EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

Adapting True Crime: George Wilkins's *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, the Tragedy of Wardship, and the Early Modern Court of Wards and Liveries

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Edmund Howe's entry in his abridgement of John Stowe's *Chronicles* (1618) sums up the salacious and widely-known Walter Calverley crimes as follows:

> Walter Caluerley of Caluerley in Yorkeshire Esquier, murdered two of his owne children in his owne house, then stabd his wife into the body with full entent to haue killed her, and then instantly with like fury went from his house to haue slaine his youngest child at nurse, but was preuented: he was prest to death in Yorke the 5 of August.[1]

Public interest in the Calverley case endured for more than a decade after the murders, revealing the culture's assessment of the case as an important event in English history. Calverley's status as a prominent landowner only deepened this interest as evidenced by the chronicle notations, pamphlets, and broadside ballads the crimes inspired.[2] George Wilkins's play *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* (1605-6) adapts the Walter Calverley murder case as a domestic tragedy. It was not the only play to take advantage of the public's taste for true crime, with playgoers in this era, as Andrew Gurr puts it, serving

[1] E.H., *The Abridgement of the English Chronicle, First Collected by M. Iohn Stow* (London, 1618), p. 459 in *Early English Books Online*, accessed December 19, 2017, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_verZ39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18437:237. Original punctuation and spelling for directly-quoted material will be retained when appropriate.

[2] According to Lena Cowen Orlin, Walter Calverley's status as the scion of a notable and wealthy Yorkshire family who had held property in the region for centuries is at least partially responsible for the strong literary interest in the case, which blossomed between 1605-1633 and beyond. See *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) pp. 230, 233.

as 'the first great market for daily journalism'.[3] In its adaptation of the crime, Wilkins's play contends that the evils oppressing his Calverley character – Scarborow – and the sins that he commits all stem from the exploitative or inattentive patriarchy allowed to flourish under England's wardship system. The domestic tragedy in *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* stems not from a conflict between husband and wife but between guardian and ward: Lord Falconbridge and Scarborow. Wilkins's condemnation of bad guardianship comes into sharper focus when compared to other treatments of the Calverley case.

By depicting in detail Scarborow's courtship and marriage of Clare Harcop, *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* argues that Lord Falconbridge greatly wronged his ward in forcing him to marry another woman. Lena Cowen Orlin, referencing *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (another dramatic adaptation of the Calverley case), states that 'for early moderns, the mystery of the Calverley murders was motive'.[4] *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* provides this motive, arguing that coerced marriage spurred Scarborow on to wicked and wasteful living because he was made to abandon his true love. Upon first meeting Clare, Scarborow meets, kisses, and swears love to her almost all at once and implores heaven to 'make me this womans Husband' (A4v).[5] Lord Falconbridge breaks apart a love match when he forces his ward to abandon this first relationship and marry his niece Katharine. The attention Wilkins pays to Scarborow and Clare's courtship demonstrates motive for the young man's later bad behaviour and elaborates upon an existing interpretation of Calverley's crimes. Wilkins makes it clear that bad guardianship is a domestic tragedy.

Although Wilkins blames Lord Falconbridge's suppression of his first marriage for Scarborow's abusive treatment of his wife and children, other adaptations of the Calverley case either absolve the guardian of all wrongdoing or barely mention a guardian at all. The pamphlet *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* (1605), printed between Calverley's arrest and execution, seems at least partially sympathetic to the murderer and takes pains to give a little of his backstory before his arranged marriage. It reports that when Calverley and his unnamed Yorkshire sweetheart first see each other, 'in such time was such an interchangeable affection, shot in by two paire of

[3] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 170.

[4] Orlin, p. 234.

[5] George Wilkins, *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage Playd by his Maiesties Seruants* (London, 1629), in Early English Books Online, accessed September 23, 2016, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_verZ3988-2003&res_id=xir:eebo&rft?id=xri:eebo:image:20680. Subsequent quotations are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

eies, to one paire of hearts' (p. 2). The anonymous pamphleteer portrays Walter Calverley and the young woman as sharing a love ignited by mutual attraction, but it does not blame the 'most noble and worthy gentleman' who acts as the guardian in any way for his ward's behaviour (p. 1). In fact, there is no evidence in the pamphlet that Calverley even informs his guardian of his first relationship. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605-8), another dramatic treatment of the crime, makes only the barest mention of a prior love-interest and certainly does not link the Calverley character's guardian with the dissolution of the relationship.[6]

When Wilkins adapts the Calverley story for the stage, he expands this mutual affection not only to argue that the love was real but that it was cruel of Lord Falconbridge to deny the marriage's continuance. The playwright activates cultural attitudes toward the importance of love in marriage in order to make his case more sympathetic and to villainize Lord Falconbridge. The young man speaks to the impossibility of his marrying anyone but Clare Harcop, using love as an excuse: 'O, but good Vnkle, could I command my Loue, / Or cancel oaths out of heauens brazen booke' (B4r). Scarborow cannot 'command' his love and transfer it to the woman his guardian has chosen for him. Likewise, the hurtful behaviour that results from this unloving marriage stems from Falconbridge's denial of the first relationship and the defiance of 'heauens brazen booke'. Unlike the pamphlet's unknowing guardian, Falconbridge had foreknowledge of his ward's love for another woman, a foreknowledge that condemns him as the author of all the play's troubles.

In compelling his ward into an unwanted marriage, Falconbridge does not act out of concern for his ward's finances or emotional development; instead, he is motivated by a desire to thee marry to my Chamber-maide' (B4r). In other words, Scarborow, as a ward, has no say in whom he will marry, and he must submit completely to his guardian's whims, even if it means marrying beneath his social station. Sir William, Scarborow's uncle, appraises the situation thus:

> You are his ward, being so, the Law intends,
> He is to haue your duty, and in his rule
> Is both your Mariage and your Heritage. (B4r)

[6] *A Yorkshire Tragedy* alludes briefly to a former relationship in the conversation among servants. One of them reports that 'My young mistress is in such a pitiful passionate humour for the long absence of her love' See *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, in *Disputed Plays by William Shakespeare*, ed. by William Kozlenko (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1974), pp. 118-127 (p. 119). The range of dates of first performance are cited from Harbage's *Annals of English Drama: 975-1700*, p. 96. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* was printed in quarto in 1608 and again in 1619.

For both matrimony and procreation, Scarborow is by law completely at the mercy of Falconbridge, who would marry him to his chambermaid out of pique that Scarborow objects to marrying his niece. Like Wilkins, other contemporary writers express a cultural distaste for forced marriage. Angel Day, for instance, includes a sample letter in *The English Secretary* (1599) addressing this very topic. A concerned individual chastises his friend for using his 'Fatherlie authoritie to constrain her, whome (albeit shee is you own childe) yet maie you not thus forciblie compel vnto so unnaturall an extremitie [as marrying against her will]'.[7] If a father would be denounced for forcing a marriage on an unwilling daughter, a guardian would certainly be condemned. Lord Falconbridge reveals that compelling his ward's marriage is not the work of a concerned father figure but that of a peeved guardian prepared to assuage his anger at Scarborow's first marriage by forcing his authority on his dependent.

Lord Falconbridge's dissolution of a legal marriage brings about societal instability and sets the play on the trajectory of domestic tragedy. One way Wilkins accomplishes this is by dramatizing the spousal vows exchanged between Scarborow and Clare:

SCARBOROW:	This hand thus takes thee as my louing wife.
CLARE:	For better or worse?
SCARBOROW:	I, till death vs do depart, loue.
CLARE:	Why then I thanke you Sir; and now I am like to haue
	That I long lookt for, a Husband.
	How soone from our own tongues is the word sed,
	Captiues our Mayden-freedome to a Head. (B1r)

Wilkins is showing the audience what appears to be an irregular but valid wedding. Though the couple is alone and without witnesses, they plight their troth, even co-opting wording directly from the *Book of Common Prayer*'s Solemnization of Marriage Service.[8] Scarborow's use of present-tense verbs – 'This hand thus takes thee as my louing wife' – indicates *di presenti* spousals, the spoken exchange of consent that

[7] Angel Day, *The English Secretary, or Method of writing epistles and letters* (London, 1599), p. 139; in *Early English Books Online*, accessed September 7, 2016, http://gateway.proquest.com/ openurl?ctx_ver =Z39.88- 2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_val_fmt=&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:5388.

[8] Brian Cummings (ed.), *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 158. I am referencing the 1559 version of the *The Book of Common Prayer* here, but all three versions have very similar language in the Solemnization of Marriage service.

immediately bound a couple together in matrimony.[9] The exchanged vows have legal standing but also religious importance, as Clare observes when she states, 'Men neuer giue their Faith, and promise Marriage, / But Heauen records their Oath' (B1v). Thus, when Lord Falconbridge separates the lovers, he overturns civil and divine authority and violates his ward's consent. The couple's separation is directly responsible for Scarborow's later bad actions.

Wilkins's portrayal of Scarborow's first marriage critiques the wardship system as being illegal as well as immoral, a charge other treatments of the Calverley case are careful to avoid. For instance, the author of *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* makes no such claims of illegal or immoral behaviour on the guardian's part and implies that Calverley himself is at fault for either 'concealing his late contract from his honorable gardian, or forgetting his priuate & publicke vowes' (p. 2). Clearly, the 'honorable gardian' carries no responsibility for breaking apart his ward's marriage. By contrast, in *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, the illegality of Lord Falconbridge's actions is apparent from how he treats his ward's contract with Clare Harcop. A prior contract to wed prohibited marriage to another and served as one of the few reasons that marriages could be annulled.[10] Even if Lord Falconbridge doubts that a marriage actually occurred, at the very least Clare and Scarborow are betrothed to one another and are not free to enter into another marriage contract.

Therefore, Lord Falconbridge destroys social structures in Wilkins's play not only by coercing unwanted marriage but also promoting criminal behaviour. In identifying those free to marry, Wilkins's contemporary William Gouge writes that one must be

> nor married, nor betrothed to another: the law of marriage noteth thus much in this clause. *They two shall be one flesh.* And in that the law inflicteth the same punishment vpon the person which being betrothed committeth vncleannesse, that it doth vpon a maried person, it is euident that it is vnlawfull to marie one betrothed to another. So firme is a contract as the law calleth a betrothed maid, a *wife:* and a betrothed maid may not be put away without a bill of diuorce.[11]

[9] Eric Josef Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 20. As it is the vows themselves, the spoken exchange of consent, that married two people and not an officiant or a license, Scarborow and Clare would have thus been considered legally wed.

[10] Martin Ingram, *The Church Courts, Sex, and Marriage, 1580-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 145.

[11] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises* (London, 1622), p. 186 in *Early English Books Online*, accessed 9 January 2018, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:3443.

As explained in the passage above, Scarborow is not free to marry Katharine according to the legal understandings of his time and asserts to his guardian that any second marriage 'makes me an Adulterer… My babes being Bastards, and a whore my Wife' (B3v). Lord Falconbridge, in effect, suborns both bigamy and adultery when he forces Scarborow and Katharine to marry and thereby justifies Scarborow's later characterizations of his wife as an 'Adulteresse' and 'Whore' (I3r). The guardian demonstrates his corruption and, by extension, the institution of wardship's corruption through his suppression of legitimate marital bonds.

Wilkins's adaptation choice to delay Scarborow's consummation of his second marriage until after Clare's death reveals his agenda of blaming bad guardianship for domestic unrest. *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers*'s Calverley seems to set aside or suppress his first contract with little twinge of conscience and quickly 'knit a new marriage knot, and was husband by all matrimonial rites, to a curteous Gentlewoman'.[12] The couple have three young children by the time of the murders even though Calverley's verbal abuse of his wife begins early. In *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the playwright only hints at a former relationship in the opening scene, where the servant Ralph, inquiring after the Calverley character (named only 'Husband' here) for his lovesick but unnamed mistress is told, 'Why, he's married, beats his wife, and has two or three children by her'.[13] This Husband has not been pining away, refusing to lie with his wife while anguishing over the loss of his first love. Wilkins's Scarborow, however, vows 'I will not lie with her [Katharine],' a resolution he keeps until after Clare's death (C2r). This withholding of sexual favours counts as rebellion against his guardian, but Scarborow's refusal to sleep with Katharine also demonstrates the depths of his love for Clare and his certainty of their marriage's legality.

In contrast to *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, other adaptations of the Calverley case do not make wardship an issue and are careful not to lay blame on the guardian. The prominence of the Calverley family and their court connections may have tempered *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers*'s portrayal of the unnamed guardian, whom it describes as an 'honorable Personage'.[14] In reality, this 'honorable Personage' was William Brooke, Seventh Lord Cobham, and Calverley's wife was his niece, Philippa Brooke. The niece was related by marriage to the powerful Sir Robert Cecil, a man

[12] *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers,* pp. 2-3.

[13] *A Yorkshire Tragedy,* p. 119. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* has been attributed to Shakespeare, Thomas Middleton, and others. As it is not the purpose of this article to take a position on controversial issues of authorship, I will refer to the author of this work merely as 'the playwright'.

[14] *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers,* p. 3.

closely tied to the Court of Wards and Liveries who personally profited from the sale of wardships.[15] Though *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* does mention Calverley's previous romance in Yorkshire, it does not blame the guardian for its dissolution. This Calverley does not tell his guardian about his sweetheart, so the guardian is not culpable for any wrongdoing. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* refers only to 'your worship's late guardian'.[16] Marc Friedlaender posits that this is because the Master of Revels would not '"allow" a play in which Lord Cobham… was made responsible for all the mischief, and a play whose performance would torment the unhappy Philippa'.[17] Regardless of the reason, the guardians in these other Calverley adaptations are not held accountable for any of the abuse or downward mobility that accompany their protagonists' marriage. By contrast, Wilkins's scathing treatment of Lord Falconbridge leaves no doubt as to who is to blame.

The Miseries of Inforst Marriage's indictment of Lord Falconbridge for the domestic tragedy reflects a cultural distaste for coerced marriage, as attested to by other contemporaneous works. Under the jurisdiction of the Court of Wards and Liveries, guardians were within their rights to arrange marriages for their dependents, but popular sentiment condemned those guardians who abused this power by coercing their wards into a distasteful marriage.[18] Faliero, a character in George Whetstone's *Heptameron of Ciuill Discourses* (1582), discusses in principle a situation that eerily anticipates the Walter Calverley murders:

> I confesse with you (quoth Faliero) the oversights of yonge men in their choyce but I crye out uppon forcement in Marriage, as the extreamest bondage that is: for that the raunsome of libertie is ye death of the one or ye other of the married. The father thinkes he hath a happy purchase if he get a riche young Warde to match with his daughter: But God he knowes, and the unfortunate couple often feele, that he byeth sorrow to his Childe, slaunder to himselfe, and perchaunce,

[15] Marc Friedlaender, 'Some Problems of a "Yorkshire Tragedy"', *Studies in Philology* 35.2 (1938), 238-53 (p. 247), accessed December 18, 2017, www.jstor.org/stable/4172407. Sir Robert Cecil rose to prominence during under Elizabeth and maintained this influence under James I. He was the chief discoverer of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot.

[16] *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, p. 121.

[17] Friedlaender, p. 247.

[18] Norman Jones, 'Governing Elizabethan England,' in *The Elizabethan World,* ed. by Susan Doran and Norman Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 19-34 (p. 30).

the ruine of an auncient Gentleman's house, by the riot of the sonne in Lawe, no loouing his wife.[19]

Calverley was just such a 'riche young Warde' whose 'raunsome of libertie' caused the death, not of a spouse but of two of his children. According to Faliero, coerced marriages yield such sorrows as financial ruin and the downfall of long-respected families. All these evils stem from the overruling of an individual's consent to wed, and, according to Leonore Lieblein, early modern English culture 'insists on the free choice of partner'.[20] Both Whetstone's discourse and *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* vividly illustrate the detrimental effects of forced marriage on a couple's happiness, but the play indicts not fathers but guardians and the court of Wards and Liveries itself. Wilkins's attitude toward guardians was not unique, but it was far from universal. For instance, Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602-3) takes a far more indulgent view of guardians. When the King of France forces his reluctant ward Bertram to marry Helen, he propels his ward not toward violence and financial ruin but toward maturity.

Along with condemning marital coercion, Wilkins criticizes the wardship system's financial exploitation of wards by illustrating Lord Falconbridge's decimation of Scarborow's estates. Other treatments of the Calverley case do not even hint at this kind of abuse of power. In *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage,* Lord Falconbridge makes clear that he will punish Scarborough financially for his objection to marrying Katharine:

> My Secretarie there,
> Write me a letter straight to Sir Iohn Harcop,
> Ile see (Sir Iack) and it that Harcop dare
> Being my Ward, contract you to his Daughter.
> My Steward too, post you to Yorkeshire
> Where lyes my youngsters Land: and sirrah,
> Fell me his Wood, make hauocke, spoile, and waste.
> Sir, you shall know that you are Ward to me,
> Ile make you poore enough; then mend your selfe. (B3v)

[19] George Whetstone, *An Heptameron of Ciuill Discourses* (London, 1582), in Early English Books Online, accessed January 4, 2018, http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_verZ39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:152133, F_1r.

[20] Leonore Lieblein, 'The Context of Murder in English Domestic Plays, 1590-1610', *Studies in English Literature* 23.2 (1983), 181-96 (p. 182), accessed September 22, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/450087.

In an extravagant flaunting of his legal authority over his ward, Lord Falconbridge boasts that he will not only insist Scarborow set aside his marriage to Clare Harcop but will also 'make hauocke, spoile, and waste' to his inheritance. Scarborow certainly defied his guardian's authority by marrying without his permission. However, as Peter Fleming notes 'it was possible for a ward to refuse his guardian's proposed marriage partner, but this was at the price of paying the equivalent sum to that which the guardian would have received for selling his marriage. If a ward married on his own initiative, without his guardian's consent, he had to pay double the value to the guardian'.[21] Scarborow could have married Clare, even without Lord Falconbridge's blessing; he just would have had to pay the fine. The guardian's laying waste to Scarborow's property may seem to be petty retribution for a perceived challenge to his authority, but Lord Falconbridge is also removing his ward's ability to raise his own funds. Scarborow may have been planning on selling some of his assets in order to maintain Clare Harcop as his wife. Lord Falconbridge's order to the Steward to fell his ward's trees robs Scarborow of a potential source of income to pay for the right to marry his sweetheart and removes his ability to act independently of his guardian. Unable to use the assets of his own property, Scarborow becomes even more beholden to his guardian for financial support and more obligated to Katharine.

Though he is later shown carousing with friends and not managing his allowance wisely, Scarborow's downward mobility in Wilkins's play stems directly from Lord Falconbridge's actions and not his own wild living, as depicted in the other adaptations of the Calverley case. The guardian character is absent in *A Yorkshire Tragedy,* and *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* depicts Calverley's guardian as helpful, securing him a position at court to alleviate his financial difficulties (p. 7). In both works, the Calverley character's guardian is not held liable for his ward's riotous living. The pamphlet blames the institution of marriage itself for Calverley's bad behaviour, arguing that 'he was so altered in disposition from that which he was, and so short from the perfection which he had, as a body is of life flourishing' (p. 4). Wholly absent from these works is a cruel guardian intent on punishing a noncompliant ward, as Wilkins's play depicts Lord Falconbridge. All the blame for financial ruin as well as the murders, lies squarely on Calverley in *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and Husband in *A Yorkshire Tragedy.*

Wilkins's Butler character provides an alternative to the exploitative guardianship like Falconbridge's tolerated under the Court of Wards and Liveries, and his actions

[21] Peter Fleming, *Family and Household in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) p. 106.

demonstrate the power of good patriarchal stewardship to forestall domestic tragedy.[22] Demoralized by the death of his beloved, Scarborow has abandoned his familial duties to his sister and younger brothers. The Scarborow family Butler must attempt to fill the role of patriarch in providing for their care, and these attempts provide much of the play's comic relief. At Butler's insistence, Thomas and John Scarborow become highway robbers, and Sister passes herself off as an unknown heiress, tricking a greedy Ilford into marrying her so quickly that he neglects to validate the rumours about her fortune. Wilkins is adapting the clever slave stock character of ancient Roman comedy in his depiction of Butler.[23] Though the servant's antics are humorous and do no real harm to the victims, they carry with them inherent danger. The Scarborow brothers could be executed for robbery, and Sister is now at the mercy of the man she has tricked. If the only way Butler can remedy the family's financial woes is by committing highway robbery and fraud, then bad guardianship – whether Lord Falconbridge's exploitation or William Scarborow's ambivalence – causes a deep societal wound. The scene where Scarborow agrees to stand security for Ilford's debts is a case in point.[24] Scarborow puts the comfort of an immoral friend above the needs of his family. The injury Lord Falconbridge did to him has set the entire world of the play topsy-turvy, and Butler's ingenious yet dangerous schemes provide only temporary respite. The entire Scarborow family cannot rest easy until Lord Falconbridge has atoned for his sins as guardian.

Wilkins also mitigates or displaces some of the ill effects of Scarborow's unhappy marriage compared to the other adaptations, which hold the Calverley character much more culpable for the marital problems. The point at which the evildoer realizes his failures as a patriarch serves as a striking example of the differences among *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage, Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers,* and *A*

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[22] Butler and Scarborow's Sister are identified only by these names in the play.

[23] Roman comedies, like those of Plautus, featuring clever slaves 'focus on reweaving familial bonds and the triumphs of love are often most derailed by the emphasis on deception, tricks and gags through which these plots are brought onstage'. See Kathleen McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. xii. On learning of the Scarborows' financial straits, Butler advises robbery and deception, moves that tie him securely to the clever slave tradition.

[24] This scene takes place on pages E_1r and E_1v. Wilkins adapts the confrontation between Calverley/Husband and a College Master from the other sources where Calverley's brother is arrested because Calverley has defaulted on his debts. This choice shows Scarborow willing to stand security for a friend, softening him significantly. He cares for his friend, or maybe just cares for his good opinion, but he does not actively put his siblings in danger as a result of his own poor financial choices. However, his foolishness with money does affect them, and the Butler tries to compensate for Scarborow's patriarchal deficiencies through his wild plots.

Yorkshire Tragedy. *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* use a College Master's confrontation to incite Calverley's and Husband's feelings of guilt. The protagonist's guilt over his poor stewardship spurs him to murder his family. When the College Master informs Calverley that his younger brother has been arrested for Calverley's own debts, *Two Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* explains that Calverley 'presently fell into deepe consideration of his state, how his prodigall course of life had wronged his brother, abused his wife, and undone his children' (p. 12). In the midst of these ruminations, his four-year-old son enters the room, and Calverley stabs the child repeatedly, 'being overwhelmed by the violence of his passion, all naturall loue was forgot' (p. 13). Likewise, in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the College Master's visit prompts Husband to feel shame for his actions but also to murder his son who, as in the pamphlet, innocently interrupts his father's ruminations.[25] Calverley recognizes his failures as head of his family thanks to the College Master's report of how his debt default has injured his brother.

The narratives of each Calverley adaptation cannot conclude until the perpetrator and victim reconcile, and the means of reconciliation in *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* proves that Wilkins was indicting wardship and not his protagonist for the troubles that followed his coerced marriage. As domestic tragedies, the calamity in the two synoptic works is marital dysfunction, caused by the husband. *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* follow a set plot for English domestic drama that, according to Lieblein, 'requires an ethical pattern of sin, discovery, punishment, and expectation of divine mercy'.[26] Calverley and Husband, disliking marriage and the attendant patriarchal responsibilities, rebel first by wild living and later by destroying the family. As a play, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* proves itself an heir of the earlier morality plays popular through most of the sixteenth century. These plays were meant to serve as 'secular sermons designed to show the terrible consequences of disobedience, idleness, or dissipation'.[27] Husband then – his very name recalls the generic names of the morality play heroes like Everyman or Youth – provides a negative example of what happens when a man chooses self-indulgence above responsible husbandry. Wilkins's protagonist, while certainly exhibiting some features of negative patriarchy, serves as a different kind of example, one which shows the damage bad guardianship can wreak.

In *Two Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the Calverley character must repent his crimes and reconcile with his wife before his sins may be

[25] The first murder occurs in Scene Four of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, p. 124.

[26] Lieblein, p. 195.

[27] Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 31.

expiated. The abused wife in both works brings about Calverley's and Husband's repentance with her virtue and love, demonstrating the salvific effect marriage can have. As the pamphlet author puts it,

> the distressed Gentlewoman when shee saw him, forgot both her owne wounds and the death of her two children, and did as louingly kisse him and tenderly imbrace him as he had neuer donne her wrong which strange Kindnes so strook to his heart, remembering the misery hee had heaped on her, that imbracing one another there was so pitiful lamentation betweene them, that had flint had eares it would haue melted into water (pp. 17-18).

The love of his Patient Griselda wife, willingly to forgive her husband even the murder of her children, puts Calverley in the proper frame of mind to repent his deeds.[28] Marital affection – the kissing and embracing – acts as the agent of change. In *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, Wife's love has a similar beneficial effect on Husband's soul, for after Wife forgives Husband for the murders he has committed, he declares, 'Now glides the devil from me'.[29] This intimation of demonic possession demonstrates the playwright's contention that Satan was to blame for Husband's terrible, unnatural acts of violence against his family. Husband recognizes himself as a pedagogical example common in morality plays: 'Let every father look into my deeds, / And then their heirs may prosper while mine bleeds'.[30] Once Calverley and Husband can accept their wives' love, they can accept responsibility for their sins, repent them, and prepare their souls for the hereafter.[31]

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[28] According to Peter Berek, the Patient Griselda topos found in medieval texts by authors like Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Chaucer among others, 'invites our questions about why a culture chooses a patiently suffering woman to figure values the culture ostensibly admires'. See Peter Berek, '"Follow the Money": Sex, Murder, Print, and Domestic Tragedy', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 21 (2008), 170-188, accessed September 27, 2016, http://www. jstor.org/stable/24322686. Patient Griselda commonly endures abuse, abandonment, and separation from her children before reconciling with her husband. Wilkins undermines any comparisons between Katharine and Patient Griselda by arguing that her lust led her to become an accessory to a coerced marriage. The Patient Griselda type was still popular in Wilkins's day, and contemporaneous works include a play by Dekker, Chittle, and Haughton – *Patient Grissil* – probably performed in 1600 and printed in 1603 (Berek, 184).

[29] *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, p. 127.

[30] Ibid, p. 127.

[31] The historical Calverley also addresses this need. A convicted felon's property would have reverted to the Crown upon his or her execution, thereby impoverishing the heirs. The brief reportage in *Stow's Chronicles* that Calverley was 'prest to death in Yorke' (p. 459) nevertheless tells the reader much about his repentance and care for his remaining family. Pressing, a terrible means of punishment also known as *peine fort et dure*, involved the placement of heavy stones on the accused person's abdomen until he or she either confessed to a crime or died, and it was the punishment reserved for those who chose to enter

However, it is not marital reconciliation that must occur to restore societal order in *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* but the guardian relationship that must be mended because Scarborow is the main victim. He cannot fully accept Katharine as his wife until Lord Falconbridge has answered for the coerced marriage and exploitation of property. Marriage has no salvific effect in Wilkins's adaptation of the Calverley murders, as evidenced by Doctor Baxter's attempt to reconcile Scarborow with Katharine. Though Doctor Baxter chastises Scarborow for his ill treatment of his family, his recommendation that the young man remember the wedding ceremony that bound him to his wife backfires and provides Scarborow the opportunity to accuse the clergyman thus: 'Did you not know my Soule had giuen my Faith in contract to another; and yet you would wyne this Loome vnto vnlawful Twistes' (K2v). Doctor Baxter has no moral authority over Scarborow because he broke God's law and man's by performing a marriage on a non-consenting party who had already 'giuen [his] Faith in contract to another'. No wifely piety or sorrow can turn Scarborow from his anger at Katharine or his irresponsible living. In contrast to *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, marriage in Wilkins's play does not bring about the protagonist's repentance and salvation.

In its depiction of wardship and its attendant injustices, *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* reflects the growing cultural will to abolish the Court of Wards and Liveries and introduces a legal intertext into its true crime adaptation. The decades following this play's performance saw substantial changes in the Court of Wards and Liveries, changes which had popular support.[32] The public objected to the wardship system as it stood at the time of the Calverley murders because it saw the guardians enriching themselves with their wards' inheritances and selling these wards into marriage for their own gain. Glenn H. Blayney argues that 'the persistence of the theme of wardship in the dramatic literature of England in the first half of the seventeenth century bears an obvious relation to sales of wardships and marriages and the mounting social injustice

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no plea for charges. Liza Picard notes that only 'a very brave and devoted man' could act this way 'knowing that he would die a painful and protracted death but his family could still claim his possessions'. See Liza Picard, 'Crime and Punishment in Elizabethan England,' *British Library*, accessed January 15, 2018, https://bl.shakespeare/articles/crime-and-punishment-in-elizabethan-england. No matter how socially destructive the actual Calverley was in murdering two of his children, his refusal to plea preserved an inheritance for his remaining son and his widow-victim.

[32] Peter Roebuck, 'Post-Reformation Landownership: The Impact of the Abolition of Wardship,' *Journal of British Studies* 18.1 (1978), 67-85 (p. 70), accessed January 13, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/175456.

which resulted'.[33] Changes to wardship in the decades immediately following the performances of *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* included allowing family members to purchase their relatives' wardships.[34] In 1646, during the English Civil War, Parliament abolished the Court of Wards and Liveries altogether. The public interest in eliminating this system was strong enough that, even though all the Long Parliament's legislation was rescinded at the beginning of the Restoration, shortly after Charles II's reign began the Court of Wards and Liveries was permanently abolished.[35] The legal context of the play argues for Wilkins using *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage* to issue a call to restrict the powers of guardians.

The Miseries of Inforst Marriage is a domestic tragedy not of marriage but of wardship, with coerced marriage serving as the chief example of Lord Falconbridge's abuse of Scarborow. As such, the play can only reach catharsis when the guardian himself acknowledges the sins he has committed against his ward and repents. The play's substitute patriarch, Butler, brings the news that restores Scarborow's family fortunes and allows him to accept Katharine as his wife. Butler reports that Lord Falconbridge, on his deathbed,

> knew he did you wrong,
> was grieued fort, and for satisfaction
> Hath giuen you double of the wealth you had (K3v).

This recompense includes a dowry for Sister and increased portions for the younger Scarborow brothers in addition to a restoration of what was taken from Scarborow's inheritance directly. Lord Falconbridge's admission of guilt and his financial restitution repair patriarchy not only by relieving the entire family's money woes but also by opening the door for Scarborow and Katharine to make a loving marriage. After Butler delivers his news, Scarborow tells his wife and children that he resolves to 'loue you, you three Ile liue withall,' meaning he will accept the marriage's legitimacy and occupy the same household as his family (K3v). Clare Harcop's self-sacrifice earlier in the play so that her husband could live with his new wife in clear conscience finally achieves fruition, and Scarborow can now declare,

> I am now wed, so ends old marriage woe:

[33] Glenn H. Blayney, 'Wardship in English Drama (1600-1650)', *Studies in Philology* 53.3 (1956), 470-84 (p. 471), accessed January 12, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173174.
[34] Roebuck, p. 70.
[35] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) p. 605. Charles II ascended to the throne in 1660.

And in your eyes so louingly being wed,
We hope your hands will bring vs to our bed (K4r).

Surrounded by his family, including his new brother-in-law Ilford, Scarborow finally commits to a full marriage to Lord Falconbridge's niece. Unlike *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, the catharsis in Wilkins's play comes through the repentance of the guardian instead of the abusive husband.