Liberty was offered by a Bishop of the Church of England but the Roman Catholic convert Thomas Pounde replied that, if he could gain his liberty only by denying the truth of his God, “he would prefer that his soul should be torn from his body rather than that his body should be released on such terms” (Foley, 1873: 47). Thomas Pounde chose truth over liberty.

King James of Scotland suspects that Anna, his queen, has Roman Catholic inclinations. We are told he said to her: “Well, wife, if you cannot live without this sort of thing, do your best to keep things as quiet as possible, for if you don’t, our crown is in danger” (Forbes-Leith, 1885: 265). The talented queen chose artifice in place of truth and protected their succession to the Protestant crown of England.

It is late sixteenth century England. The Parliament and the Reformed Church of England demand religious uniformity. Legal enforcement of religious uniformity results in an environment of discrimination and persecution. The open practice of the rituals and the professing of Roman Catholicism in England are punishable by harsh penalties, including fines, imprisonment, and execution. Rome, however, vigilantly maintains its claim to the “one true and only visible” faith and urges reconciliation or conversion. The opposing religious truths of the Church of England and the Church of Rome are authorized in formal statements of confessional conviction and the publication and spread of these formal statements of truth serves to provide people with individual choice. Both Churches entreat individuals to cautiously consider eternal salvation and to diligently seek out the visible signs of the truths claimed. Both sides of the confessional divide claim the “true faith” with each accusing the other of heresy. Conversion from

1 The “Life” of Thomas Pounde, S.J., was complied by Henry Foley, S.J., from various sources including State Papers, Domestic, from the British Public Record Office, and several “historia” and biographical works written by members of the S.J. and published in the mid seventeenth century. Throughout, “S.J.” signifies that the person was/is a member of the Society of Jesus.

2 Queen Elizabeth the First and her successor, King James the First, adopted the parliamentary Act of Uniformity enforcing the use and effect of The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, as opposed to the ecclesiastical authority and Catechism of the Church of Rome. The uniquely English Protestant theology and doctrine was established by Elizabeth (in 1563) and ratified by James (in 1603) via the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England. An Act of parliament in 1571 ordered the clergy to subscribe to the Articles which were circulated to the people at compulsory weekly church services through its reading from the Book of Common Prayer.

3 The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563, 1571, 1603) and the Catechism of the Council of Trent (1566) for the Church of Rome.
one religion to another becomes a political act as much as a religious act (Marotti, 2005: Ch.4). And, passionate religious rivalry between the English Protestants and the Roman Catholics becomes commonplace because the choice is crucial for some; this era of confessional rivalry spawns martyrdom and war. And, while the line of uniformity is blurry, the choices are clear cut: conformity, non-conformity, or, conversion (Questier, 1996: Ch.6). While there is no denying that non-conformity exacted a price; it is the burden of conversion which is most keenly brought home to us when we consider the English late sixteenth, early seventeenth century perceptions of “truth” and “artifice”. As my selected passages indicate, some choices imposed life-changing consequences: for the professing of truth – a life of imprisonment and banishment; and, for keeping quiet – a life of secrecy, sustained by artifice. This dangerous, discriminatory, and competitive environment, I suggest, was the hotbed for the denigration of the word “artifice”, and, for the religious alignment of the word “truth”.

The English Protestants and the Roman Catholics were engaged in a battle of words and of personal sacrifice. Either the Protestant religion would survive in England or Roman Catholicism would be revived. The battle was for eternal salvation of each English person. The Church of England had the monarchy and the Parliament, and therefore, the law, on its side. The Church of Rome had the Society of Jesus, a religious order which found itself vital to Rome’s mission to preserve the Catholic faith throughout Europe (Edwards, 1985: Ch. 1-6). These missionaries, designated “Jesuits” by the Protestant establishment, were zealous and made special efforts to attract and convert important people who were expected to have influence over others. Two such important converts were the English gentleman, Thomas Pounde, and the queen consort of James the Sixth of Scotland, Anna of Denmark. A realm apart but connected by the truth of the Church of Rome, their lives would intersect meaningfully, if but briefly, in 1604 (Foley, 1873: 77). So, here, in two obscure but respected passages from early seventeenth century texts, we can glimpse the implications consequent upon two individual’s application of “truth” when faith is at stake. Also, as regards the queen consort, there is the notion of what “artifice” means in terms of utilizing one’s best endeavours, one’s artistic craft and skill, in order to sustain one’s faith and status. I will return to the imprisoned courtier and the queen consort shortly but first “truth” and “artifice”.

In the English language around the turn of the seventeenth century “truth” primarily meant “the most perfect essence of anything”, and, “artifice” was still an Italian word primarily referring to the skill of a tradesman or craftsman. However, both words

---

4 Maintaining the truth of the Church of Rome did mean death for the 214 Catholics executed for treason in England between 1570 and 1618 during the reigns of Elizabeth Tudor (1558-1603) and James Stuart (1603-1625). Also, between 1555 and 1558, in the reign of the Catholic, Mary Tudor, 284 Protestants were executed for heresy. See: Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 92-93, & 342-352, and for an overview, Chapters 4 & 5.

5 For an understanding of the concept of the soul in early modern times, see: Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (New York: Norton, American edition 2004), esp. Ch.2 “Religion and the Soul”.

6 Peter Harrison discusses the distinction between “faith” and “religion” in: *Religion* and the Religions, 10-14.

were undergoing transformation. The word “truth” was being conscripted by the writers of disputatious texts on both sides of the confessional divide to convey truth specifically as the thing “necessary to salvation”. The word “artifice”, in the process of being anglicized, was hovering on its slippery slope towards having an ill meaning akin to trickery and fraud. What made this slope very slippery was the surfacing of the use of binary oppositions by English Protestant writers. Professor Peter Lake has explained the particular use of binary oppositions in Protestant disputatious texts as an integral element in Protestant analysis of the perceived errors of the Church of Rome (Lake, 1989: Ch.3; and see, Milton, 1995: Ch.4). In this way every negative characteristic assigned to Rome or the Pope provided a positive and superior characteristic for the Church of England. Thus, the English Protestants, via their arguments designed to advance a unique image for the Church of England, guaranteed that Protestant truths would find expression as positives over perceived negatives of the Church of Rome, hence: “Verity” over “Error”; “Gold” over “Dross”; “Right Faith” over “Popish Faith”, and eventually, “Truth” over “Artifice”.8 The Church of Rome on the other hand declared its “truth” by falling back on arguments floated with exclusive claims to the universal apostolic traditions and over a thousand years of church history. The arguments display a universal preoccupation with alternative concepts of truth and whose conviction was the most moral. The parties were adversarial; the imperative was after all the salvation of souls. And, thus it was for the imprisoned courtier, Thomas Pounde, and the Queen Consort, Anna of Denmark.

Thomas Pounde, born in 1539, was a wealthy landowner, and kin of the influential Roman Catholics of Southampton. He was talented in music, drama and dance, and reveled in being a pleasure seeking courtier of some repute in the royal court of Elizabeth the First. Thomas had a promising career in law in London. However, in 1571 after being publicly humiliated by Queen Elizabeth at a courtly entertainment he became disenchanted and retired to his country estate. Of the next 44 years of Thomas’ life he would spend 30 years in prison and his final twelve years banished and strictly paroled. Thomas Pounde’s life comes to us from a Society of Jesus biography and from British State Papers (Foley, 1873: 13-15 & 19-143; also see: McCoog, 2007). From the Society’s point of view, Thomas is considered to be an exceptional convert and pseudo-martyr; a dedicated layman who suffered for the truth in a manner only anticipated by the priests of the Society of Jesus.9 The biography portrays Thomas as a learned gentleman whose knowledge of and faith in the true religion, and therefore the certainty of his soul’s salvation, provided Thomas with confidence and patience to endure deprivation, long terms of imprisonment, and harsh punishments. The State Papers, however, notarize

---

8 Francis White, [editor], “The Epistle Dedicatorie” and “To The Reader” in A replie to Jesuit Fishers answere to certain questions propounded by … King James …. by R. B. [Richard Baylie, but in fact by William Laud] (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1624), accessed via EEBO – view images 4, 5 & 6 of 354. For the use of “truth” and “artifice” see: William, Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury” [William Laud also written as Lawd], A relation of the conference betweene William Lawd, then Lrd.Bishop … and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite …. (London: Printed by Richard Badger, 1639), electronic image 10 of 209.

9 Ann Dillon discusses the symbolic power of martyrdom and its purposeful construction in texts as a “potent symbol” of Catholic identity during Elizabethan times, see: Anne Dillon, The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), see esp. p.3-11.
Thomas variously as a “prisoner”, a “priest”, a “desperate and obstinate … recusant”, a “professed Jesuit …[and] a dangerous fellow”. It is the last description of Thomas which is no doubt the most telling. By 1578 Thomas had been converted to Roman Catholicism and had become a dedicated lay member of the Society of Jesus. He was a zealous convert and was unrelenting in his efforts to convert other Englishmen to the truth; behaviour which ensured that Thomas was in and out of prison several times in the 1570s and 80s on charges of treason. As a Jesuit, Thomas unceasingly challenged the Protestant establishment in debate and by written word. During one of his early prison terms Thomas wrote and had published, his exposé, *Sixe Reasons*, being his argument for Church of Rome tradition and ritual against Church of England sole adherence to the word of the Scriptures. The publication of this exposé created a significant controversy in 1580-81 (Tutino, 2004: 32-35). Because Thomas remained “obstinate”, consistently challenging the truths of the Church of England, his final 18 year term of imprisonment was spent mostly in solitary confinement until King James permitted Thomas’s conditional release in 1604. The intercession of several important ambassadors for the Roman Catholic faith is credited with Thomas being granted this conditional release. And significantly, one of these persons, we are told, was Queen Anna who personally approached her husband, King James, after being entreated to do so by the Spanish Ambassador and Thomas’s Roman Catholic kin. And, although Anna was apparently severely reminded at this time by the King not to interfere in matters of the State and religion, the likelihood that the Queen Consort did in fact intercede at this time for mercy for the Jesuit prisoner is a signifier of the Queen’s private behaviour in support of her Roman Catholic faith.

Queen Anna was born a princess in 1574 in Lutheran Protestant Denmark. In 1589 she married King James of Scotland who by then was committed to Protestantism and had his eye on the Protestant throne of England. By all accounts the newly wed, teenage Anna was an intelligent, moderately pious lady, already adept in the high culture of courtly rituals and entertainments. No doubt the strict masculine, Calvinist Protestant culture established in the Scottish royal Court stifled the young Anna who soon found enjoyment and guidance in a small group of aristocratic Roman Catholic women (Wade, 2003: 53-56). By 1600 Queen Anna had privately converted to Roman Catholicism under the guidance of a priest of the Society of Jesus. Then, in 1603 Anna was crowned as James’ Queen in England. Anna’s anti-Protestant action of refusing to partake of the sacrament of Communion during the Coronation ceremony in London delighted the Roman Catholic foreign dignitaries in attendance, being viewed by them as a triumph for the true religion. But at the same time Anna’s action ensured that a Protestant veil of obscurity and secrecy would flow over the Queen’s life. Queen Anna’s life and cultural achievements, for years shrouded in the deception and denial put in place via official Protestant propaganda, therefore comes to us mainly from foreign Roman Catholic sources and from records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, and also from the most recent interpretations of Anna’s ceremonial activities and court masques (Loomie, 1971:

---

See the Robert Crowley publication of 1581 which contains the *Sixe Reasons* by Thomas Pownde [Pounde], and the Protestant answers by Pastor Crowley, *Aunswere to Pownde*, and by Pastor Henric Trippe *A breve Aunswer to Master Powne*, as accessed via EEBO: Robert Crowley, *An answer to six reasons ….* (London: John Charlewood, 1581).
Fortunately, the reputation of Anna has finally broken from the male-biased Protestant line that she was frivolous, vain, extravagant and ineffective as a queen. Nevertheless, practising her religious devotion in secret whilst maintaining a Protestant public persona took its toll and it was regularly gossiped that she was either “crasie” or suffering from “melancholy” (McClure, II, 1939: 104 & 129).

Queen Anna however, was an astute woman who, realizing her inability to have a political place in the restrictive society of patriarchal and Protestant England, nevertheless was skilful in finding ways to express her faith in Roman Catholic truth, in combination with her Protestant queenship. A major feature of the queen’s skill was to invest her talent and her money in the high court culture of the period. Anna became an influential patron of the arts. One aspect of this patronage was the development of the royal court masque. Anna was an active participant in, and a producer of, several court masques (Barroll, 2001; and McManus, 2002).

The court masque was an entertainment presented as a theatrical production within the royal court environment. It has been described as being variously a “featherbrained” trifling entertainment for aristocratic revelers, and, as, a “socially and politically significant ….display of power” (Bevington & Holbrook, 1998: 1-4). It was likely both from time to time, but essentially it was an expensive, private production, targeted for its specific audience. And for its female performers, it should certainly be viewed as the ultimate female avenue for the implementation of true artifice. Court masques were a staged entertainment were female performers were permitted, but, being traditionally required to remain silent, they therefore only had access to expression through the make-up, ornaments, costume, dance, and gestures of the masque (McManus, 2002: 6-17). The writers, producers, and inventors of masques were artists and fine craftsmen who took delight in devising symbolic imagery and expressions to artfully display a virtue or a truth; displays by which to tease and test their audience (Allardyce, 1938: 22-25 & 154-191). The queen’s masques were fleeting entertainments performed by candelabra lighting and experienced only once. Each masque, since performed only once, was specifically designed for its small select audience of aristocratic people; audiences who would have competed amongst themselves to discern the ideas and symbolism expressed in the visual and auditory aspects of the masque. And yes, these select audiences did include Roman Catholic foreign dignitaries; Roman Catholics who vied for admission to the queen’s entertainments. Thus it is the realization of the uniqueness of the court masque that allows us great latitude of speculation when considering Queen Anna’s specific intentions as a producer and silent performer. We can mostly only guess at what ingenious artifice Anna devised, to impress upon the Roman Catholic amongst her audience, of her continued support of the true religion. However, the most recent research into ascertaining connections between Anna’s Roman Catholic faith and her court masques reveals that artifice was employed by the queen to express her secret confessional identity (McManus, 2002; and Murray, 2007). Clare McManus has identified one “possible” example (McManus, 2002: 188-201). In the performance of Cupid’s Banishment – performed in 1617 – the female masquers presented to Anna an embroidered emblem featuring the rosemary flower, a flower which was strongly linked to Roman Catholic rituals associated with the Virgin Mary; an ingenious artifice indeed. It is these kinds of small signifiers that must continue to be more thoroughly considered since...
it was only in this form of elusive artifice and in the kind of privately personal support, as demonstrated by Anna’s efforts for Thomas Pounde, that the queen consort could exercise her loyalty to the truth in an environment so hostile to her faith. So, what the lives of Thomas and Anna can demonstrate for us is contemporary notions about the imperative of holding true to the Catholic faith of the Church of Rome in order to merit salvation of the soul.

By the early seventeenth century, propounding the truth had become an endemic element of the disputatious literature and countless conferences designed to debate aspects of religion and thus to compete for the souls of the English people (Patterson, 2000: 43-48, 280-284, 342-346). To discover how these confessional rivals promoted their truth I looked briefly at a spate of publications which arose following a series of private Conferences held in London in 1622; an investigation that unexpectedly turned up an interesting contrast for the lives of Thomas and Anna, as well as a surprise in terms of “truth and artifice”. The Conferences were summoned by King James and chiefly involved selected Bishops of the Church of England, and, a Jesuit Priest, John Percy. Father Percy was, at that time, a political detainee with parole privileges (Wadkins, 2008). The 1622 Conferences were convened ostensibly to “seek…the Truth ….in Religion”. But, the real reason involved a complex combination of foreign policy demands, hinging on the King’s unpopular alliance with Catholic Spain, and, a very personal domestic issue for the King involving the public awareness of Roman Catholic sympathizers in his royal court (Cogswell, 1989: Ch.4; & Patterson, 2000: 305-338). Specifically, it had become known that the notorious Jesuit priest, John Percy, commonly known as “Fisher, the Jesuit”, had extraordinary influence in the household of the King’s most favoured courtier, George, Duke of Buckingham, and so, it was necessary that the King act to regain control of his court (Lockyer, 1981; Payne, 2001: 259-260; Wadkins. 1988: 154-158). Of particular concern for the King was the undesirable behaviour of his confidante, the Duke’s mother, Mary, Countess of Buckingham; a woman whose feminine influence within James’ royal court had increased rapidly in the few years since the death of Queen Anna. The Countess had, early in 1622, publicly declared that she intended to convert to Roman Catholicism, and this, was the personal issue that really prompted the King to summon the Conferences; all the publications relating to the proceedings of the Conferences, state, the giving of instruction in the truth to “that Honourable Lady [the Countess]”, as the purpose for the Conferences. Indeed, it is

11 These publications all accessed via EEBO include: A.C[aatholic] [John Percy alias “Fisher, the Jesuit], An answer to a pamphlet, Intituled: The Fisher catched in his owne net …. ([London: Printed by Peter Smith, and, Saint-Omer: English College Press], 1623); and, Francis White [editor], A replie to Jesuit Fishers answere to certain questions …Heredunt is anniced, a conference of the right: R.B. of St Davids [Richard Baylie, but in fact, William Laud] with the same Jesuit [Fisher] (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1624); and, William, Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury [William Laud also written as Lawd], A relation of the conference betweene William Lawd, then Lrd.Bishop … and Mr. Fisher the Jesuite …. (London: Printed by Richard Badger, 1639). There are at least 3 other publications which relate directly to this set of Conferences. Timothy Wadkins provides detailed information of the 1622/23 Conferences and discusses them in the wider context of James’ ecclesiastical and political interests at the time of James’ alliance negotiations with Spain, see: Timothy H. Wadkins, “The Percy-‘Fisher’ Controversies and the Ecclesiastical Politics of Jacobean Anti-Catholicism, 1622-1625,” Church History 57:2 (1988): 153-169, Accessed via JSTOR.

stated that it was the King’s “desire to recover the … Honorable [Countess] out of the Fisher’s Net”. And so, the Countess was summoned to the Conferences and the Bishops were instructed by the King to ensure that the Countess would not “revolt from the true Faith and Religion professed” in the Church of England. As for the debate between the Bishops and the Jesuit, it was required that each party defend and confirm the “truth” of their faith based on “sacred scripture … [and] ancient Tradition”.13 Both parties propounded the validity of the basis of their truths on these things and both parties denied that the other could possibly provide such confirmation.

What is significant here in terms of “truth and artifice” is that: first, the debates were recorded and quickly published, by both sides, to separately confirm their truths; and second, in 1639, Archbishop William Laud published a revised and expanded version of his first account of the conferences. In the preamble to the 1624 Protestant publication, the Church of Rome is denounced but begrudgingly allowed its efficient “cunning and subtile [subtlety]” in the defence of its truth.14 Then, in the 1639 publication, Archbishop Laud, has predictably moderated his stance, by conceding in his revised text, some possibilities for the souls of those lured by the “devices” and “cunning malice” of Roman Catholicism.15 And, significantly, in this 1639 text, “Artifice and Cunning” have replaced “cunning and subtile [subtlety]”, and, on the very same page, the Archbishop has very craftily juxtaposed “Truth” and “Artifice”.16 The effect is the extremely efficient, denigration of the word artifice. And so, a defining transformation has taken place. No longer is it the adversary’s neat cleverness which is denounced as in the 1624 text. Now in the 1639 text, the adversary is accused of employing trickery and fraud to defend truth; the Archbishop states his belief that the Church of Rome uses “Artifice and Cunning” to mislead the “tuneable” to “Ring so miserably out of Tune” that they would follow any “blind Guide”.17 This is a truly efficient denigration indeed.

I set the scene with two introductory passages; passages which reveal how “truth” and “artifice” became the tools of survival for the two very different but briefly connected lives of Thomas Pounde and Queen Anna. The lives of Father John Percy and Mary, Countess of Buckingham, however, contrast vividly with the lives of Thomas and Anna, and yet, barely twenty years, in the reign of the same monarch, separates them in terms of religious tolerance. The truth was still in dispute but it was 1622, not 1603, and, if there was artifice practised by the Countess in the wake of the Conferences, it was no clever artistic device, it was most likely quite cunning, and even fraudulent, for she


14 Francis White, “To The Reader” in A replie to Jesuit Fishers answers to certain questions … (1624), EEBO electronic image 6 of 354.

15 William Lawd [Laud], A Relation of the Conference, 1639, quotes from electronic image 7 & 202 of 209, EEBO.

16 William Lawd [Laud], A Relation of the Conference, 1639, quotes from electronic image 10 of 209, EEBO.

accepted 2000pounds from the King in June 1622, conformed and attended Protestant services, but just three months later she did publicly re-declare her conversion to Roman Catholicism. Still, the Countess remained King James’ confidante until his death in 1625. As for John Percy, he was pardoned by King Charles and allowed to live on parole in the Countess’s home, ministering the truth to courtly society, until 1634 when he was imprisoned for refusing to leave England. By late 1635 however, Charles’ Catholic Queen Consort, Henrietta Maria, had publicly interceded on John Percy’s behalf and he was released.

Ultimately this has been a story of four lives and two evolving words which became characters on the pages of those lives. As for faith, regardless of confessional conviction, truth became the moral certainty which was required for salvation, and, along with the disputation of truths came a new meaning in the English language for the word artifice. And, where are we with “Truth” and “Artifice”? Well, I suggest that it is the early seventeenth century disputatious literature that should bear responsibility for religiously aligning the word “truth” and also for contributing to the destruction of the innocence of the stylish Italian word “artifice”.

8 Cheryl Dawes, The Queen Consort and the imprisoned courtier
WORKS CITED

PRINTED SOURCES – COLLECTIONS


SECONDARY SOURCES:


