

**RE(-)MEMBERING WOMEN:
PROTESTANT WOMEN'S VICTIM TESTIMONIES
DURING THE IRISH RISING OF 1641**

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But this horrid kinde of cruelty was principally reserved by these inhumane Monsters for Women, whose sexe they neither pitied nor spared, hanging up severall Women, many of them great with childe, whose bellies they ripped up as they hung, and so let the little Infants fall out (Temple 1646: 96-7).

So wrote Sir John Temple in *The Irish Rebellion*, a book that by imagining the worst violence of the Irish Catholics through the trope of the dismembered body of the Protestant woman is emblematic of contemporary depictions of the 1641 rising.¹ Led by Sir Phelim O'Neill, the Irish Catholic uprising began in Ulster in the penultimate weekend of October 1641 with the aim of negotiating a resolution to grievances relating to land ownership and religious practice from a position of strength. It quickly spun out of O'Neill's control, however, and Protestant settlers throughout Ireland were robbed and ejected from their lands by Catholic neighbours. As exiles sought refuge across the water, tales of Catholic-orchestrated atrocity were brought to Britain and spread throughout the rest of Protestant Europe. The Dutch propaganda print (see Figure 1) is exemplary in its gendering of Catholic violence in Ireland. In its graphic depiction of the atrocity that takes place within the home of 'S[i]r', the figure of the husband/father is at the literal centre of the image. Yet his impending murder is framed by three tableaux of the rape, murder and dismemberment of his female dependents. Through the strategic use of light and shading, the viewer's gaze is drawn to the hanging body of the pregnant woman whose babies have been ripped from her womb. The dismembered maternal body thus forms the ideological centre of the image, which is illustrative of Protestant stories of the 1641 rising.



Fig. 1. Violence during the 1641 Rising. Credit: TopFoto

Like *The Irish Rebellion*, such images of violence against women played a crucial role in the ‘mythologization’ of the 1641 rising, which Kali Tal defines as the process by which traumatic events are reduced to ‘a set of standardized narratives (twice- and thrice-told tales that come to represent “the story” of the trauma) turning it from a frightening and uncontrollable event into a contained and predictable narrative’ (1996: 6). For the Irish uprising, tales of the murder and dismemberment of women – particularly pregnant women – quickly came to represent ‘the story’ of Catholic atrocity. Diane Purkiss persuasively suggests that such stories were ‘possible fantasy resolutions of the intolerable pressures placed on the death drive by the war’. She adds: ‘Such rhetoric was reassuring because it assigned passivity, disorder and dismemberment to the feminine corpse, releasing the male identity of the soldier for military action on her behalf and reassuring him that his own being was different’ (2005: 43). While this explains *men’s* investment in such stories, it cannot explain why they were so often told by *women*. For if, as Purkiss suggests, the dismembered female can be contrasted to the man’s ostensibly whole self, for the woman the question of sameness means identification rather than differentiation. So what do such stories mean for women? My essay seeks to answer this question.

This essay emphasizes Protestant *women’s* fundamental role in the creation and circulation of stories of the dismembered female, and argues that for these women they represent complexly gendered post-traumatic responses to their experiences during the rising. Such stories, I will suggest, are a fitting expression of

the 'shattered' (Henke 1998) subjectivity of the trauma victim. Reading as 'literature of trauma' the testimonies of Protestant settlers that constitute the 1641 depositions, my essay proposes that the dismembered female constitutes a fantasy by which women could come to terms with psychic trauma by enabling them to articulate both past suffering and their survival. As they 'remembered' traumatic experiences by speaking of the murder and dismemberment of other women, this essay suggests that Protestant women could begin the process of 're-membering' – that is, putting together again – their traumatized and dismembered selves.

The 1641 depositions is a collection of over 3,000 victim testimonies – of which women's depositions account for up to a third – gathered in the wake of the Irish rising.² Collected by government-appointed officials (a committee of eight Protestant clergymen led by Bishop Henry Jones), they are the sworn statements of Protestant victims, largely settlers of English and Scottish descent.³ Designed 'for the enquiry & examination of the losses & sufferings of the British & protestants within this kingdome of Ireland', as Ellen Adams's deposition indicates (TCD MS 835, f. 257), their ultimate purpose was to compensate victims for losses, but they were also used to collect information on the uprising. Originating as oral testimony spoken before at least two commissioners and a scribe who recorded the statement, the depositions represent the answers to a series of pre-established questions. Typically, they begin with the deponent's name, address and social status; they then state when the deponent was robbed, lists the value of her losses, and names those responsible; the depositions then identify other Irish in arms, and recount what disloyal or traitorous words they were heard to say; finally, they provide details of murders, and identify Protestants who had converted to Catholicism, along with any miscellaneous information (Clarke 1986: 112). The depositions thus follow a standard formula, yet they vary enormously, ranging from simple statements of losses to extensive and sensationalized accounts of suffering, which indicate that many deponents found room within their strictures to produce individuated accounts of Irish rising experiences.

It is the more lurid accounts that have historically received most attention. Excerpted in *The Irish Rebellion*, Temple acknowledges that the depositions are 'most commonly decried, and held by the Irish as very injurious to their country men' (1646: A4v), and his book makes a key intervention in the controversy surrounding their reliability that continues among historians today.⁴ Questioning the foundations of this debate, Aidan Clarke observes: 'From the inference that what had been printed was representative there had arisen, and there was to survive, the belief that every page in the collection told similar tales of horror'. In fact, he estimates that only two out of five depositions make reference to deaths; one out of five reports death through privation; and only one out of five speaks of death by violence (1986: 112-3). Since Clarke's pioneering work, the 1641 depositions have started to receive serious scholarly attention from historians, and

Nicholas Canny and others maintain that they cannot be dismissed as historical evidence 'because they constitute the only detailed information we have of what happened' (2001: 468; also Simms 1993: 123-38). Taking a literary approach to the depositions allows us to think about them in ways other than as guides to the facts of the rising, however, as Marie-Louise Coolahan argues:

But to approach the depositions as narrative, rather than to interrogate their veracity, allows us to sidestep the controversies over historical facts. From a literary perspective the more valuable depositions are precisely those which are likelier to be sensationalized. These are the lengthier depositions by women, the accounts in which female deponents have taken the opportunity to develop a personal narrative and to implement their narrative skills (2010: 144).⁵

While I agree, I also propose that by reading the 1641 depositions specifically as 'literature of trauma' it is possible to bridge the gap between literary and historical approaches. As any text written by the victim of trauma, Tal's definition of trauma literature (1996: 17) can include the 1641 depositions, authored, if not 'written', by the traumatized victims of the rising. Such a literary-critical approach might help to illuminate a range of non-traditional genres of wartime writing, including other legal testimony, pamphlets and newsbooks, letters, conversion narratives, and much more. Thus, what I hope to provide in this essay is a model for reading a variety of autobiographical texts through the lens of trauma theory.⁶

The best examples of trauma literature among the depositions are, of course, the two fifths that speak of deaths, whether as first-hand evidence or second-hand report. The admission of hearsay evidence is at the centre of the debate surrounding the veracity of the depositions. Bennett acknowledges that they are 'replete with lies, hearsay and speculation', yet he adds that they 'demonstrate what many witnesses *believed* to be the truth' (2000: 46; emphasis added). Canny similarly maintains that hearsay evidence is of value 'if only because they convey some sense of the terror which gripped the minds of the settlers' (2001: 468). Coolahan concurs, arguing that 'they are, at the very least, important evidence of contemporary anxieties' (2010: 144). Reading the depositions as literature of trauma allows us to see in the testimonies of the Protestant victims the 'truth' of the trauma survivor's experience, which must be differentiated from the objective 'facts' of the rising. Trauma theorist James E. Young maintains that we need to separate the 'authenticity' of the survivor narrative from its 'authority as "fact"' (Young 1988: 23; see also Laub 1993: 62, LaCapra 2001: 88-9). He argues that 'it is not a matter of whether one set of facts is more veracious than another, or whether the facts have been transformed in narrative at all'. Instead, he proposes, we must determine '*how* writers' experiences

have been shaped both in and out of narrative' (1988: 39). His case that 'even the Holocaust can never lie outside of literature, or understanding, or telling' (1988: 98) is also applicable to the 1641 rising. So whether or not women *were* dismembered and murdered in great numbers during the uprising (this will continue to be debated), the stories are 'true' insofar as they are an authentic representation of Protestant women's experience and expression of terror.

As literature of trauma, the depositions should be read, at least in part, through the process by which Protestant victims of violence began to work through their traumatic experiences. Tal maintains that 'literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it "real" both to the victim and to the community' (1996: 21), and Deborah Horvitz adds: 'The need to be listened to, in addition to "the need to tell", is a trope that appears and reappears in the written and oral testimony of victims' (2000: 19; see also Felman and Laub 1993). Many deponents speak of the importance of sharing their stories with women who endured similar experiences. Suzanna Steele situates herself at the centre of a large network of women who shared their trauma with each other. A 'grieved and distressed mother' who had lost her husband and several of her children during the rising was only one of many women who '(with teares) afterwards told this depon[en]t' of her experiences. Steele stresses the comparative sympathy of a *woman's* ear when she expresses her own frustration at speaking to men who refuse to take her testimony seriously. She tries to tell Lord President Jones of Connaught about a conspiracy involving the Irish Catholics, but instead of welcoming her message, he (according to Steele) 'did not believe it, for it was noe matter what women said' (TCD MS 817, f. 215). Resisting such misogynist attitudes, Steele instead establishes a supportive community of and for women in which their stories are truly valued. Elsewhere, both Joane Constable and Margaret Phillis repeat Ann Smith and Margaret Clark's story of their miraculous escape from the burning house in which a group of Protestants were murdered. Echoing the story also told in Smith and Clark's joint deposition, Phillis testifies that 'whilest these Rebels were busied in burning the rest of the howse: It pleased god to give them two strength to rise & escape away w[i]th their lives (*as both the said Agnes Smith & her daughter have since divers tymes tould her this depon[en]t*)' (TCD MS 836, f. 66; emphasis added). The fact that the mother and daughter's story of survival is re-told by Phillis in her own deposition, which also testifies the frequency with which the two women repeated their tale to her, reveals the extent to which communicating among friends – both as speakers and listeners – was part of the process by which women came to terms with traumatic experiences.

Yet while voicing trauma is crucial to the survivor's ability to work through her experiences, the irony is that trauma is itself essentially unspeakable. 'The fundamental dislocation implied by all traumatic experience', as Cathy Caruth argues, is 'both its testimony to the event' and 'the impossibility of its direct

access' (1995: 9). Unlike mother and daughter Smith and Clark who together find the words to tell their story, Ellen Matchett – who lost her mother during the rising – struggles throughout her deposition to voice her trauma. Listing the 'great numbers' of Protestants who were murdered by the Catholics, 'some burned, some drowned some hanged & the rest murdered & masacred in most barbarous & inhumane manner', she desperately tries to speak her horror. But the experience is so overwhelming that she became so 'overfrighted & feared therewith as grew almost insensible' (TCD MS 836, f. 59). It seems that for Matchett the crisis of witnessing brings her to the brink of madness, the ultimate dislocation of self, and this traumatic disturbance seems to be tied to the circumstances of her mother's death. Forced to leave her 'wounded bleeding mother' to die on a 'could mountaine' so that she and her family could 'fly away to save their owne lives', Matchett tries to articulate her 'unspeakeable greiffe' at the loss (TCD MS 836, ff. 59-59v). Trying 'to make sense of an overwhelming experience' while simultaneously acknowledging 'the unspeakability of trauma itself, its resistance to representation' (Gilmore 2001: 25), Matchett is the archetypal trauma survivor. Her failure to find the words to express her anguish at the abandonment and subsequent death of her mother – 'to speak out, to name the unnameable, to turn and face it down' (Ziegenmeyer and Warren 1992: 218) – impedes her ability to work through her trauma, particularly her guilt as a survivor. Still, Matchett's deposition represents the beginning of the process of recovery, since the 1641 deposition commission provides a supportive framework in which she could begin to speak of her experiences. It is important to note that Catholics who suffered as a result of retaliatory violence at this time did not have access to officially-appointed 'listeners' like the deposition commissioners to whom they could speak their traumatic experiences. The resultant marginalization of the voices of victimized Catholics raises important questions about the alternative ways in which Irish Catholics might have worked through trauma, and for which evidence undoubtedly exists in other Catholic-authored texts.

Nevertheless, as a record of *Protestant* suffering during the rising, the 1641 depositions exhibit the key qualities that characterize trauma literature, depicting the 'basic wound' of the traumatic event, as well as providing evidence of the deponent's new 'adaptive lifestyle'; the retelling process that 'rebuilds shattered personal myths' is also evident; so too is the identification with a community of survivors (Tal 1996: 78). For the female deponents, the characteristic features of trauma literature are feminized, with women identifying with other female survivors, telling and re-telling their stories to these women, and representing trauma specifically in terms of violence against women. The characteristic struggle to prevent the experience from 'being appropriated and incorporated into myth' (Tal 1996: 78) is not evident in the depositions, as the women could not have foreseen that their stories of the dismemberment and murder of women would become fundamental to the mythologization of the rising. Yet by showing that this

myth has its origins – at least in part – in the women’s depositions, my essay challenges the inherent misogyny of such stories and explores what they meant to women.

Like *The Irish Rebellion* and the other stories they inspire, throughout the 1641 depositions female deponents represent women and children as the primary victims of the rising. Even when they describe the victimization of men, they are represented as being emasculated or feminized, usually attacked within a domestic or familial context. Alice Champion testifies that her husband ‘was assaulted and cruelly murdered and killed before his owne gate’ (TCD MS 835, f. 26). And an eyewitness to her husband’s murder, Margaret Farmenie describes how the insurgents bound her husband ‘and dragged him up and downe in a Rope and cutt his throate in her owne sight w[i]th a skeane [dagger]’ (TCD MS 835, f. 29). Mary Smyth speaks of her husband’s murder and then castration, testifying that the insurgents ‘cutt off his tongue & secrett members most inhumanely’ (TCD MS 823, f. 17). Throughout the depositions, women speak of eviction, robbery, stripping, exposure, imprisonment, starvation, violent assault and murder, and these stories are told through disturbing accounts of the brutal disruption of the home and family, the traumatic loss of husbands and children, and direct experience of Catholic violence and persecution. For example, Magdalen Redman testifies being (with other widows) robbed, stripped, and then nearly burnt alive by the Irish (TCD MS 814, f. 77); Ann Ogden talks of her family’s eviction and then her children’s deaths through starvation and exposure (TCD MS 835, f. 37v); and Elizabeth Coates describes a violent assault on her and her daughter in their ‘dwelling howse’, as well as the murder of her husband and son (TCD MS 835, f. 4v). Throughout the 1641 depositions, women share a distinctly feminized voice. They register their personal experience of trauma while cataloguing the suffering and deaths of other women, suggesting that they identified themselves with other women. In doing so, their traumatic experiences are repeatedly represented in terms of threats to the maternal body, and the mutilation and murder of pregnant, labouring and lactating women, and their children, are tropes that recur throughout the depositions.

Temple used these stories in *The Irish Rebellion*, constructing his narrative of rebellion with excerpts from the depositions. Yet in appropriating women’s words and experiences, for him – as for the many *men* who describe the murder and dismemberment of women throughout the depositions – they come to mean something different. This is not to say that Temple misrepresents women’s experiences in his book. In fact, what is striking about *The Irish Rebellion* is the amount of space given to the depositions, which are often presented in long excerpts, and are, on the whole, transcribed faithfully.⁷ Rather, it is to argue that when women’s words are taken out of their original context, and incorporated within a male-authored text (especially one with such a strong implied male

readership), women's experiences come to speak for men and not for the women themselves. This chimes with Tal's argument that

two people can represent the same experience, using similar imagery and descriptive terminology and create literary works with entirely different meanings – meanings which are located not in the words themselves, but in the interaction between writer and text, between reader and text, between reader and writer (1996: 18).⁸

So even if Temple records women's depositions verbatim, by incorporating them in his text they come to speak for the trauma of the Protestant man in Ireland. In doing so, women's experiences are appropriated to serve the psychic needs of men. Moreover, Protestant women's trauma is also exploited for political ends, with Temple using the experiences of female victims to characterize the perpetrators as monstrous and barbaric, in order to advocate a radical policy that would ensure that Irish Catholics could never rise again (1646: A3v). While such polemic may not have been challenged by the female deponents cited by Temple, the aim of this essay is nevertheless to resist the male appropriation of women's traumatic experiences that leads to such mythologizing of the rising, and instead focus on what stories of the dismembered female body meant to Protestant *women*.

With the dismembered maternal body particularly emblematic of women's victimization during the rising, it seems that their expression of trauma involves (at least in part) the re-elaboration of anxieties surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, periods of extreme vulnerability shared by seventeenth-century women. By re-imagining these fears in hyper-violent, nightmarish ways, such stories allow women to voice their specifically gendered experience of trauma during the wars. Some deponents describe the violence they endured during their pregnancies. Judith Phillipps testifies that when she was 'in the latter end of her time' she was beaten and wounded with a skein, 'whereupon she imediatly miscarried of a man child' (TCD MS 820, f. 219). Much more frequent in the depositions are graphic third-person reports of the mutilation and murder of pregnant women. Ellen Adams describes the death of one Cary Brent, 'she being bigg with child, and at the very last of her time', whom the Irish 'did barbarously murther': 'one of the said Rebels', she says, 'ran his skyne into her body and the child ripped from her' (TCD MS 835, f. 257). Elizabeth Price tells a similar story of when the Irish 'tooke an Englishwoman nere [th]e bridge of Portadown by name the wife of one Arnold Taylor; when shee was great w[it]h child; And that they ripped up her bellie so that the child fell out of her wombe; And then they threw both the moth[e]r and the child into the wat[e]r' (TCD MS 836, f. 104v). Reporting the murder of a group of Protestants, Elizabeth Holliwell says that 'one of those wyves being great w[i]th Chyld & hanged up. the Rebels thrust there

pykes into her Belly because as they sayd the child should not Live' (TCD 830, f. 35). Similarly, Anna Hawkesworth testifies that the Irish drowned one woman '& gave her such a wound in her belly that the childe Arme (wherew[*i*]th she was great) appeared through the wound, and she & her child in that posture were carried down w[*i*]th the stream' (TCD MS 830, f. 40v).

Other deponents describe assaults upon the labouring body. Joane Constable tells of the drowning of one Mrs Maxwell 'when she was in labour of childbirth & soe pregnant & forward therein' (TCD MS 836, f. 88). Dame Ann Butler speaks about how the Irish compelled an Englishwoman 'who was nuly delivered of two childeren in one birth They violently compelled her in her greate paine and sicknesse to rise from her childbed and tooke the infant th[*a*]t was left alive and dasht his braines against the stones and after threwe him into the river of Barrow' (TCD MS 812, f. 69). Thomasin Osbaldeston's testimony reveals the acute vulnerability that women felt during their pregnancy and lying in and the knowledge that their condition would not spare them from violence. She had been 'in Childbed but 7 or 8 dayes' when she heard that armed Irish Catholics were coming into Waterford 'that would destroy all the English'. She 'fled for succour into the hospitall att Waterford & there lay secretly upon bare straw for 4 dayes & nightes together untill she escaped away by sea with her twoe Children' (TCD MS 820, f. 8). Mary Hammond is attacked and miscarries, after being tormented by the Irish throughout her labour. She says: 'she was delivered of a dead child: w[*h*]ch she verely believed was kild by the ill usage she had received [...] it being very lively before' (TCD MS 830, f. 136).

Even after the safe delivery of a child, infant and mother were not safe, and stories of the murder of the lactating mother and her baby abound in the depositions. In their joint testimony, Margery King and Margaret Simon report that one Jane Adis was murdered with her child still feeding from her (TCD MS 814, f. 81). Elizabeth Trueman talks about the drowning of two women 'that had both of [th]eir children sucking att their breste w[*h*]ch they drowned alsoe' (TCD MS 836, f. 117). Alice Champion likewise describes how when the insurgents discovered the corpse of a woman with 'a yong chyld of his [*sic*] lying sucking the dead mothers breast they killed the said child' (TCD MS 835, f. 27). The nursing infant and his mother are attacked in more insidious ways in Ann Reade's deposition:

Ellen the wiffe of the said Donnell oRely haveing the nursing of a yong male sucking child of the depon[en]ts stripped him of his clothes as this depon[en]t verely beleeveth and brought him to him [*sic*] this depon[en]t: Whoe being stript of all her meanes had not wherewith to releve the Child Soe as he by Cold and famin dyed (TCD MS 831, f. 12v).

Rejected by his Irish wet-nurse, and with her own milk dry, Reade speaks of the trauma of being unable to provide for her son.

Many women testify that their children died because they were unable to nourish and protect them. Ann Hill describes the deaths of three of her children through exposure to the cold (TCD MS 812, f. 39v), and Christian Olliphant similarly testifies: 'the depon[en]t haveing at that tyme three small children they were all Stript naked beinge a weeke before Candlemas, in the extremity of winter, which soe penetrated the infants that since they have all dyed (TCD MS 831, f. 77). Likewise, Ann Ogden describes the deaths of her children 'whoe (through the torments, hunger & cold that they endured in their journey are both dead at Dublin' (TCD MS 835, f. 37v).

Other women testify that their children died as a direct result of Catholic violence, and often these deaths are described in terms of the violent parting of mother and child. Ann Hill and Ruth Martyn both describe their child being taken from their arms and murdered: Martyn testifies that the Irish 'killed a young child of the examtes (being about three yeares ould) in the armes' (TCD MS 817, ff. 309v-310); and Hill claims that they 'pulled off her back a yong child of about a yere and a quart[er] ould, threw it on the ground & trod on it that it dyed' (TCD MS 812, f. 39v). There are also stories of the dismemberment and murder of older children alongside their mothers. Martha Mosley, for instance, tells of the murder of a 'little boy & his mother', 'the poore childs head being pittifully mangled & his belly soe opened that his bowells fell out' (TCD MS 812, f. 91). Another deponent, Ann Mawdesley, describes how the Irish 'struck and beat a poor English woman untill shee was forced into a ditch where she dyed Those barbarous Rebels haveing first ript upp & letten her childs gutts about her heeles & most cruelly murdered that child' (TCD MS 812, f. 221). Often the child is left alongside the corpse of its dead mother. Joane Constable, for example, describes the murder of a woman who was 'stabbed w[i]th a skean to the hart [...] he having first beat out her braines & that he left her child alive lying by her' (TCD MS 836, f. 88).

The murder of children (and their mothers) was seen by many women as part of a plan to extirpate the entire Protestant settler community in Ireland. Joane Constable reports that she heard an Irishman boast that he had pulled an English child 'fro[m] und[er] a bedd whe[re] it was crept & [th]at he knockt out his braynes against the wall. Saying he did it because he would have none of the English breed left' (TCD MS 836, f. 88v). Elsewhere, Ann Smith and Margaret Clarke claim that after 1641 'all the full & faire plantatons of protest[ant]s in the Cuntry thereabouts were quite depopulated and distroyed' (TCD MS 836, f. 73v). Once 'full & faire', the two women imagine the Ulster plantations in terms of a fertile femininity that is now destroyed. Many of the female deponents thus understood violence against women and children as an attack against the Protestant community through the medium of the reproductive female body.

It may be surprising then that so few deponents testify to rape, as other commentators have observed (O'Dowd 1991: 101; Simms 1993: 136; Canny 2001: 544). There are some examples from hearsay. Susan Steele testifies that 'one Edmunde duffe ffarrell a noteable Rebell attempted to have ravished one katherin Orbuson' (TCD MS 817, f. 215). Ellen Adams suggests that the pregnant Cary Brent was raped before she was murdered, the Irish Catholics 'first stripping of her naked, and then barbarously having used her' (TCD MS 835, f. 257). Since the stripping of Cary Brent leads to her rape, Adams' testimony may suggest that stripping was perceived by some women as being on a continuum with sexual assault. Numerous women describe the trauma of being stripped, including Jane Gowrly who testifies that 'she was stript of her clothes seven severall tymes after she gott other clothes and at length they left her not soe much as her smock or hairlace' (TCD MS 836, f. 57). Since the social stigma means that it is unlikely that a seventeenth-century woman would have spoken about rape, as O'Dowd (1991: 101) has persuasively suggested, it may be that the fear or experience of sexual assault may have emerged obliquely in women's description of the experience of being stripped. Whether or not this is the case, since the pregnant Cary Grant is raped before her mutilation and murder, it is clear that Adams saw both rape and dismemberment as different manifestations of sexualized violence against women.

So how might these stories help women work through trauma? As I have already suggested, Purkiss's theory (2005: 43) that narratives of the murder and dismemberment of women are 'possible fantasy resolutions' for men cannot be straightforwardly applied to women, since the dead women mirror the female survivors. Many of the deponents who tell stories of the dismemberment and death of other women also speak of their own maiming. Ellice Meagher claims that 'she t[hi]s Exa[minan]t had 11 wounds' (TCD MS 821, f. 259). And Adams – who spoke so vividly of Cary Brent's horrific murder – describes how she herself was so severely wounded that she 'wilbe weake and impotent while she lives, for besides sev[er]all wounds she received in her hands, sides, & skull [...] one of them gave this examinant a wounde with his skyne under one of her jaw=bones, threatening there to pull down this examinants tongue' (TCD MS 835, f. 257v); her fears that she was left 'impotent' by the attack may have undercurrents of infertility, and thus reflect the sexualized dismemberment she describes of other women. Adams' testimony that her daughter, also called Ellen Adams, was 'soe pittifully cut & mangled that a longe time after she was not able to goe or stirr' (TCD MS 835, f. 257v), epitomizes the blurring of self and other in women's representation of traumatic suffering, especially since mother and daughter share their name.

Yet stories of the dismemberment and murder of women constitute fantasies for female deponents also. Developing the Freudian notion that fantasies are 'protective fictions', Jacqueline Rose argues that 'fantasy is also a way of re-

elaborating and therefore of partly recognizing the memory which is struggling, against the psychic odds, to be heard' (1996: 5). Stories of the dismemberment and murder of other women represent female deponents' memories of personal experiences of traumatic suffering. Elizabeth Price speaks of the horrifying violence she endures when, imprisoned by the Catholics, 'divers tortures were used upon' her. She testifies being 'thrice hanged upp to confess moneys and after [lette] down, & hadd the soales of her feete fryed and burned at the fyre & was often scurged & whipt'. As well as suffering physical trauma, Price and her fellow prisoners were 'often affrighted with a block and a hatchet: which to putt them more in feare was alwaies left near them as the engine of their death' (TCD MS 836, f. 102). Testifying her prolonged and enduring fear of dismemberment and death, her escape, against the odds, is (in her deposition) juxtaposed with stories of others who were not so lucky. One group of Protestants, 'especially women and children', were, according to Price, 'pricked and stabbed with their pitchforks skeanes & swords and [the Irish] would slash mangle and cutt them in their heades breasts faces armes handes and other parts of their bodies, but not kill them outright, but leave them wallowing in their bloode to languish and starve to death' (TCD MS 836, f. 104). Thus, the 'engine' of 'death' of Price's traumatic memory dismembers and murders these women in the way she feared she would die. In mirroring and exaggerating her past experiences, then, Price's stories of the murder of other women represent the re-elaboration and part-recognition of her own memory of traumatic suffering.

Yet unlike the other women, Price lives to tell their story. As 'an ey witsnesse' to their murders (TCD MS 836, f. 104), Price exhibits and anatomizes the women's mangled corpses through her gaze, revealing them as other to her own surviving and whole female body. Stories of the dismemberment and murder of other women thus constitute a reassuring fantasy for Price because she survives to bear witness to the deaths of other women. Yet since the women's dismembered corpses mirror Price's – and Meagher, Adams and other female deponents' – mutilated bodies, it seems that for women (unlike men) the boundary between self and other, between survival and death, remains frighteningly porous. In trying to make sense of the deep tensions embedded in women's stories of the dismemberment and murder of women, Purkiss's work on another set of depositions – those made by women in witch trials – provides a useful model for interpreting them as fantasies for women. As 'a story in which people both express and relieve their unconscious (and sometimes their conscious) fears, conflicts and anxieties' (Purkiss 1996: 93), women's fantasies of the murder and dismemberment of women who are uncannily similar to but ultimately different from themselves may help women work through trauma by allowing them to voice the 'double knowledge' (Rosenfeld 1978: 26) of both facing death and surviving it. The dismembered woman thus becomes for the female deponents an emblem of trauma and survival.

Yet since female survival is expressed through feminized images of dismemberment and death, such fantasies prevent women from fully conquering their traumatic pasts. Unlike men who, as Purkiss (2005: 43) argues, are spurred into action on behalf of the dead woman, the lack of a positive alternative for women renders it impossible for them to be anything other than victim (albeit alive rather than dead). But attempting to break free from this trap, some deponents began to work through their experiences by re-imagining the trope of the dismembered woman in more life-affirming ways. In her deposition, Martha Mosley offers a wonderful account of feminine healing, which helps her both remember and work through trauma by voicing an empowering fantasy of the remembered female. When they were driven from their home, Mosley and her mother and husband fled to safety in Carlow Castle, where her husband and mother later died. Mosley describes a subsequent siege of the castle where 'there were slayne and hurt at the Church and about the same nere to the Castle the number of xxv men women and children English protest[ant]s & were moste barbarously mangled hewd and slashed by the Rebels' (TCD MS 812, f. 90v). With Protestant victimhood remembered through the trope of the mutilated body, for Mosley it soon becomes specifically gendered:

And one woman whoe had her hand cutt off the depon[en]t (by gods assistance) cured as she did divers o[the]rs, whilest she was there, And amongst the rest she soe cured there was a poore stript woman that the night aforesaid was most miserably wounded and cutt by fowre sevrall great cutts all through the scull of her head, and one in her face, And left for dead & layd there for about 24 howres. and that at length by goods [*sic*] great helpe recovered her senses and soe much strength that she crawled And came into the Castle being here a most miserable Object of pittie & although such as saw her despaired of her recovry yet god working w[it]h such meanes as this depon[en]t used to her, she was afterwards very well recovered (TCD MS 812, f. 90v).

In a striking extension of the traditional nurturing roles of women (and one that so many of the deponents are catastrophically unable to fulfil during the wars), Mosley becomes a nurse to her suffering female companions. In this capacity, she cures these women and 'divers others' like them, saving them from death. In doing so, she pieces together their mutilated and dismembered bodies. Mosley thus produces a reassuring fantasy in which the mutilated female body can in fact be remembered, or put together again, restored to their wholeness before the terrible violence and trauma of war. And since she is the one to heal them, Mosley's fantasy is one that is particularly empowering for her. Even as she attributes the miracle to God who 'assist[s]' and 'work[s] through' her, since 'the deponent [...]

cured' one woman, and another woman recovered 'with such meanes as this deponent used to her', she – like contemporary female prophets who assume an active role while deferring to God – claims responsibility for their survival.⁹ Mosley thus asserts both the possibility of women's recovery and her control over the healing process. So as she begins to imagine post-traumatic recovery through the trope of the *re-membered* female (just as traumatic suffering had been imagined through the trope of the *dismembered* woman), Mosley starts the process of re-piecing her own traumatized and dismembered self through narrative.

'The theme of drawing together fragments into a whole is found again and again in the literature of trauma', writes Tal (1996: 137-8). With this theme echoed in her story of miraculous recovery, Mosley's deposition reveals one fantasy through which women could begin to 're-member' the dismembered woman of their traumatized memories. An alternative fantasy of the re-membered woman emerges from one the best-known of the 1641 depositions, that of the Co. Armagh woman, Elizabeth Price. Price's children died in one of the most infamous atrocities of 1641 – the drowning of a group of Protestants at Portadown. Under the pretence of being given safe passage to England, five of her children along 'with about threescore and fifteen more protestants' were released from their imprisonment by the insurgents. Price continues:

Their Com[m]ander or conductor for that purpose being as he quickly after proved to bee a most bloody & cursed rebel by name Capt[ai]n Manus Ó Cane – & his souldiers having brought or rather driven like sheepe or beasts to a Markett those poore prison[er]s being about one hundred and fifteen to the bridge of Portadowne: The said Capt[ai]n and rebels then and there forced & drove all those prison[er]s (and amongst the rest the dep[onent]s five children: by name Adam John Anne Mary and Joane Price off the bridge into the water and then and there instantly & most barbarously drowned the most of them: And those that could swim and came to the shore they knockt them in the heade & soe after drowned them, or else shott them to death in the water (TCD MS 836, f. 101v).

Not a first-hand witness to the massacre, Price draws upon collective Protestant memory of the event to voice her losses. She participates in the circulating discourse of Irish violence to which Ellen Matchett also contributes when she (like Price) likens the prisoners to 'heardes of sheepe' being driven to the river (TCD MS 836, f. 59). Many other deponents speak of the atrocity, but their allusions are fleeting, primarily concerned with establishing the number of Protestants who died there (and inflating Price's estimate to more than one hundred and fifty victims). It nevertheless seems that the massacre at Portadown was at the heart of Ulster

Protestant articulation of shared trauma. Price draws upon her community's experience of the atrocity in order to express her personal losses, but she focuses on her own children and (unlike other deponents who simply specify their sex and age) identifies each child by name.

Price's inability to speak more fully about the circumstances of her children's deaths may be what draws her to visit the scene of their murder upon 'hearing of divers apparitions & visions that were ordinarily seene nere portadowne bridge since the drowning of her children and the rest of the Protest[ant]s there' (TCD MS 836, f. 102r). Since Joane Constable elsewhere specifies that the apparitions at Portadown 'did most extremely and fearfully shriek & cry out for vengeance and bloud against the irish that had murthered their bodies there' (TCD MS 836, f. 89v), it seems that the apparitions were popularly believed to be the ghosts of the massacred Protestants. Price may have hoped that a visit to Portadown Bridge would offer her the possibility of seeing and hearing her dead children, which would then give her the words to adequately voice the trauma of their loss.

Price is accompanied to Portadown Bridge by 'the wiffe of Newberry; the wiffe of one Prescot Ann Stubbs, Susan Stubbs, and Elizabeth this depon[ent]s surviving child, and about 40 more her fellow prison[er]s being women whose husbands were murthered & slain' (TCD MS 836, f. 102v). By travelling with other English Protestant women – widows and bereaved mothers who perhaps also lost family in the atrocity, but who certainly share her experiences of suffering – Price (with her one surviving child – a daughter) forms an exclusively female community of Protestant survivors. And it is with these women that Price sees the apparition:

then and there upon a sudden there appeared unto them a vision or spiritt assumeing the shape of a woman waste high upright in the water naked with elevated & closed handes, her haire dishievelled, very white, her eys seeming to twinkle in her head, and her skinn as white as snowe which spiritt or vision seeming to stand straight upright in the water divulged and often repeated the word Revenge Revenge Revenge &c (TCD MS 836, ff. 102v-103).¹⁰

Significantly, the apparition witnessed by Price and her female companions manifests as a lone woman, despite earlier sightings of 'divers' apparitions at Portadown Bridge, which Joane Constable indicates were 'sometymes of men & somtymes of women' (TCD MS 836, f. 89).¹¹ Indeed, Price later explains (perhaps at the prompting of the commissioners) that before she and her female companions came to Portadown Bridge – and prior to the appearance of the female apparition – 'the first visions or apparitions after the protest[ant]es

drowned, were in shewe a great numb[er] of heads in the water w[hi]ch cried all w[i]th a lowd voice Revenge Revenge &c, as this depon[en]t hath been credibly told by the Rebels themselves' (TCD MS 836, ff. 103-103v). Yet these disembodied and ungendered 'heads' are mentioned only as an afterthought as Price instead prioritizes the sighting of the woman.

With her femininity crucial to her representation, Price's refusal to categorize the apparition as either 'vision or spiritt' or 'spiritt or vision' may (as well as revealing Protestant ambivalence about ghosts) suggest that she perceived her (consciously or unconsciously) to be *both* the 'spiritt' of a murdered woman *and* a 'vision' produced by the women who see her. With her bared breasts emphasizing her femininity and maternity, and her nakedness reflecting the condition of so many Protestant women who were stripped of their clothes (Price included), the apparition is at once a spiritual manifestation of another (dead) Protestant woman and a mirror of Price and her fellow female survivors. Reflecting their sufferings and losses specifically as women, widows and bereaved mothers, she is both a materialization of their past sufferings and an embodiment of their fears that they could have – and may still – die.

Yet unlike the murdered female bodies that litter the depositions – but like the women who see her – the apparition is not silent, passive, or dismembered: she is whole and she speaks, commanding attention on her own terms. She is thus an expression of the women's survival – and their urge to fight back against the men who killed their families. Crucially, the apparition's naked body reveals strength rather than vulnerability. Her whiteness and cries are reminiscent of the banshee of Gaelic mythology whose wails herald an imminent death, and her presence forebodes retribution against the murderous Catholics.¹² By crying repeatedly for revenge, she is also an unusually feminized personification of vengeance, with suggestions of the Furies as well. But she is Christianized through her hands, which, folded in apparent prayer, define her as a divinely-appointed instrument of Protestant vengeance. The apparition's exposed breasts and quasi-combatant stance also characterize her as Amazon and, proclaiming war against the Irish men, she calls the women to arms.

So the female apparition gives voice to Price and her companions' grief and rage as women. Emerging from the waters in which her children died, the phantom specifically gives fantastic expression to Price's trauma as a bereaved mother. Price ventriloquizes her desire for reprisal against those who murdered her children by repeating the apparition's cries for vengeance. Yet the ghost does not avenge the dead children, but instead offers protection to their grieving mother. Price claims that the Irish were so terrified by the apparition's presence that they were 'soe again affrighted that they ran quite away and forsook the place' (TCD MS 836, f. 103). Instead of avenging the dead Protestants, therefore, the apparition primarily functions to protect Price and the other women from further harm. Identifying with the survivors rather than the dead victims, the apparition's

vigorous femininity comes to stand for the women's survival *in spite of* the violence and death that threatened to overwhelm them. By rising from the waters that engulfed Price's children and so many other Protestants, the apparition comes to symbolize the women's resilience and courage through traumatic suffering. She thus represents an empowering feminized fantasy of wholeness and survival – a reassuring alternative to fantasies of the dismembered female corpse – and by speaking about her, Price begins to work through traumatic memories. Repeating the story of the women's remarkable encounter with the apparition allows Price to bear witness to past sufferings, and especially the loss of her children. But it also facilitates her acknowledgement of her survival, while simultaneously providing a reassuring fantasy of her future safety and protection. The re(-)membered vision of the vengeful apparition thus helps Price work through trauma by fostering the process through which she can begin to re-piece her shattered self.

The process of recovery begins in Dublin when she speaks to the deposition commissioners. But it is not to the apparition that Price is indebted for her safe arrival in that city. Rather, the Irish Catholic Owen Roe O'Neill accompanied her and her female companions part of the way, before leaving them with enough money and food for their onward journey. Price already had Owen Roe to thank for her release from prison, and he also provided the convoy in which she and her companions were able to visit Portadown Bridge. As the man to whom Price and her companions owed their survival, Owen Roe is cast as chivalric hero. Not only does this reveal the multiple and complex constructions of Irishness in the depositions, as Deana Rankin (2005: 27) has pointed out, but it also indicates the women's need for male protection. Indeed, shortly after Owen Roe's departure the women were attacked by 'the Scottch army'. As 'these Scotts forcibly robbed and despoyled them of all the mony and meale they had left & badd them goe to the Rebels & get more' (TCD MS 836, f. 105), Price's deposition further disturbs simple oppositions between British and Irish, Protestant and Catholic. Portraying Ulster Protestants divided across national lines, her deposition indicates the multiplicity of British Protestant identities. Yet its focus on the repeated victimization of Protestant women characterizes women as pawns in a war fought between men. This may have been a persuasive strategy as the women sought compensation from the male commissioners in their own right. But it more importantly indicates women's gendered experience and expression of trauma. Thus, even as they bear witness to women's survival, the 1641 depositions remain scarred by Protestant women's memory of traumatic suffering during the Irish rising.

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NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Danielle Clarke, Edel Lamb, and the anonymous reader and editors of the *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* for their helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay.

² The 1641 depositions (TCD MSS 809-39) now occupy thirty-one manuscript volumes in Trinity College, Dublin, grouped according to county. Long accessible only by microfilm, the depositions are now the subject of a three-year research project, which aims to transcribe and digitize the entire collection. The number of female-authored depositions varies according to county. As low as 5% in Kerry but as high as 39% in Kilkenny, it seems that more female deponents emerged from counties that saw the most violence, which may have been a result of higher mortality rates for men or their enlisting for military service (Bennett 2000: 67; Canny 2001: 348).

³ On the distinctly Protestant ways in which many women articulated their victimization in the depositions, see Coolahan 2010: 153-54, 158-59.

⁴ On Temple's influence, see Gillespie 2005: 315-33.

⁵ I am grateful to Dr Coolahan for allowing me to read the relevant chapter of her book before its publication.

⁶ For book-length studies on trauma theory in an early modern literary context, see Anderson 2006 and Cahill 2008.

⁷ Coolahan observes that Temple typically chooses the more lurid depositions to illustrate particular events of the rising, with little concern for the most accurate (2010: 142-43, 148-50).

⁸ For a similar argument in an early modern context, see Purkiss 1996: 199-230.

⁹ See, for example, Hinds 1996.

¹⁰ Price's account of the apparition rising from the waters in which her children died chimes with Constable's story of the drowning of a labouring mother and her unborn child, after which (she claims) 'the very childe at once appeared & moved in [th]e wate[r] the child being halfe borne when the poore mo[th]e[r] was soe drowned [...]' w[ith]out doubt that child cryed for vengeance' (TCD MS 836, f. 88). In Price's reimagining of the same story, it is not the child but the mother who cries for revenge.

¹¹ Constable's account of the apparitions at Portadown shares some similarities with Price's:

And [th]at after there appeared visions or apparitions somtymes of men & somtymes of women brest highe above the water att or nere port a downe bridge: w[hi]ch did most extremely and fearfully shriek & cry out for vengeance and bloud against the irish that hadd murdered their bodies there And that their cryes & shriekings did soe terrify the irish thereabouts That [none] durst stay nor live long there, but fledd & removed fur[ther] into

the Cuntry. And this was a Com[m]on report amongst the Rebels there, and this passed for truth amongst them all for any thing shee could ever observe to [th]e Contrary (TCD MS 836, ff. 89-89v).

Constable confirms the key points of Price's account (the apparitions, some of whom were female, their cries for vengeance, and the terror and flight of the Irish), and there are also echoes in phraseology.

¹² Ann Fanshawe (1905: 86-8) provides a contemporary depiction of a banshee:

about one o'clock I heard a voice that wakened me. I drew the curtain, and in the casement of the window, I saw, by the light of the moon, a woman leaning into the window, through the casement, in white, with red hair and pale and ghastly complexion: she spoke loud, and in a tone I had never heard, thrice, 'A horse'; and then, with a sigh more like the wind than breath she vanished, and to me her body looked more like a thick cloud than substance.

There are some similarities between Fanshawe's banshee and Price's apparition: her pale complexion, loud voice, and the repetition of her words three times.

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