

学術論文

The Militant Protestantism in Thomas Drue's *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk*

Keitaro ISHIBASHI *1

There has been little critical interest in Thomas Drue's *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk* (1623-24). A reason for this lack of favor is that the play is composed of the type of biographical elements, with a crude episodic manner, whose popularity was seen around the turn of the seventeenth century. Moreover, the play's concern is to criticize the Catholic bishops, without a theological dispute shown. According to Irving Ribner, it was a somewhat anachronistic production even in the 1620s. Then, why did the playwright compose this anachronistic drama at a time when the biographical play was out of fashion? To examine it, I would like to illustrate Drue's treatment of the Palatine, the king of Poland, who is identified with Frederick V of Germany, the husband of King James I's daughter, Elizabeth. By focusing on his figure, considerable political significance in the context of the 1620s becomes clear. The Palatine's defiance of Queen Mary's policy corresponds to the contemporary militant Protestantism, shown as a negative reaction to the Jacobean pacifism. This essay will illuminate the political message of the militant Protestants on the shaping of *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk* by examining the anti-Catholic elements of the play in relation to contemporary events in England. The frequent invocation of Frederick in the play was meant to encourage the violent extermination of Roman Catholicism.

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Thomas Drue remains one of those playwrights of the early seventeenth century about whom we know very little; he has been identified with the actor, Thomas Drew, although G. E. Bentley considers this highly unlikely.¹ A work which has been attributed to Drue is *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk*. This is a short English chronicle play, dramatizing events in the life of a historical Duchess of Suffolk during the period from 1553 to 1558, just before, during, and after the reign of Queen Mary. As the title of the play shows, the heroine is Katherine Willoughby, the fourth wife of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. The precise date of the play's composition cannot be determined, except for the fact that the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, entered it on January 2, 1623/4 as the property of the Palsgrave's Company. The focus of the play is upon the sufferings of the Duchess, who is relentlessly persecuted by the Bishop of London, Bonner, and forced to flee to the continent in disguise. At the end of the play, however, with the accession of Elizabeth I, she is rescued and restored to her estates, while the Catholic bishop is thrown into prison. The play is drawn chiefly from the second edition of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1570). In addition to the account in Foxe, the playwright seems to have been interested in a ballad, "The Duchess Suffolk's Calamity" by Thomas Deloney,

printed in his *Strange Histories* of 1602.² The ballad is based on the *Acts and Monuments*, and on the reprint of Foxe's version of the story in Raphael Holinshed. According to the accounts of these chroniclers, Deloney depicts the plights of the Duchess and her husband Bertie beset by thieves and deserted by their nurse on the continent. Moreover, the author of the ballad mentions the birth of their son during a great storm. The popularity of the ballad in praise of the Duchess might have caused the playwright to write of her pathetic misfortunes. In Drue's time, in fact, the Duchess had become a popular symbol of triumphant Protestantism among the bourgeois inclined to Puritanism.³

More importantly, the play's strong Protestant bias is quite apparent. Having recognized the "dangerous matter" in the play, the Master of the Revels reformed the play and licensed it to be performed at the Fortune by the Palsgrave's Company.⁴ No evidence shows what the "dangerous matter" was, though. When the play is viewed in the political and religious context of the 1620s, the probable nature of the Master's censorship becomes clearer. In 1620, a couple of years before the play was composed, King James I's son-in-law, the Palatine, Prince Frederick V of Germany, had been expelled from the throne of Bohemia by the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand. In order to gain the support of the Spanish

*1 Department of International Cultural Studies

branch of the Habsburgs for the claims of Frederick, King James wanted to conclude a marriage between his son Charles and the Spanish Infanta.⁵ Because the marital alliance implied James's *volte-face* on Catholic policy, it became a real threat to the religious stability in England. Despite the fact that the alliance was unsuccessful, the play is designed to appeal the Protestant elements arranged against the King's religious policy. Considering the contemporary politics in England, the dangerous matter in the play which Sir Henry Herbert felt might have been a sensational anti-Catholicism, which had been prevalent among much of the Protestant faction.

Now critical interest in *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk* has waned. A reason for the lack of interest is that the play is of the type with biographical elements and considerable romantic melodrama, a popular form seen around the turn of the seventeenth century. According to Irving Ribner, it was somewhat anachronistic as a production even in the 1620s.⁶ Then, why did the playwright compose this anachronistic drama at a time when the biographical play was out of fashion? Margot Heinemann has pointed out that the play adjusted "history to parallel the sufferings of the dethroned Queen Bohemia more closely with those of the royal Duchess exiled under Queen Mary."⁷ While true, the critic has not mentioned Drue's treatment of the Palatine, the king of Poland, who frees the Berties, the Duchess's family, and keeps Queen Mary's agent from arresting them. The Palatine is the only person who can confront and defy the queen's powers. If we pay attention to his figure, considerable political significance in the context of the 1620s becomes clear. The Palatine's defiance of the English queen's policy is parallel with the contemporary militant Protestantism, shown as the Protestant faction's negative reaction to the Jacobean policy. This essay will illuminate the political message of the militant Protestants on the shaping of *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk* by examining the anti-Catholic elements of the play in relation to contemporary events in England.

I

In the opening scene of *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk*, the playwright shows the Protestantism of the Duchess, who is glad to see the Catholic bishop Bonner arrested and criticizes his faith. Some time before her

open Protestantism is shown, the Duchess receives a letter from the Count Palatine, recently made King of Poland. For some audience who knew that the Palsgrave's Company had been patronized by the descendant of the Palatine shown in the play, the Count might have been identified with Frederick V of Germany, the husband of King James I's daughter, Elizabeth. In this context, the Duchess responds to the Palatine's courtship:

I may intreat the *Palatins* with grace,
All curtesie and favours, for my Sovereignes sake,
I will present him with smooth countenance,
But for the poynnt heere touching Marriage, . . .
(I. i. 17-20)⁸

Having been just widowed, the Duchess refuses him. Protesting against her refusal, her honest serving man, Bertie, praises the Count's virtues and persuades her to marry him. Bertie's praise of the Count seems to have been given to Frederick, expected to be a Protestant leader on the continent, as Robert Anthony Raines has suggested.⁹ Although the Duchess decides to marry Bertie in the presence of her suitors, the Palatine graciously accepts her choice without rancor. For the Protestants who had seen Frederick as the victim of a Popish plot because of the Catholic coalition against him, the Palatine's temperate and equitable attitudes to her would enhance him as a judicious champion of Protestantism. In the following scene, Mary Tudor ascends the throne of England on the death of King Edward VI. Then, her restoration of Catholicism, with its unsparing persecution of Protestantism, is emphasized strongly in the play. Namely, Princess Elizabeth does not escape from the crude persecution. It soon becomes clear that Bonner is planning to put Lady Suffolk in peril for her faith. He confiscates her house and goods, and relentlessly persecutes her. Most importantly in this scene, the Lady stresses her Protestantism when she welcomes the opportunities to renounce the worldly luxuries:

There should we reade, vpon the naked walls,
The first creation of our wretchednesse;
There no intruding obiects of gaie clothes,
Imbrodered hangings, or rich tapistrie,
Shall wound the seruice which we owe to heaven.
(II. i. 450-54)

This is an apparent expression of a theological position that became a distinctly Puritan doctrinal or theological point. Especially, the Duchess' reference to "wretchednesse" reflects pietists' idea of election and salvation of God: for the pietists, signs of their election and salvation were expressed in the most wretched sense of desolation.¹⁰ As William Perkins, one of their leaders, believed, God's clemency and assurance of election never came to them without their wretchedness inwardly touched, no matter how many prayers they performed.¹¹ The Duchess' faith serves to show the theological protest against the Catholic prelates in the play, even if Bonner pursues her as almost exclusively a matter of personal vengeance on her for her insult in the opening scene.

II

Drue sharpens dissenting voices against King James's Catholic policy during his day, by providing the pleasure of seeing the Catholic prelates' plots frustrated. Dr. Sands, the historical vice-chancellor at Cambridge, escapes his pursuers by being disguised as a tiler. When the Duchess is forced to give birth to a child on a church porch during a great storm at Wesel, Erasmus rescues her. Drue's anachronistic invention of him appeals the Protestant elements arranged against the Jacobean policy. Furthermore, the focus in the play is on brave Protestant martyrs, Latimer and Ridley, who are forced to make their way to the stake. They are brought in for the contrast their virtues offer to the villainy of Bonner and Gardiner, according to Foxe's account of the event.¹² After having beheld their martyrdom, Cranmer recants his recantation and wants to reconcile with them. These incidents stress the anti-Catholicism unacceptable politically and religiously at a time when high-church attitudes were coming to the fore at the court of James.¹³ To the Protestants, James I's reliance of Arminians on the practice of the primitive church, and their insistence on the continuity of the Anglican church with the pre-Reformation church, seemed to presage a drift Romeward. Therefore, the portrayal of the Palatine, the king of Poland, has implications touching on the strong anti-Catholic sentiment of the play. The Palatine gives sanctuary to the Berties when they are fleeing persecution on the continent and are accused of the murder of the captain there. The king defends their Protestantism, and opposes the evil actions of the

Catholic queen, Mary:

Her heavenly face, then which theres none more faire,
In England, or the World,
Might without other wisse of her state,
Suffice to tell you, she was nobly borne,
This is that *Duchtes*, mirror of this age, . . .
(V. i. 1969-73)

The king is depicted as the only person who can rescue the Berties from their predicament. Of equal importance is the portrayal of the German Prince Frederick V as the Palatine. For Frederick came to England to marry King James's daughter Elizabeth and was a patron of the Palsgrave's Company,¹⁴ as was mentioned earlier. As L. M. Oliver has pointed out, "the players thus honored their patron by presenting a flattering portrait of their predecessor,"¹⁵ Drue might have capitalized on his popularity when he wrote the play. The playwright's decision to cast the Palatine as the political parallel with Frederick, however, has more to do with the contemporary militant Protestantism, potentially hostile to James, than with the flattering portrait of him: the Palatine's defiance of the authority of Queen Mary on religious grounds marks the dramatic expression of the Protestant's vision of their sovereign in the 1620s. In the play, when the Duke of Brunswick and his soldiers appear with a warrant, and demand in the name of royal prerogative to release the Berties, the Palatine resolutely refuses it:

The League, for this time, is your priveledge,
But as you dread the *Palsgraues* puisance
And feare to violate our wrighten loue,
Immediately vntred your forward steps,
Forsake the soyle where you haue set your foote,
Or looke to be withstood with fire and sword,
These Lambes are fled into our foulds for ayd,
And weele defend them, say what may be sayd.
(V. i. 2021-28)

Not only does the Palatine refuse to release the fugitives, but defiantly makes Bertie Earl of Crozam. Moreover, he makes Dr. Sands his chaplain, and Cranwell his Chief Secretary. In this scene, the Tudor and the Stuart principle of royal sovereignty is apparently challenged. In addition, his defiance of the queen's authority with "fire" and "sword" shows that his Protestantism is

openly militaristic. His resistance to the English monarch serves to illustrate the militant Protestant belief at the beginning of the 1620s that a war with Catholic was the best way to aid the cause of the Protestantism in general and that of Frederick in particular.¹⁶ The playwright's favorable depiction of him in a religious matter admits the moral possibility of rebellion against royal prerogatives.¹⁷

III

Even the slightest suggestion of the Palatine's policy testifies to Drue's strong political and religious bias: the Palatine's argument achieves a contemporaneity that helps to articulate the commons' petition in which they proposed as remedies that James should prepare for war and direct his sword against the Catholic arms mainly responsible for the loss of Frederick's electorate.¹⁸ Against the commons' petition, James ordered the parliament not to meddle with matters of state, and dismissed the house.¹⁹ The King's pacifism led to the political situation in which Frederick's cause was desperate, for his electorate was conferred on Maximilian of Bavaria by the emperor: Frederick had lost every foot of his native land by the end of 1622.²⁰ The incident illustrates the playwright's manipulation of source material to expound a political and religious ideology. So long as Protestant sentiments prevalent in the play culminate in the Palatine's defiance of Queen Mary's authority, it is possible to say that the confrontation between the Palatine and Brunswick shows the moral possibility of rebellion against the authority of an English monarch. In much the same manner as the Palatine, Drue has the Duchess allude to the Jacobean policy. She responds to a messenger who has arrived to tell of the death of Mary and the withdrawal of the warrant for her arrest:

I render thanks vnto the gracious heavens,
Thou that send'st Balme of comfort to the wounded,
Ioy to the brused heart, opprest for truth,
Lengthen her dayes as long as heaves hath starres,
Or this faire frame foundation for a world,
Or if it be thy gracious prouidence,
For to remooue her to a happier place,
Let in her stead arise, and from her ashes come,
A Phenix may enlighten Christendome, . . .

(V. i. 2065-73)

Elizabeth I is depicted as a virtuous queen who has triumphed over adversity, not as an agent of God. Despite the apparent reference to James as "Phenix," the plea for it to "enlighten Christendome" upon her death openly appeals to the Protestants who were potentially hostile to the absolute monarch. By the 1620s they had known that James was not to be called the champion of their party. Considering the overt expressions of anti-monarchic sentiment, Elizabeth in this scene makes the play appear nostalgic in temper, longing for the Queen whose last reign was militaristic. In short, the playwright tries to show the patriotic emotions of his audience through the shared Protestantism of the Palatine and the Duchess of Suffolk.

IV

Having heard a news of the accession of Elizabeth from the messenger, the Duchess returns to England in order to pay homage to her. In London, Bonner recants his faith in expectation of his relief from imprisonment, when he is thrown into the prison. In the following scene, the Duchess is welcomed by Lord Hunsdon and the Lord Admiral. She is restored to her estates. Bertie is appointed as Chief Secretary, Dr. Sands as Archbishop of York, and Cromwell as Gentleman Usher, by the queen. Appreciating her majesty, the party of the Duchess praises her as the advent of the grace of God. In addition, Lady Suffolk relieves the imprisoned debtors, and while visiting the Marshalsea she recognizes among the prisoners a Mr. Gosling who had saved her life in Holland, and she promises to repay him for his kindness during the time of her miserable plight. In spite of the playwright's simple description of the beginning of Elizabeth reign, it is somewhat worth while to examine the Duchess' last words at the end of the play:

Gramercies gentle servant, now my Lords,
Lets bend our pace towards famous London -Bridge,
How pleasing is the prospect of the City,
Now I haue bin fiue yeares a stranger heere,
Thorow the same to White-hall to her grace,
That I may see my loving Soveraignes face.

(V. iii. 2295-2300)

In the early 1620s, when Drue appears to have composed his play about the struggles of a Protestant heroine, England was far from the state of political and religious

stability described at the end of his play with the accession of Elizabeth, because Spain had threatened the kingdom to dominate, as a part of its quest for world domination.²¹ To make matter worse, it was at a dangerous period when the Count of Olivares, who ruled King Philip IV of Spain as well as the nation, was well informed about King James's motives in the marriage negotiations for his heir, Prince Charles, in order to secure the restitution of Frederick.²² Without still recognizing the Olivares' intention to convert him to Catholicism, Charles wished to marry the Infanta and traveled to Madrid in March 1623.²³ Because Frederick's restitution was essential as a Protestant stronghold on the continent to resolve the political-religious instability in England, the militant Protestants resolutely declared war against the Catholic alliance. In this context, the Duchess' expectation of the reign of Elizabeth in the play serves as a significant parallel with that of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, in the 1620s. Much like the overtly militaristic sentiments described in both Heywood's *the second part of If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* and Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*, the frequent invocation of Frederick and Queen of Bohemia in this play was meant to encourage the violent extermination of Roman Catholicism. Despite the general criticism of *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk* as a biographical play with a crude episodic manner, its significant response to the political-religious situation of the early 1620s should not be underestimated. When the play is positioned in this political perspective, the Palatine's defiance of the authority of Queen Mary symbolically embodies the obvious expressions of anti-monarchic sentiment.

Notes:

1. G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), II, 427.
2. L. M. Oliver, "Thomas Drue's *Duchess of Suffolk*: A Protestant Drama," *Studies in Biography*, ed. Fredson Bowers, III (1950), 241-46.
3. Robert Anthony Raines, *Thomas Drue's The Duchess of Suffolk: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition*, Doctoral Dissertation, 1968, UMI, 15.
4. Oliver, 246.
5. Godfrey Davies, *The Early Stuarts 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 55-57.
6. Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton

University Press, 1957), p. 295. In addition, G. K. Hunter, in *English Drama 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 278, has pointed out that the play is the chase and escape narrative, according to a tradition of other martyr plays written in the early Stuart period.

7. Margot Heinemann, "Political drama" in *English Renaissance Drama*, eds., by A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 200.

8. Quotations from Drue are taken from Robert Anthony Raines, ed., *Thomas Drue's The Duchess of Suffolk: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition* (1968).

9. Raines, 68.

10. Peter Iver Kaufman, *Prayer, Despair, and Drama: Elizabethan Introspection* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 18-19.

11. Kaufman, pp. 19-20.

12. John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of the Church Containing the History and Sufferings of the Martyrs, part 2* (London: Charterhouse Square, 1838), pp. 821-61.

13. Bentley (III, 285) and Oliver (246) share this speculation.

14. Raines, 38-39.

15. Oliver, 242.

16. Davies, p. 57.

17. Raines, 70.

18. Davies, pp. 57-58.

19. Davies, pp. 57-58.

20. Davies, p. 58. After the failures of James's attempts to reconstitute Bohemia for him, Frederick spent his days as a hanger-on at the Swedish Court of Gustavus Adolphus. Through his daughter Sophia (1630-1714), mother of George I of England, he became the ancestor of the Hanoverian line of royalty.

21. Albert H. Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England 1603-1642* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), p. 146.

22. John Loftis, *Renaissance Drama in England & Spain: Topical Allusion and History Plays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 151-53.

23. Loftis, p. 156.

和文要旨

トマス・ドゥルー作『サフォーク公爵夫人の生涯』(1623-1624)に関する批評は多くない。その批評史は、アーヴィング・リブナーのものを要約するだけで十分である。リブナーによれば、本劇はカトリックの主教を批判するだけのエピソード主体のメロドラマで、1620年代のものとしては「アナクロニスティック」な伝記劇にすぎない。それにしても、なぜ劇作家は、そのような流行遅れの伝記劇を再現したのだろうか。この疑問に答えるために、イングランド国王ジェームズ一世の義理の息子で、大陸のプロテスタント主義の指導者として期待されたパラティン選挙候フレデリック五世とみなされている、劇中のポーランド国王パラティンに着目したい。この人物に注意を払うのなら、当時のイングランドが抱えていた政治的状況が明らかになる。すなわち、カトリック主義の女王メアリの権威に公然と反対するパラティンの挑戦的な姿勢には、ジェームズのスペイン融和政策に反対し、武力でカトリック勢力を根絶しようとする、イングランドの好戦的なプロテスタント主義者の政治的主張が映し出されているのである。