ABSTRACT

RESURRECTING THE DEAD: THE LANGUAGE OF GRIEF IN A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH FAMILY
by Lisa Marie Toland

This paper attempts to demonstrate the constructive nature of the language of grief through an examination of the funeral sermons and funeral monuments for the Richard Riche family of Felsted, Essex, who held the earldom of Warwick from 1618/9 until 1673. This analysis argues that this elite family and their supporting clergymen utilized the existing culture and rituals of death to rhetorically and visually protect their inheritance and hegemony within society as political, social, and spiritual examples. In other words, the dead were resurrected through language and sculpture in such a way that they demonstrated familial continuity and legitimacy, while simultaneously serving as spiritual exemplars that also suggested the Riches hegemony in spiritual affairs. Through a close reading of sources surrounding the eventual extinction of one aristocratic family, a contribution may be made towards understanding the pressures and sentiments experienced by early modern English families.
RESURRECTING THE DEAD:
THE LANGUAGE OF GRIEF IN A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH FAMILY

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I. Introduction

O when degree is shak’d
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitye and due of birth,
Prerogative or age, crowns, scepters, laurels,
But by degree stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows.¹

Early modern England was a society deeply concerned with maintaining social order and status. In the last thirty years historians have been consumed by projects attempting to understand how the period worldview of a divinely ordered structure permeated every level of society.² In the later seventeenth century Puritan minister Anthony Walker articulated this concept claiming, “There are Princes and Great Men: Titles of Honour; Distinctions of Quality, Dignity and Order, are Allowable and Commendable… God is the God of Order, and the Author of it, and there would be as little Order without Such Distinctions, as Harmony in a set of Music made up of Unisons.”³ The social hierarchy, Walker claimed, was ordained by God and necessary in order to maintain a controlled and ordered society. This worldview, as historian David Underdown has written, joined “the entire universe from inanimate matter to God himself, [and] provided every individual with a natural place or degree.”⁴ This emphasis upon a divinely created social structure clearly intimates that “there would be… little Order without Such Distinctions.” Walker’s insistence on this social

⁴ Underdown, Revel, Riot, and Rebellion, 9.
arrangement also suggests fears of disorder by those in positions of authority whose positions, to be legitimate, required a unanimous and unquestioned acceptance of the existing hierarchy.

Early modern historiography in the last thirty years has reflected this period concern with order and disorder. Historians have become quite keen on examining expressions of instability, and the mechanisms used to maintain control. These investigations have often been interested in the disturbing effects of occurrences such as bread riots, ritual mocking of the patriarchal order, and an increase in domestic court cases. In her text, *An Ordered Society*, Susan Amussen broadly outlines the general trends of the early seventeenth century and their relationship to the disruption of the ideal ordered society. Summarizing she states, … The economy was transformed by demographic growth and inflation; the political order was explicitly challenged by the gentry who tried to regain control of royal policy and prevent the establishment of what they sometimes perceived as absolutism; the family was changing as women in wealthy families gradually withdrew from work, and as poorer families became increasingly dependent on wages; the social order of villages was challenged by those who sought to introduce new agricultural practices, by those who challenged church seating and by those who rejected the power of the local notables. These changes, when combined with the theoretical, unbending authority of the ordered society, as intimated by the Puritan Anthony Walker produced tension and crises. Thus economic, social and political changes created an environment prone to instability, but one still ruled by an elite class bent on maintaining control.

The disorder of the early seventeenth century was only increased with the outbreak of the civil wars. Some historians have attempted to argue that the social divisions and changes earlier in the century had direct effects upon the war, certainly at least dictating rural and village allegiances. David Underdown attributes the disruption of the war to the gradual emergence of two separate worldviews: “On one side stood those who put their trust in the traditional conception of the harmonious, vertically-integrated society…. On the other stood those… who wished to emphasize the moral and cultural distinctions which marked them off

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5 Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, 187-188. The growing population that more than doubled in England and Wales between 1500 and 1655 further exacerbated this depressed economy. Ibid., 7.
from their poorer, less disciplined neighbours, and to use their power to reform society according to their principles of order and godliness." The first of these ideologies has been stereotypically recognized as the Royalists and the poor who depended upon the peerage for their well-being. The second is represented by the gentry and middling ranks who have often been characterized as Parliamentarians who were spiritually driven by their Puritan convictions. However, as will be shown through the example of the Sir Richard Riche family, the lines were not always so clearly drawn, and members of the peerage were not necessarily dedicated Royalists.

However, the emergence of this new ideology based in Puritanism and the middle class was not any less concerned with the maintenance of order. In other words, Puritanism in its theology cannot be blindly aligned with the disruption of the civil wars. Rather, “[Puritanism] gave its adherents the comforting belief that they were entrusted by God with the special duty of resisting the tide of sin and disorder that surged around them.” Or as Amussen asserts, “Puritan theology made the struggle against disorder part of the cosmic struggle against sin, and so gave it meaning.” However, this new conception differed from the communal, organic conception of the Elizabethan age, as the new mindset was rooted in the struggle for godliness and performance of moral duties by the individual. Therefore, enduring throughout the conflicts and disruptions of the seventeenth century was a determination to maintain societal order, though the definitions and motivating factors for that order shifted to some degree.

Regardless of the constancy of social, political and economic change in early modern England, one occurrence remained potentially disturbing no matter what the external conditions. This reality was death. Although the population of England and Wales nearly doubled from the sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth century mortality rates still fluctuated considerably. Clare Gittings notes “Between a quarter and a third of all children born would be dead before they reached their fifteenth birthdays, many failing to survive their first year.” Naturally the frequency of these occurrences had wide repercussions for

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7 Ibid., 41.
individuals, families, and society at large. In the last twenty years, historians have attempted to piece together the effects of and attitudes towards death.\textsuperscript{10}

Some of the discussion has examined rituals surrounding death to trace themes such as emerging attitudes of individualism. For instance, Clare Gittings examines a number of different practices such as treatment of the physical body and Puritan teachings on death to argue “these different signs of anxiety about death… can be interpreted as arising from a changing conception of the self and a heightened sense of individuality.”\textsuperscript{11} Other scholars, most notably David Cressy have taken an intersectional, rather than progressive approach, treating “death and burial… in relation to the customs and tensions of a complex society, rather than as indicators of a ‘growing sense of individuality.’”\textsuperscript{12} In particular Cressy focuses on the intersections of social and religious “understanding of death in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”\textsuperscript{13} However, like Cressy, Ralph Houlbrooke seeks overall to examine “the effects of religious change on the social history of death between the close of the Middle Ages and the mid-eighteenth century.”\textsuperscript{14} Studies by Houlbrooke are characteristic in their careful notation of source commonalities and structure relating to death such as wills and funeral sermons.

Many of these studies, though not all, have placed heavy emphasis upon the divisive quality of death following the advent of the Reformation. In other words, prior to the Reformation European Christians maintained a sense of community with the dead through the theological geography of purgatory. However, following the Reformation Protestant Europe was unable to maintain this perception of continuity. The effects of this fracture are heavily emphasized by historians such as Eamon Duffy, Ralph Houlbrooke, Clare Gittings, and even Natalie Zemon Davis in relation to French Protestantism.\textsuperscript{15} Yet, as this paper will

\textsuperscript{11} Gittings, \textit{Death, Burial and the Individual}, 14.
\textsuperscript{12} Cressy, \textit{Birth, Marriage, and Death}, 379.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 379.
suggest, the occasion of death in all its effects of instability still served as a time in which continuity and hegemony were demonstrated.

For any class of society the death of a family member could signal disorder, but when the upper-most class, or peerage of England faced this threat the impact could be widespread and unsettling. During the early seventeenth century a large number of elite families died out. Lawrence Stone notes, “This came about despite the fact that one of the principal objects of marriage was to ensure continuity of title and of family estates. So urgent was this need that even the most disastrous of marriages tended to hold together until it had been achieved.”16

In other words, death either of a peer, peer’s wife, or heir-apparent threatened the family’s hegemony because of the title’s dependence upon inheritance by the eldest son. Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes state similarly of the gentry, “Genetic misfortune was an enduring element in the experience of gentry families, which cruelly mocked the boasted antiquity of their houses.”17

Attempts at demonstrating these families’ continuing power was particularly important in the midst of such a turbulent period of the civil wars and rising gentry class in which the ruling class faced more opposition to their supremacy than death.

The legitimacy of a noble family was inherently tied to their role within the community at large. It cannot be exaggerated that they were to serve as models for the entire society in all circumstances. Contemporary religious didactic literature noted that great families were viewed as “a candle set upon a hill to illighten all inferiour families.”18 They were “like looking glasses according to which all the country dresse themselves….19 In other words noble families were urged to be both spiritual and social examples within the layered hierarchy of early modern England. Therefore, because of their importance to the maintenance of societal order the potential instability brought about by a noble person’s death, particularly a male peer or heir apparent, had to be deliberately softened through various mechanisms.

18 Edmund Calamy, A Patterne for All, especially for Noble and Honourable Person, To teach them how to die Nobly and Honourably (London: Printed for Edward Brewster, 1658), 35.
19 Ibid., 34.
For the nobility, the funerals and surrounding period of mourning were especially important in order to buttress their goals of permanence and security. The intended aims of the funeral service ranged from demonstrating familial continuity and social stability, to the clergyman exhorting his parishioners to imitate the godly example of the deceased nobleman. Indeed, the rituals surrounding death were an “intersection of social and religious obligations”. Recent scholarship has demonstrated this two-fold purpose through extensive analyzing of the role of funeral monuments and their visual power in asserting claims of political legitimacy, and familial hegemony, as well as serving as models of godliness. The crown and royalty’s indulgence in elaborate heraldic funeral processions and the use of wax or wooden funeral effigies have been investigated as another expression of supremacy and continuity.

In a similar reading of visual and written sources this paper illustrates how one seventeenth century elite family and their supporting clergymen utilized the existing culture and rituals of death to rhetorically protect their inheritance and hegemony within society as political, social, and spiritual examples. Thus this paper is concerned with the constructive ability of the language of grief in affirming the authoritative rule of a noble family. The first section argues that the clergymen of the Riche family rhetorically created a public persona of the deceased in funeral sermons for the dual purposes of asserting the Riche family as both social and moral exemplars. The second section suggests that the family’s hegemony was still asserted within language which traced and highlighted the family’s lineal demise. Thus like many other mechanisms within early modern society, the language of grief within the framework of mourning rituals could also serve as a period which reaffirmed the belief in a divinely ordered structure and which ultimately aided in overcoming the divisive quality of death.

Through such a study I have attempted to follow the language of a family’s funeral sermons and monuments from one generation to the next tracing the reputations of individual family members, as well as their corporate demise. In contrast, few of the most recent studies

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20 David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 421.
on death and the family in England have chosen to focus exclusively on single families and their extended experiences with the loss of generations. Rather, they have examined and articulated the structure of sources and rituals surrounding grief and mourning. Thus, the narrow focus enables specificity of analysis allowing a glimpse of the complicated mass of demands and expectations placed on the family. Through a close reading of sources surrounding the eventual extinction of one aristocratic family, particularly the publicly central funeral sermon, a clearer understanding may be reached regarding the pressures and sentiments experienced from the loss of family members.

The main body of sources considered here are funeral sermons. I have also incorporated the texts of a diary, a printed epitaphs and the extant family funeral monuments. At least six funeral sermons were printed during a twenty-year period for the Riche family, who possessed the earldom of Warwick during the mid-seventeenth century. Several of them differ in categories such as the age of the deceased, though only one is for a woman.

For the purposes of this study a background of the Riche family and their standing within sixteenth and seventeenth century English society is important. Mary Countess Dowager’s death in 1678, the last among her immediate family, marked the end of Sir Richard Riche’s direct line as possessors of the earldom of Warwick. The Riche family was based near the parish of Felsted, Essex. Their estate outside of the village was known as Leighs (Leez) manor home, their home in Holborn near London, Warwick House. Mary’s grandfather in-law, Robert Riche the Elder had received the earldom from James I in 1618.22 Robert the Elder had two sons and five grandsons, (most of whom were named either Robert or Charles). However, none of the grandsons lived long enough to produce their own heirs. Thus, by 1673 when Robert Riche’s second son Charles Rich, Mary’s husband, died, no male was left to carry the title into the next generation. Although the patriarch of the family Richard will be discussed, this paper focuses exclusively on the years during which the family held the earldom. Mention of Richard the Patriarch will be made solely in reference to the way in which his memory was invoked by his living relatives for their various purposes.

Throughout their history the Riche family proved to be great patrons of the surrounding area of Essex. The family’s patronage of Felsted parish began with Sir Richard

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Riche who represented Essex in Parliament and was in 1536 made Chancellor of the Court of Augmentation. During his lifetime he purchased the prior and the living of Leighs outside Felsted, almost immediately after the suppression of monastic orders in 1536. He then proceeded to build the family mansion, also known as Leigs, on the property of the former priory. The main house survived until the mid-nineteenth century. In 1564, Sir Richard founded the Felsted School that is still in existence today.23

Robert Riche the Elder (1559-1618) was created Earl of Warwick on August 6 1618.24 James I conferred four Earldoms during that same month for the price of £10,000. Apparently “[Riche’s] money was needed for the expenses of the King’s annual progress and £8000 appears in the Exchequer receipt-books.”25 The title of Warwick appears to have been perceived as less honorable than other peerage titles such as Clare, which was “a higher honour than could well suit with a family in a manner upstart … usually bestowed on none but the king’s sons.”26 Because the Riches were perceived as a new, even perhaps a less honorable family within the peerage they may have been particularly eager to demonstrate the legitimacy of their title and accompanying power.

The Riche’s assertions of hegemony can be easily construed as an attempt to solidify their position in the face of periodic external political and social disruption. The Riche family had been a peerage family for several generations by 1618. Sir Richard Riche was created a baron in the mid-sixteenth century. Thus their recently created position in the upper echelon of the peerage as earls must account for their reputation as new peers. The English peerage as a whole expanded tremendously under the Stuarts, and the creation of Robert Riche the Elder as Earl of Warwick was part of the greater trend. While there were only eighteen creations during Elizabeth’s reign, which includes creations, resumptions, restorations and recognitions, one hundred and three were granted from James I’s accession until the outbreak of the war in 1641.27 However this seemingly wild increase must also be viewed in contrast to the number of lines that died out during the same period. Stone calculated that there were

23 Michael Craze, “A Guide to the Church of the Holy Cross Felsted” (Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex, 1996, photocopy). Among some of their first students were four of Oliver Cromwell’s sons, Cromwell’s wife being from Felsted herself.
25 Ibid., 405.
26 Ibid., 405
27 Stone, Crisis, 755.
sixty-three peers “extant on 31 December 1559.” Of those families only 22 maintained direct
descent from father to son to grandson through to 1641. Thirty-three percent failed
altogether, and thirty-two percent failed to maintain their line of direct descent.28 The total
number of peers holding titles between 1558-1641 was roughly three hundred and fifty.
However this includes both newly created peers and peers who inherited their titles.29
Therefore although James I was obviously giving out more titles and favors than his
predecessor, the peerage still remained a relatively small percentage of the overall
population. Yet, as was indicated earlier, more peers did not necessarily indicate that the
structure of society was further solidified. Rather during the seventeenth century “the ideal of
a society in which every man had his place and stayed in it was breaking down under a
combination of material and ideological pressures.”30 Thus, the Riches found themselves at
the height of a slowly crumbling societal structure. And as did many of their noble peers, the
Riches chose to demonstrate their legitimacy through public funeral rituals and
commemorative objects.

This desire manifested itself in various ways, some of which was through increased
patronage and a visible display of control within the Felsted parish following the
appointment of the title. Robert the Elder passed away only seven months after having been
granted the title, and it was then passed on to his son, Robert the Father (1587-1658).
However, before his death, Robert the Elder had a family chapel erected on the south side of
the Felsted parish church somewhere between the years of 1600-1617. (See Figure 1) Robert
the Elder’s own father had instructed in his will that such a family chapel be constructed: ‘I
will that he (the third Lord Riche) shall cause to be made for my ffather and mee a comely
and decente tomb according to our degrees and estates, to be erercted and sette up in the
Quyer or Chauncele of the p’ishe Church of ffelstede aforesaid or in some conveniente
Chappelle adjoyned to the same by him to be erected by his discretionne….’31 However,
Robert the Elder did not build the tomb as instructed and this task was left to his son, Robert
the Father, 2nd Earl of Warwick whom he charged in his will saying, ‘I will that my executor

28 Ibid., 769.
29 Ibid., 774.
30 Ibid., 35; Stone attributes these pressures mainly to humanist education, Puritan theology and new findings in
astronomy and medicine, all of which gradually “undermine[d] confidence in the hierarchic principle of social
organization as the inevitable and necessary rule of God and Nature,” Ibid., 36.
31 Craze, “A Guide to the Church of the Holy Cross Felsted”
(the second Earl of Warwick) shall cause to be erected and made within eighteen monethes next after my Decease in the newe Chappell by me lately erected and made at felsted, one comelie and decent tomb for my grandfath~r, my ffather, my brother Richard Deceased, and for my selfe, according to our degrees and estates.\textsuperscript{32} This monument could have been erected as early as 1619. All the subsequent heirs to whom this paper refers were buried within this family chapel in a burial vault under the floor. Although the commemorative slabs are not accessible anymore, several of the epitaphs have been preserved by inclusion in printed family funeral sermons. Included as well is a description and analysis of Richard the Patriarch’s monument, and Robert the Elder’s adjoining monument and its assertions of family legitimacy and continuity.

Not only were the Riches prominent within their local holdings but they were also visible during the national affairs of the mid-seventeenth century. Politically they ranked among some of the more active Parliamentarians until Charles’ execution. Robert the Father (d. 1658) in particular had been sympathetic to Parliament and Cromwell. He actively opposed Charles I’s increasingly frantic efforts to raise revenue, such as the forced loan. He served as the commander of the Parliament’s navy in the early years of the civil war. A personal friend of Cromwell, he even completed a series of complicated negotiations in 1657 enabling his eldest grandson, Robert the Younger to marry the Protector’s daughter Frances.\textsuperscript{33} However, his loyalty to the republic flagged when the monarchy and House of Lords were officially abolished, and Charles was executed in the same period. Thus, although he was a parliamentarian and a puritan, Robert the Father was not a strong proponent of the extreme measures taken against the monarchy. Generally, the entire family seems to hold the same sentiments. Mary Riche, Robert the Father’s daughter-in-law expressed her own sentiments concerning Charles’ execution in her diary nearly twenty years following Charles’ execution in 1668 stating, “I… did also beg of God to take away from the land, the guilt of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
the innocent blood of the last king.”

34 Such divided loyalties suggest that allegiances during the war cannot be easily generalized along political, religious or class lines.

At different times Robert the Father was also involved in the New England, Guinea and Virginia companies in the Americas. He gradually “became estranged from the court, and allied himself with the puritan opposition.”

35 This affiliation also strengthened his ties to the growing New England colonies. He was known for his patronage of Puritan ministers at home, and it was through their presence within Leigs Prior that Mary Riche became a devout Puritan. Indeed these Puritan convictions were long-standing within the Riche family, and similar to other peers’ patronage. Their sponsorship enabled Puritan propaganda to flourish where it might otherwise have been suppressed. For “Puritan peers were also invaluable in getting printed material past the censor…. Thanks to some half-dozen men like the Earls of Leicester, Bedford, Huntingdon, and Warwick, and Lord Rich, the English press was for many years wide open to Puritan propaganda.”

36 Clearly the Riches were prominent in society politically, socially and spiritually, particularly through their patronage.

This analysis is especially concerned with the construction of sermons; therefore, it is worthwhile to consider the religious and political affinities of each presiding clergyman. The clergymen delivering the sermons at the six funerals could not deny the extreme social and political prominence of the family and the deceased individuals, but at the same time, in extremely elaborate heraldic and secular ceremonies, they had their own desire to inspire godliness, and often used the examples of deceased nobles to aid them in their aims.

On a broad level it might be asserted that none of the ministers in question were known to have sympathies which leaned toward advocating a disestablishment of the current political and social hierarchy. Only one of the ministers presiding over the family’s funerals was non-conformist under the Stuart monarchy, both before and after the Civil War and Interregnum. Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) a staunch Calvinist was given the rectory of Rochford, Essex by Robert Riche the Father, earl of Warwick whose funeral sermon he would deliver approximately twenty years later.

37 He was apparently one of the ministers

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34 Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, Memoir of Lady Warwick, Also Her Diary from A.D 1666 to 1672, Now First Published to Which Are Added, Extracts from Her Other Writings (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1847?), 145.


36 Stone, Crisis, 735.

who swore to the Solemn League and Covenant at the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1643. Later in 1645 the Puritan Parliament accepted the Directory for the Public Worship of God that “required burial of the dead ‘without any ceremony.’” However, some ministers such as Calamy, as will be shown in more detail later, had little difficulty with funeral sermons or the secular pomp that occupied funerals for the nobility asserting hegemony. And, just like his Puritan-leaning patron, Calamy did not support the execution of Charles I, and he “eagerly promoted” the Restoration. Indeed the assumption of political and religious alignment in civil war allegations must be questioned.

The other three ministers, Nathaniel Hardy, John Gauden, and Anthony Walker, the last of whom delivered the last three sermons for the family, all served under the Church of England. This majority coincides with the perception that the period from 1660 to 1714 was the “Anglican heyday” for funeral sermons, the number of non-Conformist funeral sermons dropping noticeably after the Restoration. Nathaniel Hardy (1618-1670) began his ministry with Presbyterian leanings; however, he was convinced of the Episcopalian persuasion around 1645. Following the Restoration he became a royal chaplain for Charles II. Though John Gauden had parliamentarian sympathies he too eventually became one of the king’s chaplains. Anthony Walker’s biographical sketch outside what can be inferred from the sermons is unfortunately quite vague, though it is clear that he served for a time as Gauden’s curate at Bocking.

In summary, this paper seeks to understand the way in which grief, material concerns, and moral positions of the nobility intersected. Examining the language of mourning through funeral sermons and other sources relating to the personal losses of one aristocratic family provides a particularly well-focused investigation of how the needs of the Riches’ were met

38 Ibid., 679. This agreement was approved by both houses of Parliament and approved by the assembly of divines on 25 September 1643. It bound both Scotland and England to “to uphold the true protestant religion in the Church of Scotland, to reform religion in the Church of England according to the example of the best reformed Churches, and to bring both into the nearest conjunction and uniformity.” William Hunt and Reginald Poole, The History of England: From the Accession of James I. To the Restoration 1603-1660 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), 291.
39 Cressy, Birth, Marriage and Death, 416.
41 Houlbrooke, Death, Religion and the Family, 299.
42 Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, 1238.
43 Ibid., 948. Shortly after the Restoration in 1661 Gauden published a work entitled, ‘A pillar of gratitude humbly dedicated to the glory of God, the honour of his Majesty, the renown of this present Parliament, upon their restoring the Church of England to the primitive government of Episcopacy,’ Ibid., 949.
44 Ibid., 950.
rhetorically during a period of mourning. The Riches, due to their central position within Essex and the Felsted parish, the puritan community, as well as Parliament and court, clearly had a reputation and position to protect and assert in many sectors, thus making their assertions of legitimacy and demonstrations of stability particularly noteworthy. Finally, the fundamental role of clergymen during periods of familial loss cannot be overlooked, and the impact of their own loyalties and convictions within or outside of the Anglican Church. However, their professional debt to their noble patrons makes their roles as the public voices of the family’s grief especially crucial.

After the Reformation, Christians throughout Protestant Europe struggled to maintain a sense of connection to their dead relatives and friends. Due to theological shifts in doctrine the time of mourning no longer included prayers for the dead leaving a rift in perceived relations. In a broad manner, this paper inherently suggests that Protestants were still able to incorporate the dead into their structured worldview. In fact, the dead were written into the maintenance of the social hierarchy for the purpose of demonstrating familial continuity and legitimacy. Secondly, the dead were rhetorically resurrected as spiritual exemplars who, through the language of the clergymen and the memories of parishioners, survived to prod their living counterparts towards godliness, while simultaneously suggesting the hegemony of the Riches in spiritual affairs as well.

II. Embodying the Dead: The Creation of a Public Persona

The rift of death has undeniable disruptive consequences for the living community. Within early modern Protestant England, various helps were given in order that the living might successfully overcome the personal and communal affects of loss. In the face of potential disorder the deaths of male peers and heirs-apparent signaled the need to emphasize a noble family’s claims of hegemony politically, socially and morally. It can be suggested that contemporary funeral sermons and monuments had a constructive ability to create a public persona of deceased noblemen within the Riche family to assert these claims. This “spirit” or personality was perceived as existing separately from the natural or decaying body. This public persona had two primary functions. Spiritually, the deceased noble became a model of virtue which asserted the exemplary morality of the noble family. Secondly, the
family’s claims to political and social continuity and authority were also reaffirmed by this created body.

In 1659, one year before the restoration of the monarchy, Edmund Calamy concluded his eulogy for Robert the Father by reiterating his desire for Robert the Son: “My prayer… is that all his infirmities may be buried in the grave of oblivion, and that all his virtues and graces may supervise, and live in his son and heir; that as he inherits the estate, so he may also inherit the virtues of his Father. And that religion, piety, and godliness may be entailed upon the Noble family of the Riches, from one generation to another till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ unto judgement.”45 This passage easily demonstrates the blending of social and political assertions concerning the superior rule of the Riches. Indeed, Calamy extends his paralleling of moral virtues inherited with an estate inherited, to invoke the legal language of entailment. The basic concept of this inheritance device was that “The current occupier of the land had only a life interest in the estate, he could not sell it or will it away from the class of heirs- usually the heirs male of the original grantee- nominated when the entail had been established.”46 To a seventeenth century audience entrenched in such language Calamy’s use of the term “entailed” emphasized his desire that godly virtues would be a permanent, irrevocable trait or “inheritance” of the Riches. Calamy’s invoking of inheritance language also reiterates the Riches’ superior social and political position.

However, this excerpt not only presents a hope of continuing godliness for the family, until “the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ…,” but it also indicates that Robert the Father’s enduring public persona and constructed memory should be devoid of his perceived imperfections in life or that “all his infirmities may be buried in the grave of oblivion.” Rather the image of the deceased earl that is purported is one that emphasizes his Christian virtues through the material language of inheritance: the Earl has been made an idealistic example with few reminders of his defects that made him an individual. In other words, the creation of the public persona through rhetoric often stripped the deceased of their individuality, thereby furthering separating the natural from the “body politic.” This allowed the memories of the dead to be used for purposes of demonstrating the morality and social governance of the family. Therefore, through the rhetorical creation of a public

45 Calamy, A Pattern for All, 39.
46 Heal and Holmes, Gentry in England and Wales, 42. This particular legal device was widely used in England by the fifteenth century.
persona in funeral sermons and monuments the Riches’ claims of legitimacy and hegemony, as well as their spiritual positions as models of emulation and patrons were rhetorically asserted.

Contemporary Political Theory of the Public Persona

In his classic work *The King’s Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz explores the medieval evolution of this concept of a basic separation between the physical or natural body and the body politic or public persona. He broadly summarizes that “there was a body mortal, God-made and therefore ‘subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident,’ set against another body, man-made and therefore immortal, which is ‘utterly void of Infancy and the old Age and other Defects and Imbecilities.’”

For Kantorowicz the meaning of the body politic in early modern England included the entire political structure of the English parliamentary system, as well as the *Dignitas* (Dignity) or the line of kings before and after the present sovereign. In clarifying this Dignity Kantorowicz states “Whereas the Crown could appear ‘corporate’ because it encompassed all the members of the body politic living at the same time, the Dignity was a Phoenix-like one-man corporation encompassing in the present bearer of the Crown the whole genius, the past and the future incumbents of the royal Dignity.”

In the following analysis, this concept of the body politic as Dignity, which will be referred to as the public persona, can be viewed in its formation within the constructive language of funeral sermons asserting both familial hegemony and spiritual influence.

Indeed although his work focuses heavily upon the evolution of legal language and theory Kantorowicz claims that it is in funeral rituals and commemoration that this theory is most visibly enacted. Kantorowicz observes,

> We should not forget that the uncanny juxtaposition of a decaying corpse and an immortal Dignity as displayed by the sepulchral monuments, or the sharp

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48 Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 449. This reference to the mythical bird Phoenix will be further explored in a later chapter and its relationship to concepts of familial succession and continuity. Kantorowicz asserts that “the English jurists failed to make a clear-cut distinction between the corporate body of the Crown and the supra-individual personage of the Dignity, and instead equated each with the body politic—tempted perhaps by the current formula ‘Crown and Dignity royal.’ And from this fusion of a number of interrelated corporational concepts there originated, it seems, both the ‘King’s body politic, and the king as a ‘corporation sole.’”
dichotomy of the lugubrious funeral train surrounding the corpse and the triumphant float of an effigy-dummy wrapped in regalia, was fostered, after all, in the same ground, came from the same world of thought and sentiment, evolved in the same intellectual climate, in which the juridical tenets concerning the ‘King’s two Bodies’ achieved their final formulation. 49

Therefore, it is most appropriate to consider this theory in relation to the rhetoric of the funeral sermon, as well as the display of funeral monuments. This theory is also not exclusive to royal affirmations of continuity. Noble funerals of powerful aristocrats possessed similar regalia and processions in which the body politic was central to the ceremony. 50

Since the initial publication of his seminal text in 1957, historians have utilized Kantorowicz’s articulation widely. More recently art historian Nigel Llewellyn has adopted the dual concept, marrying it with Saussure’s linguistic theory. 51 Gradually, Llewellyn claims, the relationship between the natural and what he terms the social body (public persona) becomes more “arbitrary” or disconnected: “In the process of dying, the death of the natural body was followed by efforts to preserve the social body as an element in the collective memory.” 52 Just as Kantorowicz emphasized the centrality of visual funeral rituals, Llewellyn illustrates the distinction between the natural body and the public persona in his

49 Ibid., 436.
50 Gittings, Death, Burial, and the Individual, 167-168. Gittings notes that some heraldic funerals were actually held around an effigy rather than the real corpse.
51 In his text, Llewellyn, The Art of Death, 49-51. Llewellyn parallels the post-Reformation conceptualizaton of the dead body with Saussure’s linguistic theory that places a distinction between the visual symbol, a word, or the ‘signifier,’ and the meaning of the word or the ‘signified.’. When applied to the human understanding of the body after death, Llewellyn clarifies that the ‘signifier’ “would appear to be the natural body, with which the social body acts as its signified, achieved, in turn, by a whole world of other signifiers, such as costume and heraldry.” Llewellyn notes that this conception is not so earthshaking until the creation of such a basic linguistic convention is considered. In other words, coming to a consensus about the process by which conventions of communications and meanings are formed is “the social arena of human work and endeavor.” As clarification he states, “Conventions are not set up in response to neutral conditions but result from the whole wide range of pressures which typify the human condition: pressures based on sex, gender, class, age, history, the weather, power relations, habits, ideology and so on.” In this same way I will consider the rhetorical formation of the public persona.
52 Ibid., 53. Elsewhere Llewellyn reiterates that “The relations between the two aspects of the sign become increasingly arbitrary and the apparent continuity of the social body, like the authoritative meaning of language, appears as an artificial construction sustained as a figment of the collective imagination.” Ibid., 104.
53 Nigel Llewellyn, Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47. In this analysis Llewellyn’s term “social body” is equated with the term “public persona” that I have employed.
analysis of the social body’s depiction as stone effigies displayed on post-Reformation English tombs.\textsuperscript{54}

Using the theoretical framework of Kantorowicz and Llewellyn the rhetorical process of creating a public persona for the purpose of asserting political, social and spiritual familial hegemony stability may be examined through funeral sermons and monuments. As Llewellyn states in his recent work concerning the stabilizing function of funeral monuments, “By favouring continuity, the society resists fragmentation and recognizes itself as outlasting its individual membership. The more socially conscious a culture becomes, the more it needs monuments for preservation’s sake and to help overcome the potentially fragmenting separation of death.”\textsuperscript{55} These ministers were themselves sculptors creating monuments emphasizing the Riches’ hegemony.

Within the rituals of the heraldic nobleman’s funeral the emphasis upon the public persona for the purpose of claiming familial hegemony is most obvious. The funeral service was the time in which the heir was invested with the new title. Following the giving of the sermon, the principle mourner, typically the heir, would move to the front of the nave at the altar where he would be given the achievements of the deceased peer, such as the coat of arms, the helm and crest, and the sword.\textsuperscript{56} After this ritual “offering” he would return to his seat as the new Earl. Jennifer Woodward notes: “The focus of the proceedings was the public persona… signified by the heraldic titles and achievements. Once that public persona had been ritually transferred to the heir, attention was fixed on him and the body lost its significance.”\textsuperscript{57} As a result the individual personality of the deceased and the heir were lost under the weight of symbolic ceremony. In a similar effort at transference the rhetoric of the presiding minister within the sermon sought to invest the new Earl not only with the trappings of nobility, but with the piety and paternalistic actions of a wise and benevolent

\textsuperscript{54} Llewellyn clarifies in regards to monuments that “Symbolic values traditionally attached to the ‘Natural’ Body such as pollution, decay, individuation and separation were replaced by monuments which emphasized the living ‘political’ significance of regeneration, the solid, socialization and continuity….. Monumental Bodies were, in fact, part of the ritual developed to extend the liminal, transitional stage and prevent death being too disruptive of the body politic.” Nigel Llewellyn, “Monuments to the Dead, for the Living” in Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture: 1540-1660 (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 222-223.
\textsuperscript{55} Llewellyn, Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England, 42.
\textsuperscript{56} Woodward, The Theatre of Death, 30.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 34.
peer. This rhetoric often asserted the continuance of order and hegemony beyond the destabilizing effects of death.

Clergymen and the Dynamic Creation of the Public Persona

Funeral sermons for the Riches asserted familial hegemony in social, political and spiritual spheres. In their rhetorical creation of the public persona the clergymen mixed contemporary legal language with descriptions of righteous attributes to create admirable public personas. Although sometimes critical of the materiality and pomp of the nobility, traits seemingly opposed to the quiet and pious modesty urged by so many Puritan ministers, the Riches’ presiding ministers ultimately subsumed their personal reservations and instead suggested the social and spiritual authority of the family.

In order to grasp at this inherent tension the ideal expectations for the spiritual behavior of males must be considered. Although women of the period were regarded as having the greatest capacity for piety, it was the male who was perceived as the spiritual head of the family. A sermon by the Puritan William Whately articulates the common perception of the spiritual structure within the home, and its biblical parallel. He argues ‘as our Lord Jesus Christ is to his Church… so must [the husband] be to his wife an head and Savior… the Lord in his Word hath intitled him by the name of head: wherefore hee must no stand lower than the shoulders….’

The father, or elder family patriarch was given the duty of making sure the family attended church regularly, had daily prayers, and read the scriptures. Lawrence Stone argues that “the role of the head of the household was also strengthened” by the Reformation. Certainly the familial responsibilities of the father upheld the gender hierarchy apparent within the political and social spheres.

However, the clergymen not only portrayed their noble patrons as morally righteous, thereby legitimating the Riches’ authority, but they also addressed the more material

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58 In her article Susan Moore goes on to argue that puritan preachers often used feminized language to describe the appropriate mentality men were to have. Interestingly the period literature urged men to view their souls as female, so that men would see themselves as the ‘brides of Christ.’ “We find male fervour for Christ as ‘my sweet loving husband’ in sermons and biblical commentaries, in private diaries and records of spiritual experience.” Susan Hardman Moore, “Sexing the Soul: Gender and the Rhetoric of Puritan Piety” in Gender and Christian Religion (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 175-6.

59 Stone goes to indicate “From this point of view… the principal result of the Reformation was the heavy responsibility placed by Protestantism upon the head of the household to supervise the religious and moral conduct of its members.” Stone, Family, Sex, and Marriage, 156-157.
concerns of the family and community at large. The rhetorical creation of this spirit also sought to highlight the positive political and social duties fulfilled by the deceased earl. In English politics at large, this period between the Restoration and the Revolution was a time in which the peers or lords were gradually regaining their political and social authority. In a sermon to a deceased earl in 1673, the minister Anthony Walker addresses each level of society with whom the peer had contact. He begins with the earls and barons in the audience urging them to weep “for [they] have lost a limb of your honourable body.” However, he goes on to say

Weep over him you Worthy Gentry…. … you Reverend clergy… … you Dutiful and Diligent Servants, for you have lost a Careful, a Good Lord and Master. … ye Commons, and whole Neighbourhood, for you have lost a Condescending Goodness, which despised not your Meaness. … you Tenants, for you have lost a Landlord, who opprest you not…. …you Labourers and Tradesmen, for you have lost a Master, who imployed you much and paid you well…. …you Poor and Needy, for you have lost a Charitable Benefactor, whose Bounty was instead of Cubbard, Kitchin, Barn, to many of you.

This extended list illustrates the earl’s many roles in the community and his expected behavior towards each class. Certainly, “at the basis of aristocratic power lay the notion of patronage,” and the preceding passage demonstrates that role. As is known from their family heritage the role of the Riches within the government at large, especially within Parliament was particularly important to the assertion of their legitimacy and power.

Although it may not be immediately observable, the demands placed upon the nobility to visibly assert their dominance, power and wealth sometimes clashed with the clergy’s didactic intention of portraying the deceased nobles as being more concerned with their soul, than their political seat locally and in Parliament. In other words, an inherent conflict of interests could exist between the material aims of the nobility and the spiritual goals of the clergymen. In his funeral sermon for Robert the Son Nathaniel Hardy noted,

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63 Ibid., 160-166. In his social history J. A. Sharpe asserts that toward the end of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century that the center of national power had shifted from the court to parliament.
“Usually men of high estates are high-minded. Nor is anything more common, then for the
bunch of Pride to grow upon the back of Honour.” Edmund Calamy in his sermon for
Robert the Father in 1658 more emphatically claims, that “Greatnesse without goodnesse will
be but as a great fagot to burne them the more in hell.” Repeatedly in these sermons the
clergymen indicate that though men and women may be noble in birth, they are by no means
assuredly moral or virtuous people.

John Gauden who preached the funeral sermon for Robert the Younger is by far the
most severe in his criticism of flattering the dead. For although clergymen often used
funeral sermons to buttress the inheritance claims of the grieving family Gauden verbally
proclaimed a reluctance to present nobility as inherently virtuous or materially great claiming
that the true purpose of the funeral sermon was as spiritual instruction for the living.

Homilies were not to give undue praise to the dead: “Funeral Sermons… ought to be serious,
severe, and wholly circumscribed, as to all danger of sowing pillows under the elbows of the
living, or of dawbing with any untempered mortar; and no lesse from whiting the Sepulchres
of the dead, as if there was no rottenness in their bones.” In keeping with this conviction
Gauden focuses in his eulogy upon his hopes of salvation for the young man, based upon
Robert’s appearance of genuine desire and aims toward piety. That is, Gauden appears
disinterested or even loathe to concentrate upon the nobility of his patrons for fear of
excessive praise; it is moral instruction, not support of the Riches’ social position that
concerns him. This personal sentiment of the clergymen could often muddy statements
asserting familial hegemony.

On the other hand, and more prominently the Riches’ clergymen often took advantage
of emphasizing the family’s hegemony for their own purposes. In fact, they were quite aware
of the role the Riches played in their own material comfort and security. Robert the Father’s
death occurred in 1658. Edmund Calamy lamented in his funeral sermon, “We ministers have

64 Nathaniel Hardy, Man’s Last Journey to His Long Home: A Sermon Preached at the Funerals of the Right
65 Calamy, A Patterne for all, 14.
66 Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, 948. Though John Gauden had parliamentarian sympathies he
eventually became one of Charles II’s chaplains. Shortly after the Restoration in 1661 Gauden published a work
entitled, ‘A pillar of gratitude humbly dedicated to the glory of God, the honour of his Majesty, the renown of
this present Parliament, upon their restoring the Church of England to the primitive government of
67 Gauden, Funerals Made Cordials, 43.
great cause to weep over his hearse and to bemoan his death. For we have this day lost one of
the greatest friends that the godly and painful ministers had in England." Similarly, though
Calamy was theologically a determined Calvinist he displays little difficulty with funeral
sermons, the secular pomp that occupied noble funerals, or asserting the family’s social and
spiritual superiority. Therefore, the clergy sometimes rhetorically created a public persona
for the deceased earl or heir-apparent not only to stabilize the political, social and spiritual
position of the family, but also for the security of their own situation.

Within the printed sermons this concern of instability following noble deaths, and the
desire for the Riches to maintain their position as spiritual patrons can be seen both in the
Epistle Dedicatory, written to the living commissioners of the sermon, as well as in the main
body of the sermon. In June of 1659, when the cries for the monarchy’s restoration were
becoming increasingly persistent, Nathaniel Hardy declared

the Earl of Warwick still liveth in his succeeding brother, who will (I hope) not only
continue, but increase the Honour of his Family, by endeavouring not only to equalize
but excel his Predecessours, in being a Friend to the Orthodox Religion of this
despised Church, a pattern to his tennants, servants, yea, the whole Countrey, of
Piety, Charity, Humility and all vertues."

The preachers for the Riches often indicated their own fears of instability by expressing the
hope that the son and/or next heir would prove as much a friend to the Church as the
deceased and maintain the family’s position as “a Friend to the Orthodox Religion” or as
spiritual patrons. Therefore, the rhetorical transference of the one Earl’s spirit to the next not
only suggests continuity, but also emphasizes the perceived importance of the Riches’
position as spiritual exemplars and patrons. Thus it can be suggested that not only were
attempts made to sustain the continuity and hegemony of the family in the face possible
instability, but that personal concerns also led the clergy to verbally represent the deceased as
exemplary spiritual examples for their own material aims.

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68 Calamy, A Patterne for All, 36. Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, 679. Edmund Calamy (1600-
1666) a staunch Calvinist, was given the rectory of Rochford, Essex by the earl. He was apparently one of the
ministers who swore to the Solemn League and Covenant at the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1643.
Ibid., 679. Later in 1645 the Puritan Parliament accepted the Directory for the Public Worship of God that
69 Hardy, Man’s Last Journey Home, 28.
Thus on the whole the clergymen reconciled any tension between the moral and material when they spoke specifically of the Riches and their influence in multiple societal spheres. Throughout the funeral sermons for the deceased Riche earls it is possible to trace the language that formed conceptions of a virtuous public persona of the deceased which simultaneously and rhetorically asserted the Riches’ social and political hegemony. Like the succession of the king’s Dignity from one monarch to the next, this public persona was rhetorically passed from one generation to the next. Edmund Calamy in the Epistle Dedicatory of his funeral sermon for Robert the Elder in 1658 quickly asserts to Robert the Son “…as you are his heire, and inherit his estate, so you may also inherit his virtues; and that whatsoever was good in him, may live in you.” Immediately observable is the minister again appealing to the language of material inheritance as a way for him to suggest that the deceased’s virtue, like the physical estate, is something to be passed generationally down the male line. Calamy continues saying “My prayer for your Lordship is, that you may be an honour, glory, and crown of rejoicing to your Family, and by your godly and virtuous life make your Father (though dead) to enjoy a kind of happiness upon the earth while you live. And that you may embalme his memory to posterity by the spices, and sweet odours of your godly life, and conversations.” This expression of traits and virtues that live beyond the dead indicates a determination to show the deceased’s spiritual traits as exemplary. By using the metaphor of a corpse being treated and preserved after death Calamy creates a public persona, or spirit of the deceased which is passed on to the inheriting son. The clergymen preaching at the funerals of the Riche family utilized such language of inheritance which emphasized the Riches’ position as spiritual exemplars and patrons. Therefore, although some clergymen maintained reservations in praising deceased noblemen beyond their merit, expressions which created a public persona intimating their position of spiritual and social authority were frequently invoked both to the advantage of the Riche family and the presiding minister.

70 Calamy, *A Patterne for All*, A1
71 Ibid., A2.
72 It can be noted that this paralleling of religious and social language occurs throughout these funeral sermons and was a common rhetorical strategy. Calamy at one point parallels earthly nobility with a more heavenly nobility stating, “A true Christian is of a noble extraction. He is the adopted Son of God, brother to Jesus Christ, heire of God, and co-heire with Christ….He is partaker of the divine nature, and without all controversy the Noblest man in the world.” Ibid., A4.
The Female Patriarch

One of the most notable places within the funeral rituals for the Riche family in which a public persona is suggestively created for the purposes of familial authority and moral imitation is in the funeral sermons that honor Mary Riche, wife of Charles the Son. At Charles' death in 1673 it is quite clear that the family will die out. Mary was unable to conceive again in earlier years, and Lord Charles' younger brother Hatton passed away in 1670, leaving no heirs of his own. This fate is described by Mary in her diary as an "incurable wound." Therefore at Charles the Son’s death Mary stands as the sole remaining symbol of the Riches’ place in the peerage. The funeral language used demonstrates that while maintenance of the gendered hierarchy was important it was sometimes sacrificed for the greater purposes of reasserting familial hegemony socially, politically and spiritually.

The period female model of religious virtue was characterized by piety, submission and charity. As a mother "it was therefore one of the prime duties… to inculcate good practices into her children, and in the rare cases in which female advice survives it often revolves around the routines of daily prayer." Sara Heller Mendelson notes in her study "Piety was another feminine ‘ornament’ regarded as a special talent of the sex. It was customarily listed as one of the female virtues, perhaps because women were pre-eminent in its devotional aspects- faith, prayer, and occasionally prophecy." These socialized duties were of course directly related to perceived inherent characteristics and tendencies of women. Yet the ideals were not always reflected exactly in society. And the stereotypically submissive role of the wife could be rhetorically overlooked by the greater need of asserting familial hegemony.

Even in the funeral sermon for her deceased husband, prior to Mary’s own death, the plasticity of the gendered language of inheritance is perceptible. The Epistle Dedicatory of Walker’s funeral for Charles the Son speaks to Mary honoring her for her many virtues including her devout piety and her marital fidelity. Yet, Walker’s language paints Mary as an exception among the female sex with many masculine qualities. Walker states,

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She was great by her Marriage into the Noble Neighbouring Family… Great by her Tongue… Great by her Pen… Great by being the greatest Mistress, and Promotress,… Great in her nobleness of Living…. Great in the unparallel’d sincerity of constant, faithful, condescending Friendship… Great in her dexterity of Management…. Great in her quickness to apprehend the difficult of her Affairs…. Great in the conquest of her self, and mastery of her passions…. Great in a thousand things besides.76

Thus Mary is endowed with typically masculine qualities, and these qualities enable her to fill the authoritative role of her husband as head of the family and estate. Also, although Mary is still living, she is described as the great men who had their funeral monuments built before their death. Her public persona is being created rhetorically prior to her own death, much as a stone effigy might be carved long before a patriarch had passed away.77 In other words, Mary is present in her physical body with all her supposed flaws and individuality. Yet she is simultaneously being described in terms that emphasize her fulfillment of social expectations in portraying a superiority of ability that would seem to justify the family’s hegemonic role.

The legal position of Mary, in possessing the estate of Leigs, as well as her position as patroness within the local community aids in explaining the rhetorical creation of Mary as a public persona in order to prolong the Riches’ hegemony politically, socially and spiritually. At her husband’s death Mary gained possession and executorship of her husband’s estate, and the full responsibilities of the earldom were not passed directly onto the inheriting Earl. Unlike most noble estates, the Riche estate was not entailed to the male heir. For Mary it “was a privilege to be given possession of Warwick’s estate, and an honour to be appointed its executrix.” Apparently one year before his death Charles had signed his will “in which he had given Mary his entire real and personal estate for her life plus one year.”78 In this way Mary stands as a temporary suspension of the male domination of the title and its corresponding duties. Though a woman, she is draped in language indicating a masculine authority that she possesses in spite of her sex. In other words, her public persona while she

77 Llewellyn notes that “Robert Cecil, an adviser of princes, had a monument made just before his death in 1612 which shows that he was well versed in this theoretical duality [natural versus politic] body;” Llewellyn, “Monuments to the Dead, for the Living”, 218-240.
78 Mendelson, Mental Worlds, 112.
is still living is a liminal object, and her supposed masculine virtues and characteristics provide a somewhat legitimate bridge between Sir Richard Riche’s direct line and the line of the inheriting cousin. Walker indicates Mary’s temporary role when he states, “The Princess hath this Prince: This Great Woman hath this Great Man, left to supply His place; to bear up the Honour of his Family, and Name; and to be a Nursing Mother in this our Israel, during Her Life, which God in Mercy, Graciously prolong to His Glory, and to all Our Comforts.”

In this passage Walker indicates Mary’s multiple functions. Because Mary had full control over all the land, guardianship of her three nieces, as well as the duty of being executrix to her husband’s will, she, rather than the young heir, is to maintain the honor of the Riches in their community and provide the care and stability necessary to those whom to depend on the family.

In fact, Walker highlights Mary’s liminal position as a female by paralleling her to the late queen. “When Queen Elizabeth was Dying, being inquired of concerning her successor, she replied, My Throne, is the Throne of Kings.” Comparing Mary to Queen Elizabeth, he interprets her place within the familial and masculine line as a temporary respite, and while Mary will perform her masculine duties admirably and ably, a male must ultimately occupy the head of the family. This short historical reference serves to enlighten the reader concerning the contemporary practice of gender inversion within language, particular as it relates to women in positions of authority.

In fact, the desire to extend the Riches’ line is so great that Walker does not acknowledge the new Earl’s presence until the end of his sermon: “Next to her Ladyship; He hath provided an Honourable Successor for His Noble Seat; Which He hath left with all it’s Furniture, to invite and oblige his Residence, to be a Head and blessing to this Neighbourhood.” Thus, while the Earl of Holland received his new title at Charles’ funeral, he does not possess the responsibilities and his partial inheritance until after the death of the interim “queen.” This investment even prior to the new Earl’s receiving his inheritance of Warwick House suggests the importance of demonstrating eventual male familial continuity of virtue and authority despite the fact that the new Earl was a distant cousin.

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80 Ibid., 30.
Thus, Walker describes Mary’s exceptional qualities within the bounds of conventional discourse. In his funeral sermon for Mary in 1678, Walker again utilizes language that masculinizes Mary and her role within the family inheritance scheme. As Mary held the title of the earldom as countess until her death, it is through her status and her public persona that Walker transfers the social, political, and religious responsibilities of the earldom onto the inheriting cousin. Emphasizing both her own aristocratic lineage and her spiritual maturity he bequeaths her spirit to the new Earl of Warwick stating, “And for your noble Lordship, who are now investing yourself with her large and noble mantle- may Elijah’s Spirit rest upon you, as well as his Mantle: that you may rise up an Elisha in her place and stead.” [Italics added] Walker’s usage of this image is particularly notable as he used the same biblical reference in Charles the Son’s sermon when he bequeathed Charles’ spirit to the new heir. Walker utilizes a powerful biblical image in which one prophet is invested with the power of the elder prophet, or in this second instance the dying “prophetess,” or Mary. This vision still serves a dual purpose as it not only illustrates the spiritual transference of the virtue of the family, but also the full investment of the young heir with the authority or essence of the social and political responsibilities of the earldom of Warwick under the Riche family. Thus even through the interim presence of a woman, the attempt to demonstrate the Riches’ hegemony both politically and spiritually continued.

The Riche Family Chapel and Monuments

The Riche chapel constructed between 1600-1617 functioned as an entire unit aimed at creating a public persona of the deceased and emphasizing the family’s legitimacy within the local community and beyond. However, the chapel was also located within the larger sacred space of the parish church. Therefore, as the different emphases of each of the two monuments will indicate, the family chapel and its commemorative structures simultaneously served the dual purpose of portraying exemplary spiritual morality and familial power.

During the seventeenth century the funeral monument visibly asserted familial hegemony both socially and spiritually within the local parish community. Monuments were

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82 Anthony Walker, A Virtuous Woman Found, Her Loss Bewayl’d and Character Exemplified in a Sermon preach’t at Felsted in Essex..., (London, Printed for Nathanael Ranew, 1680), 129.
“images of continuity and legitimacy and were potent symbols of rank and territory.” The Riche family was no exception to this commemorative trend. Robert the Father had two monuments erected to his grandfather and great grandfather at the Felsted parish church within the new family chapel, the construction of which his father had overseen. The two monuments represent the beginning of the Riches’ place within the English peerage. The first monument commemorates Sir Richard Riche, 1st Baron, who was the major patron within the Felsted area in the mid-sixteenth century. The second monument honors his son Robert Riche Senior. Constructed around 1620, as little as two years after the creation of his son Robert the Elder (d. 1618) as Earl, these physical displays of wealth and status suggest a determined reassertion of the relatively young authority of the Riches within the peerage. Both in their form and function these monuments, as the funeral sermons, created a public persona of the deceased that emphasized the family’s lineal legitimacy and their claims to societal and political dominance, as well as their position as spiritual exemplars.

The first and largest of the monuments, over thirteen feet high, commemorates the life, primarily the political career of Richard Riche the Patriarch. (See Figure 2) Architecturally styled after an elaborate funeral hearse complete with a canopy, the monument provides a sense of permanence to the temporary liminality of the funeral in which the power of the ruling family was constantly reasserted through physical displays of prestige. The bridging of political power between the deceased noble and his successor was usually emphasized through a sculpted effigy. In other words, as Llewellyn states, “the survival of the political body of a great magnate was more critical than anything that could overcome the natural body since the political body had dependants within the body politic, which relied on ritual and the law to overcome potentially destabilizing separation.”

Funeral monuments literally depicted the public persona of the deceased nobleman in the form of an effigy to demonstrate the continuing authority of the Riche family.

Indeed the details of Richard the Patriarch’s physical appearance affirmed his local and national political importance. Portrayed in elaborate clothing denoting his position as Lord Chancellor, Richard’s less than life-size effigy reclines on his left side, while his head rests on his left hand. His gaze is fixed looking northerly in the direction of the main altar.

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84 Ibid., 42.
and chancel of the parish church. The upper torso rests on a gilt-fringed pillow while his right hand holds his place in a book. This physical position was typical of period funeral monuments: “Commonly, the figure is raised up, meditating, with hand under head or chin, all in accordance with the tradition of the *memento mori*, which encouraged serious study as part of the preparation for death. By the early seventeenth century the pose had become a sign of the death of the individual thus portrayed.” This posture claimed, much as contemporary funeral sermons, that noblemen were not too great to overlook contemplation of their own mortal fragility. Yet Sir Richard’s apparel also subtly emphasizes his national import and authority. (See Figure 3)

Three sculpted panels above and behind Richard’s effigy, however, further proclaim his political supremacy. The first depicts Richard with a cardinal virtue, most likely Truth. The second shows the deceased in his office as Speaker of the House of Commons, while the third and center panel shows him as Lord Chancellor accompanied by the cardinal virtues of Charity, Fortitude, and Justice. These images subtly eternalize Richard’s public persona by intimating that such immortal characteristics were his constant companions. The mixture of virtue with political duty again demonstrates the dynamic relationship between the social and spiritual spheres, and that the Riches’ maintenance of authority relied on appearances of supremacy in both areas.

The final scenes on Richard’s monument are located on the lower tomb chest and are etched in black stone. One panel depicts him on horseback riding through Westminster bearing the Great Seal, while the second portrays him lying on his deathbed, hands clasped in prayer where four official mourners watch him on each side of his bed. The structure of Richard’s bed mirrors that of his funeral monument, and the posture of his body imitates those of many contemporary monuments. Thus the depiction of the natural body’s death is masked by the appearance of Richard’s corpse as a sculpted and permanent effigy. (See Figure 4) Much like the family funeral sermons, Sir Richard’s monument may be read as a text that asserted the deceased Patriarch’s hegemony in local and national spheres.

While Richard’s monument emphasizes the family’s political role in the community and nation, Robert Senior’s monument and accompanying effigy more strongly demonstrates the spiritual role of the Riches as moral exemplars. (See Figure 5) The structure is much

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85 Ibid., 101.
smaller than the first and is dovetailed into the larger monument. Robert is portrayed in effigy kneeling at a prayer desk facing east. The body is dressed in period court costume with some ornamental armor. His right hand is ungloved so that he may turn the pages of his prayer book. Not only does this posture indicate the contemplation of death, but it does so in a distinctively Christian and devout manner. A period devotional text claimed “kneeling figures were signs of submission…. ‘when we pray, we kneele, because kneeling is the gesture of humility.’” Unlike his father’s monument which is an overt statement of familial hegemony Robert’s monument not only creates a public persona with political and social statements of hegemony, but the body created certainly has spiritual aims highlighting the Riches’ position as spiritual exemplars.

However, other motifs present on Robert’s monument affirm the aim of establishing familial legitimacy. The wall behind the statue includes a coat of arms with supporters, motto as well as implements of war (drum, target, shield, curass, arrows, musket, helmet, sword). The monument also includes a skull lying sideways wrapped in a shroud being watched by angels. Although the skull is typically a signifier of mortality, in this case it is also a commemorative motif for Robert the Elder’s (d.1580) older brother, Richard who died as an infant. This memorialization of the elder son is demonstrative of many monuments’ primary purpose in asserting the male patrilineal line, the inheritance scheme on which families relied in order to maintain their hegemonic position.

Overall, Robert’s smaller monument clearly depicts him as a member of the courtly aristocracy. However, his kneeling posture even more prominently indicates the role of the noblemen in providing the rest of the community, and further family generations superior spiritual examples. In addition, such a moralistic emphasis again suggests that sacred aims were not only the concern of the clergy, but that many noblemen took seriously their spiritual commission.

Finally, consideration of the family monuments cannot be made without reference to the surroundings of the chapel. A Peter Muileman “noted in 1771 that ‘against the east and south walls of this chapel the iron remains on which were suspended the banners, casques,

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86 Ibid., 103.
helmets, gauntlets, etc., etc., of this great family.”88 Although the appearance of the monuments is still impressive today the surrounding environment has lost its heraldic emphasis. This chapel, as other period family chapels, was specifically created for the use and commemoration of the local ruling family. Therefore, the chapel contained many more artistic mediums expressing the perceived superiority of the Riches, and their place within the elite strata of England’s nobility.

Death naturally causes a divide between the living world and those who pass away. For elite families of early modern England this rift could bring the possibility of familial and more widespread social instability. Much as the monarchy needed a device to provide continuity in the transition period between rulers, so too did the nature of the peers’ authoritative position necessitate demonstrations of permanence and stability. This need was partially met through the language of the funeral sermons and funeral monuments in which the presiding minister stressed the role of deceased nobleman or woman as a spiritual exemplar and patron. The minister also continued to hint at the political and social hegemony of the family and the particular inheriting peer.

The rhetorical creation of a public persona was one mechanism that buttressed these needs for order. The traits of this public persona typically emphasized the piety, and exceptional paternalistic care with which the deceased had upheld his responsibilities within his family, his estate, and his community, and sometimes within the English realm at large. Thus when the inheriting heir was invested with the title he was also urged to take upon himself these exceptional and positive characteristics of his forbearer. The way in which this less tangible inheritance was to occur was through invoking the memory of one’s predecessor and remembering their example through a public persona. Therefore, just as the stone effigy represented the public persona of the elite, so too did the rhetoric of funerals, particularly in sermons, construct a public persona that suggested the continuing social and religious authority of the Riche family.

88 Ibid.
III. Death of the Line

In 1673, Charles Rich, the fourth earl of Warwick and the last living male member of his grandfather’s direct heirs passed away. Ironically this familial demise paralleled the gradual reassertion of the peerage following the Restoration. The family chaplain presiding over the funeral spoke in heavily metaphorical language concerning the family’s great loss: “Here’s a great tree cut down and not a stump of its root left in the earth… No slip or tender sprig to bud or spring and revive our dying hopes. No expectation of a phoenix from these ashes.” The sermons written at the deaths of the other male family members of the Riches are filled with similar symbolic images, most of which trace the slow death of a family, and the impossibility of lineal renewal. Viewed collectively these texts suggest that at the death of heirs or heirs-apparent that the language of sermons was constructed so as to protect the Riches’ claims of social and political hegemony despite the reality of a failing line.

Though somewhat obvious, it is important to note that the concept of familial destruction was entirely dependent upon the assumption that family identity was based solely in the male family members. That is, the family is perceived as dead and their memory dying despite the existence of at least three direct young female relatives and the Countess of Warwick (d. 1678) at the time of Charles’ death. Although primogeniture and the accompanying language reinforced the family’s patriarchal ruling, these structures also effaced the existence and identity of these women as remaining descendants of the “family now dead.” Thus, the family’s governing claims are believed to exist so long as there is a living male heir.

Indeed the entire structure of English families was maintained through the authority of a male head. In his seminal work, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, Lawrence Stone outlines the three-fold authority of males within the nuclear family. Speaking of the early modern aristocratic family he states that it was “patrialineal, primogenitura, and patriarchal” and that these forms “reached their extreme development in the sixteenth century.”

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90 Stone defines these three terms as follows: “Patrialineal in that it was the male line whose ancestry was traced so diligently by the genealogists and heralds, and in almost all cases via the male line that titles were inherited; primogenitura in that most of the property went to the eldest son, the younger brothers begin dispatched into the world with little more than a modest annuity or life interest in a small estate to keep them afloat; and
follows that any social group, in this case the peerage of England, which makes their inheritance claims and social hegemony dependent on the continuity of male heirs would not only be obsessed with tracing past genealogical claims, but that they would also be extremely concerned with maintaining their family line into the future. Though the wealthy of early modern England became less interested in lengthy genealogical outlines in the later seventeenth century, they were no less concerned with the lineal continuity of their immediate nuclear family. Heal and Holmes emphasize their “obsession with the continuity of the lineage through the provision of a male heir and the transmission of property in a way that provided both for the survival of the family in the long term and its success in each generation.” Thus, the very structure of the elite family in its dependence on male heirs for hegemony and legitimacy forced the birth, childhood, and marriage of the eldest male into the forefront of the family’s concerns.

Due to the patrilineal emphasis high mortality rates were haunting to many sixteenth and seventeenth century families whose young heirs died before their fathers, or even grandfathers, leaving titles of peerage devoid for representation. The large percentage of deaths within aristocratic families has already been noted. The Riches were not exempt from these trends themselves, gaining the earldom in 1618 under James, and then losing it to a cousin, Robert, second earl of Holland in 1673, only after the title had been passed to at least one brother and nephew.

patriarchal in that the husband and father lorded it over his wife and children with the quasi-absolute authority of a despot,”Stone, Crisis, 591.

Stone also indicates the obsessive drive of many aristocrats and gentry of the sixteenth century to trace their patrilineal heritage, many times to antiquity, and in one particular case a family claimed relationship to the biblical Noah. Holmes and Heal claim that this excessive interest in lineage began to pale in the later seventeenth century. They posit as a partial explanation a changing attitude toward the family and a greater concern with nuclear familial relationships. Heal and Holmes, Gentry in England and Wales, 46-47. The extensive obsession with family genealogy and heraldry, even to the point of forgery, is also outlined in F. Smith Fussner, The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought, 1580-1640. (London: Routledge, 1962), 42-44.

Heal and Holmes, Gentry in England and Wales, 51.

Heal and Holmes claim that “Upon the male heir devolved all the hopes and anxieties of the rest of the nuclear family, and his circumstances and personality… did much to determine the fortunes of the whole,” 80-81.

Heal and Holmes note of the lesser elites that, “between 1611 and 1623 King James granted the hereditary title of baronet to 203 leading gentry families. By 1700, 28 per cent of the titles had died out through the total failure of male heirs of the original grantee; in only 34 per cent could a family show a direct father to son lineal descent from the first baronet to the possessor of the title in 1700.” Ibid., 24.

Thus in period funeral sermons the lineal state of the family was considered and their ability to retain hegemony was poignantly reassessed with the recent loss of a male heir or heir apparent in mind. Indications of such grief at total patrilineal loss may also be found in sources of private grief, and in this analysis the diary of Mary Countess of Warwick (d. 1678), also suggests that at times that fears of lineal loss and familial hegemony permeated private as well as public spheres.

The quick succession of male familial deaths began only three years prior to the restoration of Charles II in 1660. Robert Riche the Father (d. 1658) who inherited the earldom in the summer of 1619 lived only fourteen months following the death of his twenty-three year old heir-apparent grandson, Robert, who passed away in February of 1657. The epistle dedicatory of young Robert’s funeral sermon is dedicated to his wife Frances, the youngest daughter of Cromwell.96 His death was the first of five over the next sixteen years that would eventually bring an end to Richard Riche’s direct lineage, and their holding of the earldom.

Although the following five sermons trace the loss of the family line they also rhetorically attempted a continuing assertion of the family’s legitimacy and hegemony. Through the text of a funeral sermon the grief surrounding Robert the Younger’s death became public the damage to the family’s lineal continuity is recognized. The chaplain to the deceased’s grandfather, John Gauden had a close personal relationship to young Robert housing him during the four years immediately following his mother Anna’s death.97 Gauden, the dean of Bocking, remarked on the lineal consequence of Robert’s death to the Riche’s in his funeral sermon. Noting the pain of sorrow he states, “So in the loss of children… especially our only child; more if in the prime and pregnancy of their age; most if the hopes and honour of their families, the props and pillars of their houses; these wounds in the delights of our eyes are prone to go too deep to our hearts….”98 Clearly the loss of a young male heirs apparent is understood to be the greatest possible grief to parents and a great infliction upon the lineal strength of the family. A few paragraphs later he declares that the death of children should rush parents to “speedy repentance and preparation for death”

97 Charlotte Fell-Smith, Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick (1625-1678): Her Family and Friends (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), 139.
98 Gauden, Funerals Made Cordials, 85.
when “they see their prime branches lopped off, as presages that the whole bulk of the tree, root and branch, shall ere long be hewn down, and without repentance cast into unquenchable fire.” 99 In this metaphor that likens a tree to the family, spiritual language is mixed with symbolic images of lineage. Robert’s death which is seen as a foreshadowing of the genealogical destruction of the family is noted not only for its material damage to the family in regards to inheritance and hegemony, but also for its spiritual implications and the need for the family to demonstrate piety in order to avoid eternal damnation. 100 Thus there is a perceived direct relationship between the spiritual faith of the family and the mortal fate of heirs. The perceived marriage of the spiritual and inheritance effects of deaths cannot and should not be divorced. Rather, such a union serves to highlight the multiple roles of the Riches in society at large. The place of the deceased loved one in the metaphorical family tree was perceived as having a variety of implications, both of which affected their appearance as legitimate ruler and spiritual examples.

Gauden’s use of a biblical term in parallel to the Riches’ position also added rhetorical authority and legitimacy to the family’s claims. Throughout the family sermons the Riches’ presiding ministers continued to use the image of the tree, or root and branch. One of the earliest fourteenth century English references to such an image was in the context of “the roote of Jesse,” a prophetic statement concerning the birth of Christ. 101 The root, of course, symbolizes the beginning or single patriarch of a notable family. The branches are the prosperous generations that followed. 102 Contemporary uses and biblical references to the

99 Ibid., 86.
100 Keith Wrightson notes this emphasis as a characteristic of Protestant theologians who “instructed their flocks to see in misfortune the judgement of a just God upon their sins or the testing by God of the faith of the godly…. Providence provided the godly with a coherent explanation of the ups and downs of daily life.” Wrightson, English Society, 201. Three years after the death of Charles the Younger, his mother Mary still observed with solemnity the anniversary of his death and noted in her diary “I kept my private fast, being the day three years upon which my son died. As soon as up, I retired into the garden to meditate; and there large meditations upon the sickness and death of my only child, upon all his sick-bed expressions, and the manner how God was pleased to awaken him, with which thoughts my heart was much affected; and then I began to consider what sins I had committed, that should cause God to call them to remembrance, and slay my son.” Rich, Memoir of Lady, 111. Thus Mary clearly perceived a direct relationship between her own spiritual righteousness and the death of her son.

102 Literary references to the root and branch were common. Macbeth states “It was saide… that my selfe should be the Roote, and Father Of many Kings.” Macbeth, Second edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), III. I. 5.
root and branch as symbolic of the family tree sought to emphasize the legitimacy of elite families as both social superiors and spiritual examples.

In his sermon for the earl Edmund Calamy quite obviously, and more than any of the other divines preaching at the Riches’ funerals, utilizes language associated with inheritance to create a spiritual parallel thereby hinting at the Riches’ familial hegemony. Referring to the heritage of the biblical patriarch Abraham and his line continued through Issac and Jacob, Calamy states, “Behold a true noble blood, a holy kindred, a blessed generation.” He does appear to be intimating that the Riches possess a kind of spiritual authority. And he urges his audience to remember those such as Robert the Father who have “not only noble and honourable titles, but [are] truly noble and honourable.” He states that the earl’s death “is the more to be lamented by us, because that goodness and greatness do so seldom center in one and the same person.” Robert’s authority in society is seemingly strengthened by his blend of material wealth and righteous piety. Therefore, Calamy creates a parallel between the biblical “nobility” of Abraham’s lineage and the lineage of the Riches. Such a paralleling again emphasizes the material male inheritors of the earldom, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the material and spiritual inheritors of the eventual kingdom of Israel. Calamy’s paralleling of biblical and lineal language endows the seventeenth century family with a legitimacy whose power is based not only in birth or land, but that is also founded upon the ordinances of providence.

Robert the Father’s death was only the second death in the string of five observed here. A little over a year after his father’s death on May 30, 1659, Robert the Son “followed him to the grave.” Only a year before the restoration of the monarchy, the funeral sermon for Robert the Son increased the sense of lineal demise while simultaneously hinting at the family’s remaining heirs and hegemony. A widower, Robert left his three remaining children, all daughters, to the care of their aunt, the newly deemed Countess of Warwick, Mary Riche.

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104 Ibid., 32.
105 Ibid., 34.
Nathaniel Hardy\textsuperscript{107} notes in his funeral sermon for Robert the Son, the death of the youngest heir Robert in 1657:  

\begin{quote}
It seemed good to the wise of God… to begin with the youngest of the three, by death lopping off from this goodly tree a blossoming branch, which might in probability have flourished long, and brought forth much fruit. But when his surviving relations consider what hath lately fallen out, and is too likely to befall this land, they may look upon it as a mercy, in that he was taken away from the evil to come.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

Whether Hardy is referring to the growing movement toward a restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the reoccurring tensions between the Crown and Parliament cannot be discerned. Once again a presiding minister utilized the image of the family tree, an image which is reliant upon the male propagation of the line of inheritance, indicated through the reference to “a blossoming branch” that would have “brought forth much fruit.” The image used to describe the loss of the family is not one of a withering or dying tree, but rather an apparently healthy plant, even blossoming, when its branches and limbs are violently struck off. Such language again emphasizes the disorder created by excessive and unnaturally ordered deaths such as those the Riche’s experienced, and the havoc it wreaked upon families. Despite this loss of lineal continuation Hardy consoles the mourners by stating that the deceased men and any possible future male descendants have been spared the “evil” events of the future by their deaths. In this way Hardy views the multiple deaths as less of a spiritual condemnation, and as more of a disguised and ironic blessing. However, the simple use of this biblical image once again reminds the audience of the family’s legitimacy and hegemony.

Within the epistle dedicatory Hardy uses the same metaphor speaking to the new earl’s heir, his brother Charles the Son, stating, “Finally, that as you have the blessings of wisdom’s left hand… your deservedly beloved and honoured Lady, your hopefull Son and Heir, with those tender plants the remains of your deceased brother and all your honourable relations, till you all in a good old age arrive at the fruition of a blessed eternity.”\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{107} Nathaniel Hardy (1618-1670) began his ministry with Presbyterian leanings; however, he was convinced of the Episcopalian persuasion around 1645. Following the Restoration he became a royal chaplain for Charles II. Stephen, \textit{Dictionary of National Biography}, 1238.

\textsuperscript{108} Hardy, \textit{Man’s Last Journey}, 25.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., Epistle Dedicatory.
the “tender plants” reveals the fragility of such hopes. Despite the disturbing language used to describe the destruction of the family tree, the passage above demonstrates the hope and expectation of familial continuity and authority in the face of familial grief and social instability.

However, the hope of the “tender plants” for Charles and his wife Mary would be abruptly ended. Young Charles’ death to small-pox in 1664 as the only son and heir of his grandfather’s lineage, thus signaling the loss of the earldom, was devastating to both Mary and her husband Charles the Son. Not only were they mourning the loss of a son, but of an inherited peerage, familial lineage and societal authority. Mary recounts in her private diary, “After that by my dear and only child’s death, my Lord’s family grew so thin, that the name was like to sink….”

This despair is increased by the fact that Charles, like his cousin Robert the Younger was nearly of age, and already had a young wife, Ann Cavendish. Indeed Mary’s reference to the demise of the family name and line suggests that the concerns over familial hegemony and lineal progression were expressed in both private and public spheres and that they deeply occupied the thoughts of family members in the period.

The Puritan sympathizing chaplain Anthony Walker personifies the dying of the family in young Charles’ funeral sermon when he intimates “But now the Family is dead, and fallen with Him, and the Line, and Name, will fayle, by his departing childless.”

More than any of the other previous deaths, the family members remaining at Charles the Younger’s funeral mourn for the loss of an entire family rather than simply an individual personality and identity. The irretrievable loss of a family identity, and material status is described without

110 Crocker, Autobiography, 31. Gauden’s sermon adheres to the generic form of the funeral sermon by first giving a didactic sermon, and includes an exegesis of Ecclesiastes 7:1; however, he spends a great deal of time diverging onto political and religious issues calling for “moderation,” attacking Puritans claiming that their dissension is “unchristian” and protesting the violence of the Civil War in no lightly veiled manner. At one point he even comments saying that “No Protectors can protect themselves or others from this civil war [death], this intestine enemy, which is unavoidable, irresistible, which hath all the engines for battering and art so undermining us.” This is a comment worth noting as Cromwell’s daughter is the woman to whom he dedicates the printing of the sermon, Crocker, Autobiography, 39. Nevertheless, he does not fail to attack previous views of purgatory by stressing that prayers or attempts to aid the deceased after death were futile, 13. Gauden held a tenable position between extreme Presbyterianism and “high” Anglican. “Gauden thus maintained an ambiguous position, retaining his preferments, and conforming to Presbyterianism, though publishing books on behalf of the church of England. In 1656 he was endeavoring to promote an agreement between Presbyterians and Episcopalians on the basis on Archbishop Ussher’s model,” Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, 948.

111 Walker, Planctus Unigeniti et spes resuscitandi, or The bitter sorrows for a first born sweetened…, delivered in a funeral sermon at Felsted in Essex…., (London: Printed by Thomas Malb, 1664), 51. As noted earlier Charles the Son’s younger brother Hatton passed away in 1670, leaving no heirs of his own.
any hope of resurrection. Although the Riches’ family demise is inevitable within the language used to memorialize the death of the line, this funeral sermon also suggests a strengthening of their remaining position as social superiors and spiritual exemplars by providing a continuing rhetorical legitimacy to their authority.

The collective demise of the family through this single death is obvious in the epitaph on Charles the Younger’s grave noted below which was included in the printed funeral sermon:

Within this Marble doth Intombed Lye,
Not one, but All a Noble Familie:
A Pearle of such a Price, that soon about
Possession of it, Heaven, and Earth fell out;
Both could not have Him, So they did Devise
This Fatall Salve, to divide the Prize:
Heaven Share’s the Soul, and Earth His Body tak’t,
Thus We lose all, whilst Heaven, and Earth part stakes:
But Heaven, not Brokking that the Earth should share
In the least Attome, of a Piece so Rare,
Intends to Sue Out, by a new Revise
His Habeas Corpus, at the Grand Assize.112

The hopelessness of the Riches is softened by the portrayal of Charles as too great a “pearl” to live with on the earth. Here again spiritual language buttresses the decaying family by focusing upon the spiritual righteousness of the deceased. And as “all a Noble Familie… doth Intombed Lye,” the epitaph also suggests a collective familial piety and superiority.

Finally, the language used to describe the disappearing lineage of the patriarch Sir Richard Rich reaches its intensity in the funeral sermon of Charles the Son in 1673. Anthony Walker, who would deliver the funeral sermon for Mary as well reverts to the image of the tree. Yet his language is by far the most dramatic in this regard even utilizing the ancient image of the Phoenix which was frequently employed in describing the succession of royalty. This time the demise of the family is complete: “the spreading oak hath been long falling, but now the last blow, the finish stroke, hath reached him. Here’s a great tree cut down and not a

112 John Flowre, “Within this Marble doth Intombed Lye” in Planctus Unigeniti, comp. Anthony Walker, ?.
stump of its root left in the earth… No slip or tender sprig to bud or spring and revive our dying hopes. No expectation of a phoenix from these ashes.” Walker’s use of the ancient Christian and pagan reference to the bird Phoenix as another metaphor for the life and death of the family line. While the tree withered, the Phoenix, it was believed, “set his nest ablaze, fanned the fire with his wings, and perished in the flames, while from the glowing cinders the new Phoenix arose… In pagan as well as in Christian art the Phoenix usually signified the idea of immortality….” Thus, Walker’s own use of the term is ironic as he indicates the death of a family through the death of Charles, and with no indication of regeneration. However, the equating of the Riches with the mythical bird rhetorically added legitimacy to their past governing and appears to increase the sense of tragedy at their demise.

However as has been discussed in an earlier chapter the governing patriarchy of the family both socially and spiritually was rhetorically extended through the intervening presence of Mary Riche. So although Charles the Son’s death was the final end to the family’s dominating role in society, other passages are fraught with gendered imagery of Mary performing the symbolic role of a family patriarch, while still being a spiritual “nursing mother” to the greater English community. Not only do such references illustrate the cross sexual plasticity of period language, but more important to this argument, these statements suggest the lengths to which families and clergymen would go to maintain a sense of familial hegemony. Thus Mary becomes the last living embodiment of the Riche family and peerage, and her body is inscribed with the living and mystical essence of a family, while she simultaneously represents the lives of patriarchs now dead, including her late husband. Mary’s role as a female patriarch is heightened by Charles’ act of bequeathing his estate of Leighs in its entirety to his wife upon his death. She also takes on the role of a traditional *paterfamilias* by carefully arranging the marriages of her three nieces who were also handed over to her guardianship following the death of their own father Robert Riche the Son (d. May 1659). The last five years of her life following Charles’ death appear primarily

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114 Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 388.
consumed with maintaining the estate, seeing to the fair execution of her husband’s will, and assuring the martial and financial securities of her remaining female relatives.

Mary passed away on the twelfth of April 1678. At her funeral the final farewell and eulogy is given for the Riche family. Walker mourns the loss to social community at large. Yet in the following passage the claims of hegemony can be seen as continuing beyond the mortal life of the family.

This line, I say, which for well near an hundred and fifty years; by the right honourable stiles and titles of Baron Rich of Leez, and Earl of Warwick, have been the blessing and glory of this neighbourhood: and being honoured by God with much riches and plenty, have honoured him again, and done much good by their bounty; and have watered, and made fat and glad the vallies round about them, by shedding down that dew, and rain, which the divine benignity poured on the heads of these elevated mountains. And have built their own monuments in this place, which will be coevious with the sun and moon, in the famous free-school, and alms-house or hospital, which they founded; and so liberally, yea, magnificently endowed, in this town. Therefore

Thus we see that the death of the family not only signals a loss to the family itself, but also is a perceived loss to the community within which they served for so many years. The family is presented as still exerting their hegemony and influence through their charitable monuments in the form of a “free-school,” and “alms-house or hospital.” By emphasizing the community’s loss as well as the family’s, Walker demonstrates the role of the Riches in society and their attempts to maintain control. The Riches’ hegemony in the area is rhetorically strengthened by Walker’s linking of divine blessing with the righteous ruling authority of the family.

Through the deaths of the five male heirs considered above, the growing rhetorical emphasis and intensity upon the loss of family lineage is clearly obvious. This familial death was illustrated through tools such as the metaphorical image of the tree, as well as the paralleling of spiritual and social language and authority. Indeed, these tools rhetorically suggest an attempt to strengthen the Riches’ position and ruling power. Clearly the institution

115 Mary’s death coincides with the rise of the Whig party and the reoccurrences of Crown versus Commons’ battles. Hill, Century of Revolution, 232.
116 Walker, A Virtuous Woman Found, 22.
of primogeniture colored the language of grief blatantly displaying the aristocracy’s intense concern with maintaining familial hegemony. This desire ran so deep that sometimes women could be viewed in a masculine light, in order to allow the extension of the family’s patriarchal authority as long as possible. Thus, even in their death, the language of the Riches’ funeral sermons suggested the family’s hegemony spiritually and socially, a familial control that lasted beyond their deaths, and which is still represented throughout the community of Felsted today.

The family of Sir Richard Riche found themselves in the midst of their own lineal battle during one of the most turbulent periods in English history. Yet while the monarchy managed to reassert its dominance, albeit in a reduced and limited role, the Riches found their own battle for survival less successful. Entering the peerage as barons under Elizabeth in the 1580s, the Riches’ died out almost a century later, prior to the entrance of William and Mary in the Glorious Revolution of 1689. In a period when nearly every level of society was being redefined, the Riches battled against the most unpredictable of foes, death. And like many of their fellow peers they were unable to prevent their own lineal destruction.

Despite this story of tragedy, the Riches and their supporting clergymen did attempt to buttress the family’s vulnerable position in society through the rhetoric of funeral sermons and the visual magnificence of funeral monuments. Using the existing expectations for peers, as well as the accepted role of funeral rituals the Riches’ hegemony and authority as political leaders, social caretakers, and spiritual examples was purported. Firstly, the clergymen’s creation of a rhetorical public persona suggested the family’s position, while simultaneously asserting the material needs of the clergymen themselves. Indeed the rhetorical construction of the funeral sermons allowed these ministers and chaplains to create a female patriarch for the apparent purposes of extending the family’s rule. Most permanent in their statement of the family’s control are the two family monuments whose structures may be read for proclamations of political and spiritual authority. Finally, the funeral sermons for the Riches used glorified biblical language suggesting an assertion of their power despite the reality of the family’s ultimate death.
In the seventeenth century English peers struggled against disorder in many spheres. As Lawrence Stone reminds us, the concept of a divinely ordered structure “was breaking down under a combination of material and ideological pressures.”117 Within the general framework of this uncertain period the Riches found their own hegemony breaking down under the misfortune of multiple fatalities. Yet despite their hardship the rhetoric of their funeral sermons, and the permanence of their family chapel and monuments suggest that their assertions of hegemony in the midst of destruction and sorrow extended the memory of their presence, and the impact of their patronage even into the present day.

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117 Stone, Crisis, 774.
Appendix 1

Riche family from Patriarch Lord Chancellor Richard Riche

**Sir Richard Riche (the Patriarch)**

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**Robert Riche Senior (Second Baron)** m. Elizabeth Baldry

- d. June (?) 1580/1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richard Riche Devereux</th>
<th>Robert Riche the Elder (Third Lord) (First Earl) m. (1) Penelope</th>
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- Died in Infancy

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<tr>
<th>b. Dec. 1559</th>
<th>d. March 24, 1618/9</th>
<th>Divorced 1605</th>
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(2) Frances Wray (m. 1605)
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Riche the Father (2\textsuperscript{nd} Earl) (4\textsuperscript{th} Lord)</td>
<td>m. Frances Haton (1)</td>
<td>Susan Rowe (2)</td>
<td>b. 1587</td>
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- *Names in italics are funeral sermons included.*
- *Names in bold indicate funeral monument.*
Appendix 2

Figure 1. Riche Family Chapel, c. 1600-1617, Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex.
Figure 2. Monuments to Sir Richard Riche and son Robert Riche, c. 1620-1.
Figure 3. Monument to Sir Richard Riche, Riche family chapel.
Figure 4. Detail on monument to Sir Richard Riche, Riche family chapel.
Figure 5. Detail from Robert Riche’s funeral monument (d. 1580/1).
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