral Sermon Preached at Plaisterers-Hall, Feb. 15, 1690, to the Church of Christ there, upon the Sad Occasion of the Decease of their Late Reverend Pastor, Mr. John Faldo* (London, 1691), 23; Martin Finch, *A Sermon Preach’d upon the Death of that Pious and Learned Divine, John Collinges, D.D.: The 25th Day of January, 1690. From Acts 13, 36* (London, 1695), 31.

⁹⁷ *Cal. State Papers, Domestic, 1654*, 236.

Only in a spiritual context do we find more whole-hearted approval of tears. Religion played an important role in shaping the period's emotional values, and St Peter's penitential tears served as a model across the religious spectrum.⁹⁸ All are sinners, and all must repent, warned Richard Brathwaite: 'Neither can any man get to heaven with drie eyes'. *The Sinners Sobs*, a black-letter chapbook, spelled out the same lesson for humbler readers.⁹⁹ Medieval society had not, for the most part, internalized that message; tears of grief and compassion had been common, penitential tears rare.¹⁰⁰ The Reformation (and Catholic Reformation) world proved far more responsive. John Lesly believed that 'the most Regenerate are most inclined to Weeping', and insisted that to reach paradise all must 'passe through the Purgatory of Weeping'.¹⁰¹ Robert Southwell, the Elizabethan Jesuit martyr, penned impassioned and tearful poems close in spirit to many puritan effusions. Tears pervaded the prison verses of the Anglican publisher Samuel Speed and the devotional treatise of the royalist physician Thomas Fettiplace.¹⁰²

Penitential tears featured prominently in a wide range of situations. Stephen Gardiner repented urging Cardinal Fisher to accept the Henrician supremacy, and in 'his seacrett talke amonge his Chaplins . . . the teares would fall from his eyes abundantly'. A New Model Army officer, disgraced by a sexual liaison, manifested his tearful remorse more publicly. At

⁹⁸ See Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance*, chs. 3–4; Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature*, 13–15.

⁹⁹ Brathwaite, *English Gentleman*, 346; Matthew Killiray, *The Sinners Sobs: or, The Sinners Way to Sions Joy. Plainly Demonstrating the Absolute Necessity of True Godly Sorrow for the Sinners Safety* (London, 1667).

¹⁰⁰ Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization*, 349.

¹⁰¹ Lesly, *Epithrene*, 41–2, 44, 81.

¹⁰² *The Poems of Robert Southwell, S.J.*, ed. J. H. McDonald and Nancy Pollard Brown (Oxford, 1967); Speed, *Prison-Pietie*; Fettiplace, *Sinner's Tears, in Meditations and Prayers*.

the Restoration, the republican MP Luke Robinson made an emotional ‘recanting speech at the bar [of the House] . . . all bathed in tears’.¹⁰³ Penitential tears on the scaffold made a deep impression. The earl of Essex, executed in 1601, recited the Lord’s Prayer, ‘which all present joined in with floods of tears and lamentations’.¹⁰⁴ Penitent murderers attracted particular admiration. The young apprentice Nathaniel Butler, condemned after stabbing a friend to death in 1657, was visited in prison by godly ministers, and progressed from simple remorse to a deeper awareness of his sinful condition and finally a sense of divine grace. At his exemplary death at Tyburn he addressed the crowd ‘with a very loud voice and with abundance of tears’.¹⁰⁵ Such narratives could exert a powerful influence. A pamphlet account of a penitential murderer helped guide another profane young man to a tearful deathbed repentance. Tears on the scaffold might even substitute for the expected ‘last dying speech’.

¹⁰³*The Life of Fisher*, ed. Ronald Bayne (Early English Text Society, extra ser., xxvii, London, 1921), 107–8; Edmund Chillenden, *Nathan’s Parable: Sins Discovery, with it’s [sic] Filthy Secret Lurking in the Brest of Men: or, Some Few Discoveries What the Sinfulness of Sin Is, and Spoile it Hath Made on Man, in Nine Particulars* (London, 1653), 14; Historical Manuscripts Commission, ser. 4, *Fifth Report*, Appendix, 199.

¹⁰⁴*Cal. State Papers, Domestic, 1598–1601*, 595; *A Lamentable New Ballad upon the Earle of Essex Death: To the Tune of the Kings Last Good-Night* (London, [1620?], STC 6792.3). See also R. Boreman, *An Antidote against Swearing* (London, 1662), 164–5.

¹⁰⁵Randolph Yearwood, *The Penitent Murderer: Being an Exact Narrative of the Life and Death of N. Butler, who (through Grace) Became a Convert, after He Had Most Cruelly Murdered John Knight* (London, 1657), 34–5 and *passim*. See also Lake with Questier, *Antichrist’s Lewd Hat*, 159–70; William Blake, *The Condemned Mans Reprieve: or, Gods Love-Tokens, Flowing in upon the Heart of William Blake, a Penitent Sinner, Giving him Assurance of the Pardon of his Sins, and the Enjoyment of Eternall Happiness, through the Merits of Christ his Saviour* (London, 1653), 1, 4.

A boy of 14, hanged at Tyburn in 1675, had understandably little to say on the scaffold, ‘but he supply’d that defect with his tears, weeping continually’.¹⁰⁶

The spiritual tears of the pious were more devotional in character. The Elizabethan preacher Thomas Playfere stressed that tearful prayer manifested sincerity and fervour.¹⁰⁷ This devotional practice was particularly evident in puritan and nonconformist circles. The diaries and notebooks of the Yorkshire minister Oliver Heywood are sodden with tears on every page, shed by himself, his family and friends. The godly believed tears could dissolve the stoniest heart and move God to mercy, and saw them as tokens of strength not weakness.¹⁰⁸ One preacher pictured God himself telling sinners, ‘you must use weeping and wailing’, for only ‘that will move my pitifull nature’.¹⁰⁹ They were Christ’s own weapons against man’s obstinate sinfulness. In one conversion narrative, an apothecary reflects on the marvel ‘that he who could with one look have looked me into Hell, should so long stand at the door of my heart . . . weeping, knocking, begging, and waiting’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *The Repenting Sinner Pardoned: Being a Brief Relation of the Wicked Life, and Penitent Pious Death of James Wilson of Wolverhampton in Stafford-shire, who Died February 21. 1668* (London, 1669), 9–15; J.D., Killing, murder, 13 Oct. 1675, *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913*, at <<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>>, t16751013-4.

¹⁰⁷ Playfere, *Meane in Mourning*, 10–13, 16–21.

¹⁰⁸ *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1632–1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books. Illustrating the General and Family History of Yorkshire and Lancashire*, ed. J. H. Turner, 4 vols. (Brighouse, 1881–5). See also *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, Lieutenant-General of the Horse in the Army of the Commonwealth of England, 1625–1672*, ed. C. H. Firth, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1894), i, 548; Richard Mayo, *The Life and Death of Edmund Staunton D.D.* (London, 1673), 56–7.

¹⁰⁹ Symmons, *Foure Sermons Wherein Is Made a Foure-fold Discovery*, 74.

¹¹⁰ James Janeway, *Death Unstung: A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Thomas Mowsley, an Apothecary, who Died July, 1669. With a Brief Narrative of his Life and Death. Also the Manner of Gods Dealings with him before and after his Conversion* (London, 1669), 150.

Men with this religious sensibility valued tears as a powerful weapon in national as well as private contexts. In January 1642, following Charles I's attempt to seize the Five Members, Heywood's family and friends stayed up all night seeking the Lord's mercy and protection. It was 'such a night of prayers, tears and groans as I was never present at in all my life', he recalled; 'the case was extraordinary, and the work was extraordinary'. Bewailing England's sinful provocations, they saw their fervent attempt to avert God's wrath in quasi-physical terms. At a similar fast in 1664, on the anniversary of St Bartholomew's Day, Heywood recorded 'strong crys, many teares, and mighty wrestlings'.¹¹¹ He readily associated spiritual tears with images of masculine physicality, echoing the biblical precedent of Jacob wrestling through the night with God's angel.¹¹² The godly saw prayer as physically strenuous. Recalling an uncle who joined in his parents' family prayers, Heywood remarks, 'Oh I remember he would weep and wrestle, when he went to prayer in the family'. The nonconformist Richard Steele observed that 'we cannot wrestle with our God, with our hands in our pockets, nor get the blessing without sweat and tears'.¹¹³ And such tears would endure. 'Sure I am', Heywood remarked, 'God bottles all these teares, these prayers shall not be lost'. This image (from Psalm 56: 'put thou my tears into thy bottle') was another favourite, viewed as spiritual capital almost comparable to Catholic good works. Heywood even employed it in a love letter, assuring his 'Endeared Sweetheart' of 'the regard I have for a praying family; whose Tears in God's bottle and Prayers in God's Book, are the best inheritance in the World

¹¹¹ Heywood, *Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, i, 83, 191.

¹¹² Playfere, *Meane in Mourning*, 19. See Gen. 32: 24–35; Hos. 12: 4.

¹¹³ Heywood, *Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, i, 96; Richard Steele, *An Antidote against Distractions: or, An Indeavour to Serve the Church, in the Daily Case of Wandrings in the Worship of God* (London, 1667), 236.

to a surviving posterity'.¹¹⁴ For Cromwell, too, tears offered a proof of sincerity to convince God, bind allies and impress doubters. One admirer assured him that 'many of your teares were bottled by God himselfe'.¹¹⁵

Spiritual tears were not only penitential and devotional; contemporaries recognized their further importance as a weapon in the preacher's armoury. As Arnold Hunt has emphasized, emotional preaching in the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period was by no means confined to evangelical puritans.¹¹⁶ Thomas Playfere frequently used an emotive style to reduce his congregation to tears, and when he died in 1609, his funeral sermon by John Williams, future archbishop of York, was in similar style. 'Mr Williams wept over him . . . as if a Child had lost his Father', a witness reported. 'O what a tunable Musique he made between his Rhetorique and his Tears! For both flowed together'. Listeners were deeply moved.¹¹⁷ Years later, Richard Baxter recalled how St Paul had exhorted his flock 'night and

¹¹⁴ Heywood, *Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, i, 132, 191. See also Steele, *Antidote against Distractions*, 148; Speed, *Prison-Pietie*, 47, 93; Brathwaite, *English Gentleman*, 346.

¹¹⁵ *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. Wilbur Cortez Abbott, 4 vols. (1937–47; facs. edn, Oxford, 1988), iii, 51; *The Diary of Thomas Burton, Member in the Parliament of Oliver and Richard Cromwell from 1656–59*, ed. John Towill Rutt, 4 vols. (London, 1828), iii, 211; *Original Letters and Papers of State, Addressed to Oliver Cromwell, Concerning the Affairs of Britain from the Year 1649 to 1658, Found among the Political Collections of John Milton*, ed. John Nickolls (London, 1743), 141.

¹¹⁶ Playfere, *Meane in Mourning*, esp. 14–16; Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge, 2010), 86–94.

¹¹⁷ Bryan Crockett, 'Thomas Playfere's Poetics of Preaching', in Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough (eds.), *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History, 1600–1750* (Manchester, 2000), 60–1.

day with tears', and thought every pastor should have the text on his study door.¹¹⁸ Preachers welcomed tears as proof they had moved the faithful and stirred the apathetic, and many pious laymen felt little embarrassment in such a context. When the MP John Harington noted a powerful sermon in his diary, in August 1646, he added simply, 'I weep at this'.¹¹⁹ Powerful preachers could reduce even the worldly and profane to tears, an achievement their admirers valued highly.¹²⁰

Ministers agreed, however, that tears triggered by guilt, shame or fear were merely a first step towards grace and salvation. Martin Finch cautioned that 'we must not make a Christ of our tears, and think to do that by our tears, which the blood of Christ onely can do'.¹²¹ A minister guiding a teenage murderer warned that 'if he could shed a thousand tears of blood for any one vain thought, it would be no better than puddle water to justify, or to

¹¹⁸ Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus: or, The Reformed Pastor. Shewing the Nature of the Pastoral Work, Especially in Private Instruction and Catechizing. With an Open Confession of our Too Open Sins. Prepared for a Day of Humiliation Kept at Worcester, Decemb. 4. 1655* (London, 1656), 409–11.

¹¹⁹ *The Diary of John Harington, M.P., 1646–1653: With Notes for his Charges*, ed. Margaret F. Stieg (Somerset Record Society, lxxiv, Yeovil, 1977), 32. See also William Knapp, *Abraham's Image in One of his Sonnes: or, The Picture of a Good Old Man. Reprinted in a Sermon at the Funeral of John Dethick* (London, 1658), 6.

¹²⁰ John Murcot, *Moses in the Mount, in Several Works of Mr. John Murcot, that Eminent and Godly Preacher of the World, Lately of a Church of Christ at Dublin in Ireland . . . Together with his Life and Death* (London, 1657), 9; Edward Bagshaw, *The Life and Death of Mr Vavasor Powell, that Faithful Minister and Confessor of Jesus Christ: Wherein his Eminent Conversion, Laborious Successful Ministry, Excellent Conversation, Confession of Faith, Worthy Sayings, Choice Experiences, Various Sufferings, and Other Remarkable Passages, in his Life, and at his Death, Are Faithfully Recorded for Publick Benefit. With Some Elogies and Epitaphs by his Friends* (London, 1671), 10, 130.

¹²¹ Martin Finch, *Milk for Babes in Christ: or, Meditations, Observations, and Experiences. Divers Cases of Conscience Resolved* (London, 1655), 79.

save him'.¹²² Tears of remorse, by themselves, had no value in God's eyes. They must be accompanied by faith in Christ's saving grace. 'Weep for thy sins because they are committed', advised John Sherman, 'but weep for them more, because they are pardoned'.¹²³ Tears of sorrow might then be transformed. The conversion narrative of the artisan Charles Doe records a spiritual journey that ended with tears shed 'for the inexpressible and fullness of joy'.¹²⁴

The Bible provided plentiful support for spiritual tears, penitential, devotional or pastoral. As St Paul told the Ephesians (Acts 20: 36–8), he had preached the gospel to them for three years with such ardour that he had wept every day and night. When he left, they in turn 'all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him' in a very physical and public expression of love and dismay. That scene was of course very hard to reconcile with the requirements of decorum and moderation, and preachers generally avoided the text. William Houghton, preaching on it in 1650, had never heard of any other commentary. Houghton argued that in such a context nothing could be judged excessive. Even so, he was conscious that the Ephesians had transgressed contemporary ideas of decency. So after describing the weeping, hugging and kissing he asked rhetorically, 'But was that good manners?', and acknowledged it was not. Yet their love and grief were surely commendable: 'It is a very

¹²² Robert Franklin *et al.*, *A Murderer Punished and Pardoned: or, A True Relation of the Wicked Life and Shameful-Happy Death of Thomas Savage. Imprisoned, Justly Condemned, and Twice Executed at Ratcliff for his Bloody Fact in Killing his Fellow-Servant* (London, 1668), 15. The passage greatly moved Gervase Disney: Disney, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Holy Life and Death of Gervase Disney, Esq.*, 42. See also *Diary of Samuel Rogers*, ed. Webster and Shipps, 111.

¹²³ Sherman, *White Salt*, 130.

¹²⁴ Doe, *Collection of Experience of the Work of Grace*, 45. See also *The Journal of George Fox*, revised edn., ed. John L. Nickalls (Cambridge, 1952), 21; *Diary of Samuel Rogers*, ed. Webster and Shipps, 28; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 92.

seemely unseemliness . . . and mannerly unmannerliness, that comes from love; love puts a grace upon gestures otherwise undecent'.¹²⁵ Many contemporaries, of course, thought tears unacceptable even in a spiritual context. As the nonconformist George Newton conceded, the profane multitude 'think it an unworthy and unmanly thing to weep . . . as if it argued feebleness of mind, and imbecility of spirits'.¹²⁶ 'Holy weeping seems at first very uncouth', Thomas Watson acknowledged. But not so: 'The water of repentance, like Rose-water . . . sends forth a sweet smell, which refresheth the Soul'. Spirituality transformed uncouth tears into genteel perfume.¹²⁷

Such views reflected an 'alternative masculinity' in which passionate emotion was approved and admired, at least within the spiritual sphere.¹²⁸ Men like Oliver Heywood identified tears with strenuous, masculine exertion, and some hit back at those who charged the godly with effeminacy. On the contrary, John Lesly declared, it was those without such natural affections who lacked manliness, for they 'emasculate in themselves the Heroicall vigour of this heavenly Vertue'. Spiritual tears testified to manly vigour: 'The valorous Christian is no less prayse worthy in Weeping, then Warrfare'.¹²⁹ Cromwell would have agreed.

Among the pious elite, however, some sensed that even spiritual tears offended against propriety. An admirer recalled that the marquess of Worcester, a prominent Catholic royalist, had been 'a very devout man, and us'd prayer very much, and you should never see

¹²⁵ William Houghton, *Preces et Lachrymae: A Sermon on Acts xx. 36–38 (The Christian's Desire, Shewing How and For What Causes a Man May Desire Death)* (London, 1650), sigs. A4^{r-v}, 22.

¹²⁶ George Newton, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mr. Joseph Alleine* (London, 1672), 11.

¹²⁷ Thomas Watson, *The Crown of Righteousness: Set Forth in a Sermon . . . at the Funeral of Thomas Hodges, Esq.* (London, 1656), 23.

¹²⁸ See Shepard, 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen?', 290–2.

¹²⁹ Lesly, *Epithrene*, 59, 105–6.

his closet doore open, but you might perceive he had been weeping, which', however, 'he would endeavour to conceale, by wiping his eyes'. Civility and decorum made him reluctant to reveal them.¹³⁰ Many within the Established Church came to share that reluctance, and gradually retreated from religious tears. Some drew on humoral physiology to reject any equation between tearfulness and genuine penitence, pointing out that those with a 'dry' or 'moist' constitution would respond differently to the same emotion. Lancelot Andrewes, bishop of Winchester, made the point in typically exuberant style. Penitential weeping was a Christian duty, he began, recalling how David's eye had gushed and Mary Magdalene had 'wept enough to have made a bath'. Such excess was unnecessary today, he went on; 'some few droppes . . . a drop or twaine' would be sufficient and more appropriate. And if a sinner's constitution rendered him unable to produce even those, sincere repentance would suffice, reinforced by the tears Christ had already shed on our behalf.¹³¹ A generation later Jeremy Taylor similarly observed that the expression of true sorrow 'differs according to the temper of the body, the sex, the age, and circumstance'. 'Some people can shed tears for nothing, some for anything', he noted, and weeping was not required as long as sorrow was genuine.¹³²

Tearful religiosity became increasingly identified with puritan 'enthusiasm' and nonconformist piety. From the Jacobean age onwards, puritans' tears were lampooned along

¹³⁰ Thomas Bayly, *Worcesters Apophthegmes: or, Witty Sayings of the Right Honourable Henry (Late) Marquess and Earl of Worcester, Delivered upon Severall Occasions, and Now Published for the Benefit of the Reader. By T.B., a Constant Observer, and No Lesse Admirer of his Lordships Wisdom and Loyalty* (London, 1650), 63–4.

¹³¹ Lancelot Andrewes, *XCVI. Sermons* (London, 1629, STC 606), 210–11. See also Lesly, *Epithrene*, 63.

¹³² Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (1650), ed. P. G. Stanwood, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1989), i, 247.

with other devotional mannerisms as ostentatious, vulgar and hypocritical. The emotional preaching of a puritan lecturer at Dover in 1646 met with contempt from his audience: ‘Mr Porter wept and the people flung the snott about’.¹³³ Royalist wits poured scorn on the pious tears of Cromwell and his lachrymose son-in-law Charles Fleetwood. One jested that had Fleetwood been on board Noah’s ark his torrential tears might well have capsized it.¹³⁴ The ‘alternative masculinity’ of religious tears was becoming increasingly marginalized.

IV

Masculinity in early modern England was proved, for the most part, ‘between men, rather than between men and women’.¹³⁵ Yet it never operated, of course, within an exclusively male environment. Did women view male tears as unmanly, or did they wish men to be emotionally demonstrative? The limited evidence we possess comes mainly from elite sources, and for the most part suggests that elite, gendered values influenced women as much as men, as for Lucy Hutchinson. When the royalist poet Hester Pulter dismissed tears as a feeble response to the regicide, she commented disparagingly that ‘Poor Village Girles doe soe express their grief’, and ‘Plebeans soe each vulgar loss deplore’.¹³⁶ Lady Fanshawe, a fellow royalist, recalled her husband’s dismay when forced to leave her in Oxford in 1645. She had just given birth, they had no money and the enemy were at the gate. She records, without criticism, that Sir Richard ‘was extremely afflicted, even to tears’, but rejected any

¹³³ BL, Add. MS 2964, pp. 200–2. For Michael Porter, see *Walker Revised: Being a Revision of John Walker’s Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion, 1642–1660*, ed. A. G. Matthews (Oxford, 1948), 224.

¹³⁴ *An Out-Cry after the Late Lieutenant General Fleetwood* (London, 1660), broadside.

¹³⁵ Shepard, ‘From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen?’, 284, where the phrase is, however, used of masculinity in the eighteenth century.

¹³⁶ Hester Pulter, ‘On the Horrid Murder of . . . Charles the First’: University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection, MS Lt q 32-c, fo. 34. I owe this reference to Dr Elizabeth Clarke.

hint of unmanliness; in such desperate circumstances they were impossible to resist, ‘though passion was against his nature’.¹³⁷ Shakespeare’s female characters also display conventionally gendered attitudes. Rosalind, disguised as a man in *As You Like It*, is driven to despair in the Forest of Arden, and tells her friend Celia, ‘I could find it in my heart to disgrace my man’s apparel and to cry like a woman, but I must comfort the weaker vessel’ (that is, Celia, still in women’s attire). Later, she declares she could cry again, now hopelessly in love, whereupon Celia retorts, ‘Do, I prithee; but yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a man’.¹³⁸ In *The City-Heiress* the Tory dramatist Aphra Behn pours scorn on a Whig’s hypocritical tears and has a feisty widow take exception to the ‘whining humour’ of a tearful, weak-spirited lover. In the mid eighteenth century Lady Mary Wortley Montagu condemned Achilles for crying over his lost mistress, and wished Homer had chosen a ‘less pettish’ hero.¹³⁹

The Elizabethan poet Isabella Whitney had scorned lachrymose men on very different grounds, warning young maids to beware of men shedding crocodile tears to gain their lascivious ends. She had been deceived herself, she explained, and would never be fooled again.¹⁴⁰ But Lady Mary Wroth showed a far more sympathetic response in her pastoral drama *Love’s Victory*, a convoluted romantic tale in which thwarted lovers, of both sexes, shed many tears. Venus steers the action, declaring, ‘I would have all to weep, and all to wail’. One male character, Rustic, sneers that lovers’ tears were no more significant than his

¹³⁷ *Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshaw*, ed. Loftis, 114.

¹³⁸ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II. iv. 4–6, III. iv. 1–3.

¹³⁹ Mrs. A. Behn [Aphra Behn], *The City-Heiress: or, Sir Timothy Treat-All. A Comedy, As It Is Acted at His Royal Highness his Theatre* (London, 1682), 2, 10, 19, 25, 52; Williams, *Pope, Homer, and Manliness*, 164–5.

¹⁴⁰ Isabella Whitney, ‘I.W. to her Unconstant Lover’, in Paul Salzman (ed.), *Early Modern Women’s Writing: An Anthology, 1560–1700* (Oxford, 2000), 7, 10.

own vexed tears when he mislays his bag or bottle. His cynicism is taken to task by a female character; and there is a hidden sub-text, for the boorish figure of Rustic is based on Mary Wroth's own unloved husband, Robert, whose own trivial tears are surely far less acceptable.¹⁴¹ At a much humbler level, the diary of Roger Lowe, a Lancashire apprentice, also suggests a more sympathetic female attitude. In August 1664 he records 'a most ardent affection to Emm Potter', and was left despondent and distressed when she gave him the cold shoulder. After several days pining, he poured out his heart to another friend, Elizabeth Rosbothome, 'which I could not doe without tears'. Elizabeth proved sympathetic, not scornful; 'she did pitie my state', he writes, and embarked on tactful diplomacy which saw Roger and Emm soon pledging their undying love.¹⁴² John Cannon, the exciseman, records emotional reconciliations after quarrels with a sweetheart and later his wife, without any indication that they disapproved of his tears. There are many more tears in the emotional autobiographical narrative of Bunyan's disciple Agnes Beaumont, mostly shed by Agnes herself but also by her father, brother and jurymen. She says nothing to suggest that gender made them inappropriate.¹⁴³ It would be rash to generalize from such fragmentary evidence, but it appears broadly consistent with male attitudes: elite acceptance of literary, romantic tears, disapproval of any real tears that suggested weakness, and greater tolerance among the lower social strata represented by Lowe, Beaumont and Cannon.

¹⁴¹ Mary Wroth, 'Love's Victory', in Salzman (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Writing*, 93–4, 97, 419.

¹⁴² *The Diary of Roger Lowe, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire, 1663–74*, ed. William L. Sachse (London, 1938), 68–9.

¹⁴³ *Chronicles of John Cannon Excise Officer and Writing Master*, ed. Money, i, 104, ii, 289; John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, ed. John Stachniewski with Anita Pacheco (Oxford, 1998), 208, 213, 219, 222; Bernard Capp, 'The Travails of Agnes Beaumont', in Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson (eds.), *Women, Law and Agency in Early Modern England and Wales, c.1300–1700* (London, 2013), ch. 8.

<h1>V</h1>

In the later seventeenth century, tears faded from public debate. Mainstream figures in the Established Church had much less to say, and poets drew back.¹⁴⁴ Several factors contributed to a new cultural shift that left male tears with few defenders. The civil wars had militarized public life, with physical courage and fortitude re-emerging as the defining attributes of masculinity. Religious life, too, took on an aggressive, combative character, with rival preachers clashing in print and from the pulpit. Society itself was militarized. A significant proportion of Englishmen, possibly 10 per cent, had personal experience of military life during the wars, and England acquired both a standing army and a hugely expanded navy.¹⁴⁵ The later Stuart period retained some of these elements, witnessing significant military or naval conflict in every decade.

A second, related consequence of the civil war era was to associate puritans and separatists with fanaticism. The plebeian character of Baptists, Quakers and other radicals reinforced the elite's distaste for emotional religiosity. Moreover, Restoration culture witnessed a natural reaction against the religious and moral intensity of the preceding decades, a reaction reflected in the frivolity of the royal court and the witty cynicism of Restoration drama and verse. The new age had much less appetite for introspection or compassion. The Anglican divine Richard Allestree lamented that whenever a gentleman appeared moved by a sermon, his friends promptly resolved that 'he is to be laught out of that Hypochondriack fit'.¹⁴⁶ At Oxford, Anthony Wood despaired at the worldliness and flippancy the Restoration had brought in its wake. Divinity was now 'laught at', he fulminated; even

¹⁴⁴ Lange, *Telling Tears in the English Renaissance*, ch. 5.

¹⁴⁵ Ann Hughes, *Gender and the English Revolution* (London, 2012), 4, 90–106; Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642–1649* (Oxford, 2008), 215–16.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Allestree, *The Gentlemans Calling* (London, 1662), 135.

theologians preferred to ‘ride abroad . . . with swords by their sides’, and undergraduates were addicted to their dogs and drink.¹⁴⁷

When tears do feature in late Stuart discourse, it is often in a public rather than personal context. Alexander Pope commented on the power of tragedy to move audiences down the centuries, and praised Addison’s tragedy *Cato* (1713) for provoking tears of patriotic ardour, ‘such tears as patriots shed for dying laws’.¹⁴⁸ The stoical Cato, unmoved by the personal tragedies that have engulfed his family, weeps only for Rome. Male tears belong firmly within a masculine public context.¹⁴⁹ Achilles’ tears continued to vex translators. Dryden dismissed Achilles as a ‘Booby’ who should have pursued manly revenge, though Pope insisted they were acceptable ‘Tears of Anger and Disdain’.¹⁵⁰ Richard Steele, writing in *The Spectator* in 1711, gave short shrift even to tears of grief and compassion. Ridiculing the measurement of sorrow by the display of emotion, he complained ‘that if one Body wants the Quantity of Salt-water another abounds with, he is in great Danger of being thought insensible, or ill-natured’. ‘I have lately lost a dear friend’, he declared defiantly, ‘for whom I

¹⁴⁷ *Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford 1632–1695, Described by Himself*, ed. Clark, i, 423, 465.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Pope, ‘Prologue to Mr. Addison’s Tragedy of Cato’, in Alexander Pope, *Collected Poems*, ed. Ernest Rhys (London, 1924), 57.

¹⁴⁹ Julie Ellison, ‘Cato’s Tears’, *English Literary History*, lxiii (1996). Addison nonetheless ‘softened’ the Roman history by making Cato’s children and friends shed sentimental tears: Ian Donaldson, ‘Cato in Tears: Stoical Guises of the Man of Feeling’, in R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (eds.), *Studies in the Eighteenth Century, 3: Papers Presented at the Third David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra, 1973* (Canberra, 1976), 380–6.

¹⁵⁰ Williams, *Pope, Homer, and Manliness*, 99–107.

have not yet shed a tear'.¹⁵¹ Steele saw the public display of grief as vulgar, and the conduct books of the period dismissed tears as an 'unpardonable weakness in a man'.¹⁵²

The mid eighteenth century, however, witnessed yet another cultural shift. Restoration cynicism eventually prompted a reaction, with Augustan periodicals promoting civility and novelists championing the virtue of sensibility. They applauded a masculinity characterized by refined emotions as well as courteous behaviour, and with tears now applauded as evidence of genteel sensitivity.¹⁵³ The didactic novels of Samuel Richardson and Laurence Sterne culminated in the huge success of Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), the high tide of this refined male sensibility. Its hero, Harley, innocent and warm-hearted, is repeatedly reduced to tears by stories of lives destroyed by the greed, lust and corruption of the powerful. The novel challenges elite male stoicism and condemns worldly materialism, while conceding its power; its hero dies worn out and defeated. Contemporaries as diverse as Robert Burns and Adam Smith were deeply moved.¹⁵⁴ In the religious sphere the new Methodist movement saw a similar appeal to passionate emotion. Its leaders, John Wesley and George Whitefield, set out to move congregations to tears, and succeeded even with tough coal miners. Whitefield, like his puritan predecessors, was often in tears himself during

¹⁵¹ *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1965), i, 403–4.

¹⁵² Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England*, 336.

¹⁵³ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London, 1986); G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992); Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660–1800* (Harlow, 2001).

¹⁵⁴ Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (1771), ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford, 1987), pp. vii–xxiv; Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2004), 36–40.

his sermons.¹⁵⁵ But the 1780s, ushering in a new era of revolutions and war, saw this new sensibility under attack and soon in full retreat. Within a few years, *The Man of Feeling* prompted only laughter and ridicule.¹⁵⁶

VI

The interlocking histories of civility, emotion and masculinity are complex and sometimes contradictory, with cyclical elements as well as continuities. To some extent male tears can be accommodated within the broad narratives advanced by Thomas Laqueur and Dror Wahrman. The instability of the sexual body in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made it imperative to enforce strict codes of gender conformity. Hence the demand for rigid self-discipline within the new culture of civility, and hence too the furore over the Jacobean fashion for ‘masculine’ attire among elite women. The triumph of different biological models at the close of the seventeenth century, establishing male and female sexual identities as immutably distinct, allowed some room for Wahrman’s gender ‘playfulness’, evident in the popularity of sex-reversed theatrical productions, and for the tearful hypersensitive masculinity epitomized by Mackenzie. But the ‘gender panic’ of the 1780s brought an insistence on gender and sexual identities as inseparable, with male effeminacy and tears branded shameful and unnatural.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 71–2; Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690–1850* (Princeton, 1961), 147, 171.

¹⁵⁶ Todd, *Sensibility*, ch. 8; Mackenzie, *Man of Feeling*, p. viii; Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 38–40.

¹⁵⁷ Laqueur, *Making Sex*; Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, ch. 1 and *passim*; Wahrman, ‘Change and the Corporeal in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Gender History’. See also Diane Purkiss, ‘Material Girls: The Seventeenth-Century Woman Debate’, in Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (eds.), *Women, Texts and Histories, 1575–1760* (London, 1992), ch. 3.

It is clear, however, that no single masculinity or ‘emotional regime’ ever held complete sway in the Tudor–Stuart period. While tears generally invited disapproval, much depended on context, character and class. Tears of grief were acceptable, within moderation, across the social spectrum. Spiritual tears, identified increasingly (though never wholly) with puritans and nonconformists, reflected an alternative masculinity which some pronounced more ‘manly’ than the dominant model. The tears of Elizabethan and Jacobean love poetry belonged within a literary discursive tradition, and gentlemen were generally expected to display emotional fortitude, suppressing or at least concealing any tears of anguish or self-pity. Yet civility was also already expected to imbue them with a refined sensibility. Sir Thomas Browne thought he ‘could lose an arme without a teare, and with few groans, me thinkes, be quartered into pieces; yet can I weep most seriously at a Play’. He viewed both responses with quiet satisfaction; his was a genteel masculinity that fused Stoic self-control with compassion for the sufferings of others, even if imaginary.¹⁵⁸ Approved models of masculinity have swung, and continue to swing, between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ forms.

According to a mid eighteenth-century story, Cromwell’s granddaughter, a Mrs Bekndysh, told how he had once sought the Lord ‘with such ardour of devotion . . . that the tears were forced from him with such abundance as to run under the closet door’.¹⁵⁹ The story was relished as a comical anecdote from a remote, fanatical age. Cromwell’s tears demonstrated an emotional excess which polite gentlemen viewed with disdain. Yet early modern civility could accommodate at least some male tears, of the right kind and in an appropriate context. And *The Man of Feeling* was to endorse a lachrymose masculinity that Cromwell himself would have looked upon with wonder.

¹⁵⁸ Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London, 1642), 127.

¹⁵⁹ *Diary of Thomas Burton, Member in the Parliament of Oliver and Richard Cromwell*, ed. Rutt, iii, 211<thin space>n.

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