

Feminism, Tragedy, and Frances Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva*

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Late eighteenth-century tragedy includes a remarkable range of styles and approaches to the genre, including melodrama, history plays, and Gothic drama, the critical consideration of which has no doubt been discouraged by critics who describe the genre as “confused” and prone to “piteous touches” or making a “sorry picture.”¹ Among the writers experimenting with tragedy at the end of the eighteenth century were major female dramatists, including Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, and Frances Burney. While Baillie has enjoyed a sort of revival of late, Burney’s efforts as a tragic dramatist have been hampered by the unavailability of original texts, something only now being remedied by the recent publication of her collected dramatic works, edited by Peter Sabor.² Though known primarily as a novelist and journal writer, Burney wrote more plays than novels, writing drama over the course of her long life (1752-1840) and making extensive revisions to the plays. With the publication of a modern, scholarly edition, Burney’s efforts as a dramatist can finally be read in tandem with her work as a novelist.

In providing this reading of the only play by Burney to be staged in her lifetime, *Edwy and Elgiva*, I am proposing an approach that may be applied to other women dramatists contemporary to Burney and to Burney’s other dramatic work. In responding to the questions posed by Jill Dolan, “[h]ow does a given performance—the dialogue, choice of setting, narrative voice, form, content, casting, acting, blocking—deliver its ideological message? How does it convey its assumptions about its relation to social structures?,”³ I make central the notion that Burney’s play exists as both a text and as a script for performance. My reading of the play’s dual nature attends to performance-based components of the drama and is offered as an accompaniment to the psychoanalytical and biographical approaches to the tragedy that are already available to us. Margaret Anne Doody, in *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, is the first critic to treat Burney’s tragedies seriously, but her approach is limited by her use of the plays “as evidence in a biographical study, treating them chiefly as psycholgoical documents in Burney’s emotional history” and as important contributions “to her future production as a writer.”⁴ *Edwy and Elgiva* is a literary and historical

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document as well as a psychological one and as such it offers evidence about late eighteenth-century dramatic praxes. I argue that Burney is one of several late-century female writers who envision the stage as a forum in which to address issues of gender. Burney's play is feminist in its mode of representation and its subject matter. She uses the conventions of tragedy in order to draw attention to a gender hierarchy that relies on the discipline and control of the female body in order to establish and maintain the authority of patriarchal figures who rule the secular, religious, and physical spheres of their subjects.

The female dramatist's use of dialogue, stage space, and drama's unique property of physical embodiment can be brought to the forefront as fundamental elements of the political critique of social institutions (government, the family, marriage) and gender-related oppression often enacted by their plays. In *Edwy and Elgiva*, dialogue, space, and the female body are used by Burney to represent a version of tragic suffering that is gender-specific, as she rewrites an historical tale of political machinations, thwarted love, and personal and public conflict from a woman-conscious position.⁵ Burney depicts a female figure who exists entirely within the confines of objectivity and representation by male figures, the object of sexual desire or sexual scorn, but in no way a desiring subject herself.

Edwy and Elgiva is an adaptation of a story Burney found in British histories by David Hume, Tobias Smollett, and M. (Paul) Rapin de Thoyâs. It is the tale of a tenth-century monarch, Edwy, who married his kinswoman, Elgiva, and faced the opposition of the Roman Catholic clergy led by Abbot Dunstan. In the sources, Dunstan kidnaps Elgiva and tortures her in ways that include branding, ham-stringing, and banishment. Edwy is accused of lasciviousness, effeminate desires, and improper government. While the role of Elgiva is of varying significance in the sources, she is always represented in the context of a forbidden and dangerous female sexuality that perverts male governance. In Burney's play, Elgiva is a central figure who provides a touchstone for all of the issues considered in the play and conventionally associated with tragedy: struggles for political power, the conflict between reason and passion in a prominent male figure, and the relationship between the ruler and his people. The main contest in the play is between the ruler, Edwy, and the head of the religious orders, Dunstan. The site on which this struggle is enacted, both physically and rhetorically, is the female body; the effects of the struggle are communicated through dialogue, the physical use of the stage space, and the entrances and exits of the dramatic figures. The female body is thus integral to the tragedy itself, to the fall of the male protagonist, and to the triumph of his opponent.

While Burney's play is not merely personal in reference, it is difficult to overlook the resonance it has with the experiences of the period in which she

wrote her tragedies, which include *Hubert De Vere*, *The Siege of Pevensey*, and *Elberta*. Doody remarks that the 1780s were the “most troubled period of [Burney’s] life,” and Joyce Hemlow suggests that the years leading to Burney’s miserable tenure in court were marked by “personal experiences and emotion. Disappointed love and wild love, manifested in scenes as pathetic, lurid, or tender as those of eighteenth-century drama or romance”⁶ Though the novelist’s success with the publication of *Cecilia* in 1782 outweighed even the approving reception of *Evelina* (1778), she was not to begin writing again until 1788. The intervening years saw a disappointing involvement with George Cambridge, which ended without ever really beginning (1783), the death of Burney’s long-time “daddy” Samuel Crisp (1783) and friend Samuel Johnson (1784), the gradual dissolution of her close friendship with Hester Thrale, and the departure of all of her siblings from the family home. The solution for the single and aging Burney’s financial future was found satisfactorily (for all but Burney herself) in an appointment as the Second Keeper of the Robes in Queen Charlotte’s court in July 1786. Her position in the court is well documented as miserable, and was envisioned by her as an unhappy, enforced marriage performed largely to please her father. She writes:

I was now on the point of entering—probably for ever—into an entire new way of life, and of foregoing by it all my most favourite schemes, and every dear expectation my fancy had ever indulged of happiness adapted to its taste—as now all was to be given up I am *married* . . . I look upon it in that light—I was averse to forming the union, and I endeavoured to escape it; but my friends interfered—they prevailed—and the knot is tied. . . . I am bound to it in duty, and I will strain every nerve to succeed.⁷

This royal favour was to confront Burney with a variety of experiences: her father’s delight in this public honour, her own horror at the inevitability of her removal from happiness, the physical demands of the job, the possible attachment with Colonel Digby, the madness of the King, and the confinement of his family and court at Kew. It is of little surprise that the plays she wrote while in the Queen’s service focus on the uneasy and often unnecessary mingling of the personal, the filial, and the socio-political.

Burney’s account of the composition of her tragedies is interwoven with her first-hand account of the King’s illness. She writes in October 1788: “in mere desperation for employment, I have just begun a tragedy [*Edwy and Elgiva*]. We are now in so spiritless a situation that my mind would bend to nothing less sad,

even in fiction. . . . [I]t may while away the tediousness of this unsettled, unoccupied, unpleasant period" (*DL* 4:118). At this time, Burney was called upon to nurse an anxious Queen, which demanded of her self-denial and physical hardship.⁸ When the king grows worse, "[e]ven [her] melancholy resource, [her] tragedy, was now thrown aside; misery so actual, living, and present, was knit too closely around [her] to allow [her] depressed imagination to fancy any woe beyond what [her] heart felt" (*DL* 4:115). She returned to her by now "long-forgotten tragedy" again in 1790 (*DL* 4:362), something which "does not much enliven, but it soothes" (*DL* 4:365). A rough draft was finished in August 1790. Burney was released from the Queen's service because of ill health in 1791.

Edwy and Elgiva was the only play of Burney's to be staged during her lifetime. By 1795, when it was produced at Drury Lane (21 March), Burney was married and was a new mother. Her tragedy, *Hubert De Vere* (written at approximately the same time as *Edwy and Elgiva*) and the comedy *Love and Fashion* (1798) were submitted to theatres but later withdrawn and though *The Witlings* (1779) was sought by Sheridan, it was never produced.⁹ Nearly all accounts (including Burney's own) suggest that the performance of the tragedy was lamentable, a failure attributable to her inability to make revisions to the script before the performance, to badly acted parts, and to some poorly conceived and inadvertently comic dramatic devices and speeches. *Edwy and Elgiva* was, in fact, a substitute for Burney's original plan to have *Hubert De Vere* produced. She withdrew the latter before production in favour of *Edwy and Elgiva*, which was accepted by John Philip Kemble in December 1794. This was a time of upheaval with the birth of her only child, a son, Alex, in the same month. The birth and Burney's poor health following it seem to have kept her from revising the play to her satisfaction.

The production was in rehearsal by March 1795 and featured the leading tragic actors of the day: Kemble was cast as Edwy, James Aickin as Odo, John Palmer as Aldhelm, and Sarah Siddons as Elgiva.¹⁰ As Sabor notes, the play received fewer rehearsals than others contemporary to it (nine rehearsals in seventeen days before opening),¹¹ and the performance was far from smooth, with Palmer forgetting most of his lines. Sarah Siddons is supposed to have remarked that "'there never was so wretched a thing as Mrs. D'arblaye's Tragedy,'" Hester Thrale, that it was "'hooted off the stage.'"¹² In a letter to Georgiana Waddington, Burney provides an account of her response to the performance:

[t]he Piece was represented to the utmost disadvantage, save only Mrs. Siddons & Mr. Kemble,—for it was not written with any idea of the stage, & my illness & weakness & constant *absorbment* in the time of its preparation, occasioned it to

appear with so many *undramatic* [ef]fects, from my inexperience of Theatrical requisites & demands, that when I saw it, I perceived myself a thousand things I wished to *change* The Performers, too, were cruelly imperfect, & made blunders I blush to have pass for mine. . . . (*JL* 3:99-100, Burney's emphasis)

Burney was not to approach the public as a dramatist again, though Richard Cumberland offered to lend a hand to the revisions of her tragedy (see *JL* 3:105-110). However, the existence of three other comedies and her attempts to have *Love and Fashion* staged suggest that she did not wholly absorb the eclipse of *Edwy and Elgiva* as an indication of her failure as a dramatist.¹³

The failure of *Edwy and Elgiva* and Burney's response to it tells us much about the theatre world at the end of the eighteenth century. Ellen Donkin, in *Getting into the Act*, contextualizes the process that led to the production of *Edwy and Elgiva*. She notes, for example, that Burney, like other women playwrights of the period, did not have as ready access to the business of theatre production as her male counterparts. She did not attend rehearsals and did not watch over the production in a fashion that might have permitted her to make revisions to the play before it was offered to the public for approval. The play may have failed because of the combination of aesthetic weaknesses and theatrical infighting: "[i]n fact, the failure was not all hers. It was occasioned by gross theatrical mismanagement, Burney's illness during the pre-production period, and her failure to engage fully the production and rehearsal process."¹⁴ Donkin notes that the actors' lamentable neglect of their lines, something pointed out in the reviews of the piece, was possibly as much of an attack on the manager of Drury Lane, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, as anything else, because of Sheridan's financial mismanagement of the theatre.¹⁵

Manuscripts of Burney's tragedy survive in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library; Emmanuel College Library, Cambridge; and in the Larpent Collection, Huntington Library, UCLA. The Cambridge manuscript, edited by Miriam J. Benkovitz (1957), was a gift from librarian Evelyn Shirley Shuckburgh in the 1880s. It is a copy made by Burney's husband, Alexandre d'Arblay, at the request of her brother, Charles Burney Jr., in January 1795. It includes the Prologue, by Burney's brother Charles, and suggested revisions on the manuscript or on separate sheets.¹⁶ The Larpent copy is close to the performed version of the play, and contains the Prologue and an Epilogue by Burney.¹⁷

The most interesting text from the standpoint of theatre history is the Berg manuscript (with neither Prologue nor Epilogue), which is in Burney's hand,

boxed with her final revisions and supplementary notes in d'Arblay's, Burney's, and another hand. The revisions contemplated by Burney are suggestive of the public taste in tragedy at the end of the eighteenth century; they were probably made following the production and Sabor suggests that the revisions in d'Arblay's hand, separated according to character, "could thus be incorporated in the actors' individual copies."¹⁸ The changes to the text include both substantial and slight alterations to the verse and content, and serve often to shorten the play. Some of the more substantial alterations include the change of "legal union" to "impious union" (I.ii.12) and "noble Aldhelm" to "pious Aldhelm" (I.ix.3), both of which emphasize religious ideals as the basis for moral evaluations of character. The scene depicting the seizure of Elgiva by Dunstan's ruffians (II.xi) has also been lengthened.

The increased attention to Elgiva in the revised version, as Sabor notes, was something d'Arblay encouraged Burney to emend even further, by adding a plan for Elgiva's sacrifice of herself to save Edwy.¹⁹ Burney's concern with Elgiva and requisitely, with Siddons, is also reflected in a letter from d'Arblay to Charles Burney Jr., which Donkin does not note. D'Arblay indicates that Burney expressed to her brother an interest in having a more direct participation in the rehearsal process: Frances Burney was "eager to know of any criticisms of the play made by Charles, its 'principal *reader*' in the initial, pre-rehearsal reading, and by Siddons, the 'principal *hearer*.' She would thus be able to give the play 'a more theatrical *perfection*.'"²⁰ In considering Siddons her principal reader, in her efforts to increase the visibility of Elgiva's character, and in her post-performance observation that Siddons and Kemble were the only players to be admired, Burney demonstrates a practical sense of how to improve her play. Strengthening the female role, complicating the character with the device of self-sacrifice, and emphasizing bodily suffering are logical emendations, especially given the rage for Siddons's performances of tragic roles.²¹

Burney also indicates in her revisions to the play that more attention to theatrical spectacle might have improved the production. As Sabor notes, extravagant staging gimmicks were the rule of the day, particularly for Gothic drama, and productions employed impressive scenery and dramatic lighting.²² A possible revision for the opening of Act II reads as follows:

might begin with a Banquet scene—drums & trumpets. Edwy & the court entering as from the coronation. After taking their seats, a speech of welcome from the King. During the banquet, something sarcastic between Dunstan and the King or his friends, might create altercation and afterwards sullenness. which wd. make Edwy's retiring the more natural.

This version of Act II is more attentive to plot veracity and staging than the original, indicating, as it does, the use of “drums & trumpets” and the implied elegance of a castle setting. The many versions of this tragedy suggest that Burney did intend to make revisions to the play before the production, or perhaps following it, with designs on publication. The play seems, however, to have been abandoned in favour of other projects.

Sarah Siddons would certainly have enhanced the pivotal position Burney has created for her heroine, Elgiva, who is shuffled between Edwy and Dunstan. Burney’s play enacts the dynamic described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, using René Girard’s concept of the erotic triangle. Sedgwick argues, through Girard, that “the bonds of ‘rivalry’ and ‘love’ . . . are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent” and that these bonds, whether manifested as “hostility or hatred or something less emotively charged” are the “glue” that shapes important relationships between men.²³ In *Edwy and Elgiva*, the relationship between Edwy and Dunstan is dominated by each man’s view of Elgiva, which influences in turn his view of his opponent. The possession or loss of the female body and the public image of this body are used or appealed to alternately by Edwy and Dunstan in order to achieve dominance over the other. For Edwy, Elgiva represents not only the object of sexual desire, but the threat of transgression, excommunication, and political impotence. Dunstan translates Edwy’s physical, sexual association with Elgiva into his own political control over Edwy, based on a rhetorical construction of Elgiva as sexually dangerous. Dunstan’s control of Edwy and Elgiva is not merely rhetorical, but also enacts itself in physical domination that has sexual overtones. Elgiva is thus positioned physically and conceptually between husband and celibate, both of whom see her in terms of her sexuality and associate this sexuality with political and religious control. Dunstan’s desire to maintain Edwy in an exclusively male community, away from Elgiva, is also not without its strong homosocial dynamic.

Whether she is dominated by Edwy or Dunstan, Elgiva is uniformly overridden by male controlling figures. Her complete submission to Edwy is part of Burney’s interrogation of sexual and political hierarchies and the points at which such hierarchies intersect, for it is precisely in Elgiva’s submission to her husband—proper wifely duty—that she is most useful as a tool against him. As she says,

I have no fear, my Lord, if you have none;
 I have no dread, if you are free from doubt.
 My Honour rests on your’s; my Happiness
 My Faith, my Trust, all own no other Guardian. (I.v.46-49)

In representing Elgiva as subordinate to and reliant on Edwy, Burney emphasizes her complete lack of self-determination and the vulnerability that institutions such as marriage and the domestic sphere demand of women. Elgiva is a political subject and a wife; her relative lack of power in both positions renders her unable to defend herself against external forces of coercion.

Elgiva's significance to Edwy as a devoted wife is rivalled by her importance to Dunstan as a demonized female threat, the fear of which he can use to his advantage politically. Dunstan publicizes an image of Elgiva that constructs her as sexually deviant and politically dangerous. His fascination with discussing Elgiva's sexuality rivals the obsession of which he accuses Edwy. Elgiva's sexualized and tainted body is represented by verbal labels that serve as the prominent vehicles for accusations against Edwy, in the same fashion as her body is co-opted physically by Dunstan and Edwy. Alternately chaste wife or "courtesan" and "concubine," she becomes for Dunstan part of a public discussion of Edwy's piety, his ability to govern, and the security of his kingdom.

When Dunstan initially reveals the alliance between Edwy and Elgiva, the latter is said to represent "black ruin through seduction's wiles, / Shameless" (I.ii.8-9) as she "allures" the king to "lawless vows, / Of impious love" (I.ii.9,10-11). The connection between spiritual, sexual, and political acceptability is the point on which the condemnation of Edwy, through Elgiva's fallen nature, rests. The main strategy of Edwy's accusers is to make explicit comparisons between the king's governance and his illegal and impious marriage to Elgiva, "[e]ntranc'd" as he is in "one absorbing passion" (I.ix.22). This is achieved by figuring the marriage as bordering "on blasphemy" (I.xi.107) and the wife as corrupt. Edwy's desire for Elgiva is said to be connected with his inability to govern and his impiety, both of which ultimately affect and infect the populace in general. If the union is not dissolved, in Dunstan's words,

Ruin on ruin falls upon our Heads.—
The papal power arraign'd—its justice scoff'd—
A Courtezan upheld—. (III.v.95-97)

Dunstan's goals—the removal of Edwy from the throne, the re-establishment of the clergy's power—require a specific view of Elgiva's destructive potential and her removal from the political sphere.

The oral, public sexualization and condemnation of Elgiva are effectively represented in Burney's use of dialogue, for Elgiva ceases to have any identity for Dunstan's purposes beyond her sexuality and she becomes synonymous with abstract, feminized concepts that take the place of her name, signalling her lack of an individual identity. For Dunstan, Elgiva is one who holds ". . . England's

King in base seduction's arms!" (II.iii.4), a "blot" on the "reign / A stain indelible" (II.iii.7,8-9). With repeated condemnations and the suggestion that "frail" Elgiva will "madden [Edwy] to ruin" (III.v.121), Dunstan connects Edwy's passion for his wife with political downfall that the country should not have to tolerate. Dunstan portrays himself as his country's spiritual and political saviour, a status he achieves through his condemnation of Elgiva as both "Courtezan" and "Pernicious Concubine" (II.x.15,18). The progress of the error extends from Elgiva's sexual threat (her "seduction's wiles"), to Edwy's impiety, the loss of religious integrity, and the collapse, by implication, of the state he should protect.

Dunstan enacts his power over Edwy by condemning Elgiva to the point where Edwy himself doubts his wife. While Elgiva's sexual guilt as the seductress is unchallenged, Edwy is given a way to avoid transgression, to be spared from the taint of base female sexuality. Dunstan thus tells Edwy, "[t]hou art safe. She's—lost" (II.v.48), and that he must "[r]emove her from [his] Sight; / 'Twere impious, henceforth, but to look at her" (II.v.52-53). The accusation that "[s]he is undone. Take heed for her Undoer!" (II.v.59) makes Elgiva the partner exclusively condemned for the marriage. To this end, Edwy himself becomes doubtful of his wife's purity. Edwy first turns against her mentally, having become consumed by "[r]epentant horror" (II.vi.11), and then vows physical separation as well:

—O Elgiv! I will fly thy *dangerous* Sight,
 Nor listen to thy voice, nor speak to thee
 Till I obtain the sanction of a Synod
 To ratify our Union.— (II.vi.12-15, emphasis added)²⁴

Reflecting on Dunstan's words, Edwy voices the accusations against her, but cannot help but turn to her:

Impious to look at her!—
 O fair—dread Object of my condemnation!
 How look at ought beside!—Ah! fly Me, Elgiv!— (II.vii.13-15)

This interpretation of Elgiva transfers guilt to her and effectively removes her from Edwy's protection, making her vulnerable to Dunstan's control. Linguistic labels are shown to have clear ramifications on female physical autonomy and safety, as surely as they create a confined and condemned verbal space for the female figure.

Elgiva's image is manipulated verbally by Dunstan through his construction of her sexuality as dangerous, religiously transgressive, and politically disruptive. Burney also uses stage space in *Edwy and Elgiva* in order to represent in visual, spatial terms Elgiva's physical position between men in conflict. Though the character of Elgiva appears in only a small number of scenes (14 of 73), her presence or absence, the settings she enters, and under whose control, are central facets of all of the dramatic action. The private space in which Edwy may indulge his desire for Elgiva is presented in opposition to the public space in which he might deny or defend this desire. By contrast, Elgiva is *forced* into the public eye through Dunstan's speeches of condemnation and then physically removed from her seclusion, a movement that reverses more typical uses of confinement in Gothic drama. Kate Ferguson Ellis writes that ". . . the terror of the Gothic heroine is simply that of being confined and then abandoned, and beyond that, of being, in an unspecified yet absolute way, completely surrounded by superior male power."²⁵ Elgiva does not move consistently from freedom to confinement, but rather has forms of confinement exchanged without her consultation. Elgiva is Burney's least self-determining female figure, a figure almost entirely at the mercy of others' language and action. Manfred Pfister's distinction between story, where figures have control over the action, and event, where they do not, is relevant and in this case, gender-specific: Elgiva's experiences may be seen exclusively as events, for she is a "human subject . . . incapable of making a deliberate choice."²⁶ She participates in almost no desire or action except those which originate from others.

From the opening scene, the possession of Elgiva is equated with male participation in either the private, domestic sphere (allied with the female and the unacceptable), or the public, male sphere of government. The opening scene's "*Magnificent gothic Chamber*" (I.i) contains two entrances: a private, hidden door which leads to Elgiva's apartment, and a public, state door. That only Edwy has access to the "secret door" to Elgiva's "chambers" is undeniably sexual in overtone and represents physically the mutually exclusive alternatives for Edwy: the sexual and marital possession of the queen or public duty. Elgiva never occupies public space except as the wounded victim of Dunstan's machinations, which further underscores the co-optation of her body by a political agenda. She does not attend Edwy's coronation (which would be a sign of the legitimacy of their marriage), and accusations against her are voiced when representatives of the state burst into her apartment (II.iii).

The female sphere, represented on stage by Elgiva's private chambers, is seen by Dunstan as something in contradistinction to the male sphere, a realm of the effeminate that threatens the ruler's very masculinity. Dunstan's misogyny leads him to define state government as something that cannot permit dalliance

with a woman. He thus condemns both Elgiva and marriage in general by elevating over them the male, public arena of the clerical and the celibate, in a manner that is clearly homosocial. To Edwy's advisor, Aldhelm, who defends the marriage, Dunstan replies, "Whom should he seek, on whom bestow his friendship / If not on those with holy rites invested? / Here, in the priesthood, let him find his solace" (III.iv.31-33). Dunstan's ostensible fear is that Edwy will inadvisably entrust state secrets to his wife, but again, significantly, his language reflects an emphasis on the sexualized and fragmented female body: "Wouldst thou have Edwy trust a female Breast / With state transactions? / . . . / Trifles like those a monarch should disdain" (III.iv.45-50). Aldhelm, by his defence of Edwy, is similarly suspected of an approval of women, which for Dunstan is incomprehensible and which forces Aldhelm to defend himself against accusations that he has a sexual interest in women. As Dunstan says, "Hear I aright? speaks Aldhelm thus of marriage? / Of Women? — Nobles! . . . / Beseech the holy Bishop to explain / Lest on your mind's remain some strange suspicion" (III.iv.54-57). Heterosexual desire is uniformly suspected as a "threaten'd mischief" (III.iv.66), against which these "guardians of the Land" must "Assert [them]selves" (III.iv.67). As the object of this desire, Elgiva is the centre of all attention and fear.

The rhetorical conceptualization of the female and male sphere, associated as they are with sexual desire, has its corollary in the movement of figures on the stage and the level of access they have to stage settings. Except for a few instances, Elgiva is not depicted as entering or exiting scenes independently, but rather, the denial of her autonomous physical movements illustrates her figurative position as a political pawn. Initially appearing sequestered in her chambers, she next endures the accusations of Dunstan and is led out, fainting, between Edwy and her serving woman, Eltruda (II.iii). Later, when Dunstan seizes her again, she is gagged and "*force[d] off*" (II.x) by his ruffians. While Dunstan's position as celibate monk and announced misogynist is articulated clearly, his power as a male figure nonetheless maintains a threat of sexual violation that enhances Elgiva's submission to him though it is never carried out. During Dunstan's initial seizure of Elgiva, her main fear is that her honour remain "untainted" (II.x.12), which is an indication of what Ellis describes as the "omnipresent sense of impending rape" in the Gothic.²⁷ The threat of sexual violation which accompanies the first "rape" or seizure of Elgiva underscores the emphasis on the physicality of the female figure depicted on the stage, whether or not this violation takes place.

This female body, mangled and pushed towards madness, reappears on the stage repeatedly and in increasingly severe forms of deterioration that testify to male potency and the necessity of the figure of the suffering woman as a sign

of male authority.²⁸ As Elaine Scarry notes, the *visibility* of torture is essential to a successful acknowledgement of an authoritative body or individual's ability to punish.²⁹ Elgiva's first return, "[s]pent and exhausted" (III.viii.38), is accompanied by her fright at the imagined pursuing footsteps of her torturers, after which the character is again led off the stage. We learn by the next scene that Elgiva has been publicly declared Edwy's queen, but significantly, Burney at no time depicts her in this role in our sight, but rather has another character announce that she has again been carried off, with cries that "rent the Heavens" (IV.i.28). This time Dunstan's ruffians are instructed to kill her, and they assert that her "blood gush'd out" (V.i.3) at the attack. Elgiva is the sacrificial victim that reminds Edwy of his submission to Dunstan and that serves as the evidence of Dunstan's treachery.

With Dunstan's final seizure of Elgiva, her body is explicitly used as capital that is exchanged between men competing for religious and political authority. The exchange is both figurative and literal; Edwy is offered the alternative of giving up Elgiva as his queen in exchange for their absolution and Dunstan, as the "Idol" for the people, is to replace the husband and Monarch, Edwy (IV.vii.13-14). Forced as he is either to "lose her, or [himself] condemn her" (IV.vii.56), Edwy's alternatives between the monarchy and his marriage are narrowed considerably and his refusal to listen to his counsellors' reasoned urgings leaves him to take part in the civil war in which he is killed.

Elgiva's final return, "*with a Bandage tied across her Breast, tottering, and leaning upon ELTRUDA*" (V.iii),³⁰ shows the progress of her madness as she re-enacts the horror of her torture. This final reunion with Edwy is perhaps the most notable change Burney makes to her sources, some of which mention a second torture, but none of which recalls any reunion with the king. Burney thus rewrites her historical sources to include a final confrontation between the object of desire and torture, and her accuser and politically impotent lover. Elgiva's suffering and punishment are not only physically embodied on stage (something unfortunately diffused in the production of the play, which had Siddons reclining on a couch),³¹ but also emphasized by her bandages and re-enacted in her startled movements and speeches to now-absent torturers. She pleads "come not near me! / Murder me not!" (V.iii.25-26), and resolves to see Edwy one last time. She returns, "pale, pale and bloodless!" (V.xi.11), and dies, murdered by Dunstan so that he might control Edwy and the kingdom, through his pawn, Edwy's brother Edgar.

The status of the dead, mangled female body signifies male potency, for Dunstan and for the audience "implies the safe position of a spectator."³² Elgiva's body may also be considered a sign dual in nature for the theatrical audience, a body symbolic both of pleasure in its distance from the spectator, but

fear as well, in the threat to physical and sexual identity that the body represents. Joanna Baillie comments on the usefulness to tragedy of viewing suffering in the “Introductory Discourse” to *A Series of Plays* (1798):

[i]n examining others we know ourselves. With limbs untorn,
with head unsmitten, with senses unimpaired by despair, we
know what we ourselves might have been on the rack, on the
scaffold, and in the most afflicting circumstances of distress.³³

In Burney’s play, the corpse remains on stage throughout the final scenes while a search is undertaken for peasants to move from “this public Path” (V.xv.4) the body that has been used both physically and metaphorically as a path between men and between a king and his people.³⁴ It is the sight of the corpse that moves Dunstan to remorse:

Her lifeless frame—that deed is surely done.
True, as the Villain said, her look is innocent—
Would I had not encounter’d it!—a sickness
Deadly, unfelt before, benumbs, confounds me—
Where may she be?—Who sent her hence?—Was’t I?—
By what authority?—Hush! Enquiry!—Hah!— (V.xviii.8-13)

Dunstan’s only desire is to be “innocent of the blood of Elgiva, / The crying wrongs of Edwy!” (V.xx.10-11). Elgiva’s corpse one last time prompts connections between the spiritual and the political, the control of one body over another, the body’s physical presence, and its spiritual residence.

In the last two acts of the play, the conflict between Edwy and Dunstan and their individual pursuits for power becomes increasingly focused on the female body, its presence, its substance as wife and queen, and its susceptibility to physical violence. Elgiva’s value as a woman and as the monarch’s wife lies entirely in her body, in which is entwined her virtue and religious purity. The play’s final scene, of “slaughter’d innocence, —these mangled bodies” (V.xxiii.26), portrays the last use to which the state and the church put Elgiva, as a symbol, along with Edwy, of “Virtue oppress’d” (V.xxiii.27) and heaven’s reward in the afterlife.

Burney’s use of the corpse on stage, the terminal point as it is of female madness and dereliction, offers what might be considered the strongest aspect of what Michelle Gellrich describes as the “troublesome culture-questioning areas of tragedy” and its

. . . doubts about the viability and stability of social and moral order, its persistent way of alienating us from the simple extremes of benevolence and aloofness, its refusal to accommodate the traditional categories we would impose on characters and actions to make them safe and familiar.³⁵

By representing the physical suffering of women as part of tragic action, Burney invites her audience to question the gendered hierarchies that permit the physical and emotional use and abuse of women by those seeking social and political authority. The worlds represented in Burney's tragedies are not safe and despite their setting in the distant past, they are relevant beyond the immediate historical events they describe, in their depictions of female trauma. Burney's work may also perform a function similar to what Janelle G. Reinelt describes as the potential in drama for a reconceptualization of gender roles:

. . . there is stage space to represent the gendered subject up against the limits of current gender constraints. Further, the representation of the subject-in-process practicing resistance, exploding the strait jacket of gender through doing the 'work' of self-inscription on stage, before an audience, is both theoretically and practically a vital, imaginative, political act.³⁶

In *Edwy and Elgiva*, the powerful force of the presence of the suffering female body provides Elgiva with a political potency that is otherwise denied her, a resistance to oppression that is short-lived but which evaluates male action as violent and damaging.

Burney shows throughout *Edwy and Elgiva* the incorporation of the female body, virtue, and sexuality in political struggles; the connections between Elgiva's sexuality, Edwy's piety and right to govern, and the state's protection are made repeatedly. When Elgiva is physically present on the stage, she is accused, frightened, wounded, and forced into madness and death. In her physical absence, she is verbally present as the object of scorn and is held hostage for Edwy's submission to political and religious authority. Her value to the state exists in its ability to discredit her and exists only in tandem with her relationships to men. In Burney's other tragedies, *Hubert De Vere*, *The Siege of Pevensey*, and *Elberta*, female bodies are also of the utmost importance, and again, these bodies are shuffled between men, held hostage, manipulated, and forced literally to death, all as pawns in male games, all in the interest of political power and the maintenance or subversion of hierarchies.

The status of the female body in Burney's tragedies is clearly central to her analysis of gender relations, but may also be read as fundamental to her experimentation with the tragic genre. Rather than writing in the tradition of "she-tragedy," Burney replaces the heroic female protagonist with one who suffers purely for her relationship with men and for their use of her. Female heroism is less evident than female torture and suffering, which Burney seems to suggest is integral to male achievement and punishment. Such a view of tragedy suggests that critical conceptualizations of tragedy as a genre of heroism, responsibility, and dignity might be modified.

The frequent critical neglect of gender-specific variations in tragic drama begs the question of the extent to which tragedy is usually associated with ideas that are conventionally perceived as masculine: the leader of a community, usually male, comes into conflict with other men, or must choose between his position of authority and his personal desire, usually for a woman. Richard W. Bevis describes Allardyce Nicoll as the "master;"³⁷ despite the datedness of his *The Theory of Drama* (1931), Nicoll's views remain prominent in the field and seem representative of discussions of tragedy that do not account for variations in the way gender is represented, which helps establish a critical tradition that discourages feminist analysis. Nicoll describes the necessity to tragedy of universality, a prominent and flourishing tragic hero, extra-human forces, a sense of fateful inevitability, symbolism, and a general tragic spirit. Tragedy is "stern and majestic"³⁸ and the audience gains pleasure from "a feeling of awe allied to lofty grandeur" (p.122). This pleasure flows from the purgation of emotion and the witnessing of a "lofty nobility" and "heroic grandeur" (p.123) which are somehow universal (p.131). While tragedy presents the misery of human existence, "quiet resignation" and "calmness in face of death" (p.134) are distinguishing features of the tragic hero.

Where the hero is concerned, he is said to act either through conscious or unconscious error, and often to act against forces more powerful than his own. Whether torn between conflicting duties or confronted by antagonistic circumstances, he is central to the tragic action. Nicoll's descriptions of the potential forms of tragic protagonists are most subject to a feminist critique. He suggests that "tragedy differs from comedy in being often almost entirely masculine" (p.156), and while he notes that "masculine" and "feminine" are terms with different connotations for different times, he continues with the assertion that "tragedy almost invariably stresses the masculine at the expense of the feminine elements" because of "the hardness and sternness which we have already noted in the highest tragic art" (p.157). The language itself is strongly masculine, even phallic. A female protagonist is considered to be ineffective:

'she-tragedies,' as sometimes they have been called, have rarely an atom of tragic greatness, although some of them are affecting. . . . They never reach that sternness of majesty which is an inevitable concomitant of this highest type of literature. It is this insistence on the feminine, and, along with the feminine, the pathetic, which has marred the plays of Fletcher, Webster, and Ford. . . . (pp.157-8)

He concludes that "[t]he feminine in high tragedy, we may repeat, must either be made hard, approaching the masculine in quality, or else be relegated to a position of minor importance in the development of the plot" (p.158). Clearly, Nicoll's theory does not raise the possibility of a dramatic practice that has different emphases or characterizations other than the "hard" and "lofty," which may be compelling in and of themselves, "despite" their focus on the female.

This analysis of Burney's use of dialogue, space, and references to the body in her representation of female suffering argues that we must add a particularly feminist conceptualization of tragedy to our understanding of the range of tragic expression at the end of the eighteenth century. Burney's play appeared in 1795, as the Terror in France dashed revolutionary ideals and displayed a corruption of leadership that was deeply and publicly troubling; the last years of the century saw a number of tragedies that questioned the various ways authority is exercised.³⁹ These plays included the conservative *The Siege of Meaux* (1794), by Henry James Pye, in which revolution is averted and an aristocratic family is saved; Robert Jephson's *The Conspiracy* (1796), which also shows the triumph of benevolent rule over usurpation; and Sheridan's immensely popular *Pizarro* (1799), with its foiled Napoleonic figure. William Ireland's hoax *Vortigern* (1796) depicts a corrupt quest for power at the same time as it plays havoc with ideas of literary authority and abused artistic power. Burney's play shows the exercise of authority as it relates most clearly to the control of a woman by powerful social institutions: government, religion, marriage. Her dramatic cues include gender-specific conflict and suffering that affect female social roles (such as those of wife, daughter, or mother) and a depiction of female agency as something circumscribed by constraints specific to gender. These cues contribute to a more general comment upon gender and its place in social interaction and institutions.

Burney's play also provides a feminist example of the shift in tragedy described by Herbert Lindenberger, who writes of the suffering of the "mute and ineloquent" in martyr plays:

[w]ith the democratization of tragedy since the late eighteenth century, the tragic figure comes to have increasingly less awareness of the nature and meaning of his fate. The progressive stages of growth which accompanied the martyrdom of earlier heroes are obviously impossible for those who can at most display a sense of shock at what has been done to them.⁴⁰

Burney creates in *Elgiva* a heroine who is sacrificed to the urgency of male figures' pursuits of power and one who suffers exclusively because she is a woman married to a political figure. This female character appears at a time of revolutionary upheaval, when shock prevails over understanding in the face of aggression; this suggests that tragedy at the end of the eighteenth century was a fluid genre that included feminist comments on female subordination and martyrdom, and more general commentary on the victims of political upheaval, victims who may speak only through their damaged bodies.

We may also reach a deeper understanding of the variety of late-century woman-conscious tragedy with a brief glance at how Burney's play relates to others by her female contemporaries. In one very important manner Burney's play stands in relief against a background of female-authored tragedies, and this is in her concentration on the vicissitudes of the female body. In other plays, bodily suffering is depicted, often directly on the stage in a range that includes fainting, delirium, as in Hannah More's *The Fatal Falsehood* (1779), and suicide. Many plays show imprisoned but surviving female figures: Frances Brooke's *The Siege of Sinope* (1781), Burney's *The Siege of Pevensey*, and Hannah Cowley's *The Fate of Sparta* (1788). A more stoic figure of female survival appears in Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1800).⁴¹ In tragedies that feature female bodily suffering and death, the prominent source of suffering is often poisoning, as in More's *Percy* (1777) and Sophia Lee's *Almeida* (1796). We might consider poisoning to be an agonizing, but physically traceless form of torture. By contrast, Burney insists on emphasizing the progress of decay, whether it is caused by torture, madness, or self-sacrifice (Cerulia in *Hubert De Vere* seeks out her own death and dies, essentially, from grief). In *Edwy and Elgiva*, physical anguish is drawn out over the course of a full play. *Elgiva* is not once but repeatedly seized and tortured, and we witness her deterioration as her wounds become increasingly mortal and her body and mind weaken. In other plays, mental anguish is often on-going and is severe (*The Siege of Sinope* comes to mind), but physical suffering is short-lived. This is not the case with *Elgiva*, who circles back in repeated scenes that refer to her madness, her wandering, and her progress towards death. *Elgiva's* bodily suffering is a sign that we might

distinguish from mental incapacity because of its ultimate denial of existence itself.

My attention to dialogue, the physical stage space, and the movement of figures according to gender-specific constructions of them yields a view of Burney's tragedy that emphasizes both its existence as text and as script and its reliance on physical embodiment, space, sound, and sight. As Sue-Ellen Case writes,

the image of a woman on stage participates directly in the dominant ideology of gender. . . . Inscribed in body language, signs of gender can determine the blocking of a scene, by assigning bolder movements to the men and more restricted movements to the women, or by creating poses and positions that exploit the role of woman as sexual object. Stage movement replicates the proxemics of the social order, capitalising upon the spatial relationships in the culture at large between women and the sites of power.⁴²

While much feminist performance criticism and historical analysis attends to the work of modern and postmodern writers (see Case's *Feminism and Theatre*, which contains little on eighteenth-century drama), it is clear that eighteenth-century dramatists were similarly engaged in using the stage as a political vehicle for contentious and challenging depictions of female experience. Burney succeeds not only in considering the connection between issues of gender, social relationships, and public institutions, but also in using the stage to depict literal and physical confinement that parallels emotional, social, or mental circumscription. The female figure in Burney's *Edwy and Elgiva* and in her other tragedies moves through space and time at the behest of male figures and is tortured and pushed to madness and suicide by them. Tragedy which concentrates on female protagonists emerges when self-direction is denied women and when social, familial, and political expectations of women permit no variation or choice in behaviour or desire. *Edwy and Elgiva* and plays similar in nature urge a reconsideration of the ways in which institutions like the family, religion, marriage, and government operate in gender-biased ways to coerce behaviour and perpetuate systems of domination. Such plays also invite us to reconsider generic definitions and critical approaches that may be biased against the idea that the depiction of female experience is relevant and significant in and of itself, even if it lacks "hard" and "lofty" members.

Notes

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1. Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama* (London: Longman, 1988) 201 and Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama*, 6 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1961) 3:73.
2. All quotations from *Edwy and Elgiva* are from Peter Sabor, ed., *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, 2 vols., (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1995) 2:1-89. Citations are by act, scene, and line number. Unless otherwise noted, references to Sabor are from this edition.
3. Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1988) 17.
4. Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1988) 178. Doody, Joyce Hemlow (*The History of Fanny Burney* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1958]), Marjorie Lee Morrison (*Fanny Burney and the Theatre* [Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1957]), and Miriam J. Benkovitz (ed., *Edwy and Elgiva* [NY: Shoe String, 1957]) have commented on Burney's play. For Doody, the tragedy is best seen as a corollary for Burney's own sense of confinement in her position in court: Edwy and Elgiva are "sexual, emotional creatures, rebelling in the name of private happiness against the decrees of patriarchal power" (180-1). Hemlow describes Burney's use of sources and provides a plot summary. Morrison argues that the tragedy is conventional and incompetent where the expression of emotion is concerned (147-8). Benkovitz, clearly unimpressed, describes the play as marking "the very point of decline in the career of a woman of real literary achievement" (xiv). Austin Dobson [*Fanny Burney* (London: Macmillan, 1904)] and Elizabeth Yost Mulliken [*The Influence of the Drama on Fanny Burney's Novels* (Ph.D. diss., U of Wisconsin, 1969)] condemn the tragedy in brief references. An early critic, Evelyn Shirley Shuckburgh (*Macmillan's Magazine* Feb 1890, 291-98), writes that the play is "ludicrously bad" (294).
5. I am responding to the work of critics such as Sue-Ellen Case, Teresa de Lauretis, Elin Diamond, Jill Dolan, Ellen Donkin, Barbara Freedman, and Hélène Keyssar. "Woman-conscious" is Rosemary Curb's term for drama which represents "multiple interior reflections of women's lives and perceptions" ("Re/cognition, Re/presentation, Re/creation in Woman-Conscious Drama: The Seer, The Scene, The Obscene," *Theatre Journal* 37:3 [1985]: 302-16) 302.
6. Doody 150 and Hemlow 169. For biographical details, see Doody, Chapter 5 and Hemlow, Chapters 7 and 8. Doody puts the composition of *Edwy and Elgiva* two years later than Hemlow, who suggests it was started in October 1786 (*The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney [Madame d'Arblay]*, ed. Hemlow, et al., 12 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972-1984], 3:98, n. 2). Sabor agrees with the former's dating (2:7). All subsequent references to *The Journals and Letters* will be abbreviated with *JL*.
7. *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, ed. Charlotte Barrett, 6 vols. (London and New York: Macmillan, 1904), 2:380-82, Burney's emphasis. All subsequent references to the *Diary and Letters* will be abbreviated with *DL*.
8. Doody notes the predominance of terms of conflict in Burney's diaries and letters during the period in which she wrote her tragedies, with the appearance of words like "conflict," "monastic," "captivity," "tyranny," "shackles," "rebel," "annihilation," "deadened" (177).
9. For a discussion of the production history of Burney's plays, see the General Introduction and the introductions to each play in Sabor's edition.
10. For a list of the other actors involved and for details about the period leading up to the production, see Sabor 2:7-9.

11. Sabor 1:xiii.
12. Hemlow 247.
13. Ellen Donkin, *Getting Into the Act: Women Playwrights in London 1776-1829* (London & NY: Routledge, 1994) argues instead that Burney was “inexplicably exhilarated” (147) by the experience with the production of *Edwy and Elgiva*.
14. Donkin 146.
15. Donkin 149. For quotations from contemporary reviews, see Donkin, Sabor (1:xiv-xv), and *JL* 3:100, 366-67.
16. For a complete analysis of d’Arblay’s suggestions for revisions to this play, see Sabor, “‘Altered, improved, copied, abridged’: Alexandre d’Arblay’s Revisions to Burney’s *Edwy and Elgiva*,” *Lumen* 14 (1995): 127-37.
17. The Prologue is a rather long discussion of the different ages of religion, which see the gradual replacement of papal authority with monarchical. Its conclusion is nationalistic: “Teach us to love our Country and her Laws / To glow united in her sacred cause / And boast with swelling hearts and loud acclaim / Our Faiths Defender and our King the same” (lines 53-56). The Epilogue pokes fun at the play and its characters, laughing at Edwy and Elgiva as if they were stock comic characters in a satire about marriage: “What shall we say to Edwy and his Rib? / The Boy was sure a Driv’ler—a mere bib, / To make a rout that cost him Crown and life, / To keep a Horse?—a mistress?—no, a Wife!” (lines 11-14).
18. Sabor, 1: xvii.
19. Sabor, “‘Altered, improved, copied, abridged’” 132.
20. 130.
21. For a discussion of Siddons’s popularity, see Linda Kelly, *The Kemble Era: John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons and the London Stage* (London: Bodley Head, 1980) and Donkin, “Mrs. Siddons Looks Back in Anger: Feminist Historiography for Eighteenth-Century British Theatre,” *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992) 276-90.
22. See Sabor, 1.xxx-xxxvii and Paul Ranger, *‘Terror and Pity reign in every Breast’: Gothic Drama in the London Patent Theatres, 1750-1820* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1991).
23. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (NY: Columbia UP, 1985) 21 and 2.
24. Such an easy defeat of Edwy makes him resemble the large group of admittedly ineffectual heroes which appears in Burney’s work, including Delvile (*Cecilia*), Edgar (*Camilla*), Beaufort (*The Witlings*), and Cleveland (*A Busy Day*). Doody remarks upon this quality in the heroes of the tragedies, suggesting that “the lover is weakened or under some restraint” (178) in each play.
25. Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1989) 46.
26. Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, trans. John Halliday (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 200.
27. Ellis 46.
28. While Sabor notes that Burney was unlike her contemporaries in keeping scenes of enacted violence off stage, she does depict, rather than just describe, the results of such violence (1:xxxii).
29. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985) 56.
30. That Elgiva enters “tottering” may indicate that she has been hamstrung, as the historical sources indicate, although Burney makes no reference to this. See Sabor’s note to this line (2:70).
31. One reviewer, quoted by Donkin, notes that Elgiva’s retreat seemed to be “‘very accommodating’” because “‘the wounded lady is brought from behind [the scene] on an elegant

couch, and, after dying in the presence of her husband, is carried off and placed once more "on the other side of the hedge." The laughter which this scene occasioned, although supported by the dying words of Mrs. Siddons, was inconceivable" 148.

32. Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic* (Manchester and New York: Routledge, 1992) 44.

33. Joanna Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," *A Series of Plays*, ed. Donald H. Reiman, 3 vols., (NY: Garland, 1977), 1:1-72, 12.

34. The stage directions on this point are quite ambiguous. Characters continue to refer to the corpse, although Eltruda asks at one point that peasants help her remove the dead body (v.xv).

35. Michelle Gellrich, *Tragedy and Theory: The Problem of Conflict since Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988) 241.

36. Janelle G. Reinelt, "Feminist Theory and the Problem of Performance," *Modern Drama* 32:1 (1989): 48-57, 52.

37. Bevis 288.

38. Allardyce Nicoll, *The Theory of Drama* (London: Harrap, 1931) 120. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically. For an excellent discussion of gender and tragedy, see Linda Kintz, *The Subject's Tragedy: Political Poetics, Feminist Theory, and Drama* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992).

39. See Jeffrey N. Cox, "Romantic Drama and the French Revolution," *Revolution and English Romanticism: Politics and Rhetoric*, ed. Keith Hanley and Raman Selden (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) 241-60 for a discussion of revolutionary themes in the late-century drama.

40. Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1975) 52.

41. Baillie's *Count Basil* (1798), *De Monfort* (1800), *Ethwald I* (1802), *The Dream* (1812), and *Orra* (1812) all deal with the issue of female participation in and punishment by male figures as they are caught in the midst of political intrigue or conflict. See Cox's Introduction in *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789-1825* (Athens: Ohio UP, 1992) for an excellent reading of Baillie's heroines.

42. Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre* (Macmillan: Hong Kong, 1988) 117-18.

