

II

‘...all Altars [should] be taken down and clear removed even unto the foundation’:

Edmund Grindal. Social and political doublethink in the Puritan movement.

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The purpose of this article is to consider the English Reformation, particularly within the late sixteenth century, from an interdisciplinary perspective. By considering the two seemingly unrelated artefacts of the instructions laid out by one zealous Protestant reformer and the effigy of another, I will discuss the apparent hypocrisies and contradictions of the Reformation which present themselves here.

The term ‘Reformation’ is often used to signify a multitude of complicated events and movements which were happening throughout Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, for this paper, ‘Reformation’ is used to discuss the intense debate and conflict surrounding Christianity in an era where traditional Catholic practices started to give way to new Protestant ones. Before studying the detail of the two artefacts that are central to this study, the first section of this article will very briefly outline the change of traditional church practices between Catholics and Protestants that were taking place during the Reformation. The article will then consider my first chosen artefact, which is a list of injunctions against the Catholic church; as proposed in 1571 by the zealous reformer Edmund Grindal, then Archbishop of York.¹ Of particular interest to this discussion is Grindal’s insistence on the destruction and repression of religious visual imagery. In light of the discussion on Grindal, the third section of this paper will focus on my second chosen artefact:

¹ Church of England. Province of York, Archbishop (1570-1576: Grindal) *Injunctions Given by the Most Reuerende Father in Christ, Edmonde by the Prouidence of God, Archbishop of Yorke* (1571), from Early English Books Online <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99847124&FILE=../session/1518297592_26092&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR> [accessed 02 Jan 2018].

the memorial tomb of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. The tomb was erected in St Mary's Church, Warwick, after his death in 1588. As an aside, Dudley's figure lies beside a sculpture of his wife, Lettice Knollys, which was added after her death in 1634. Given that Knollys' death occurred more than fifty years after Grindal's agenda, her sculpture is not considered in detail but merely mentioned in passing. The purpose of discussing Dudley's sculpture alongside Grindal's injunctions is to show that taking such an interdisciplinary approach to studying the Reformation raises some interesting questions about Protestant distortion of the old system and identifies hypocrisies, not just between Protestants and Catholics, but between the church and the state.

The Reformation in Context

The dominant idea of western Christianity up to the sixteenth century emphasised the importance of tradition. Indeed, Eamon Duffy uses the term 'traditional' rather than 'Catholicism' to describe pre-Reformation religion.² Duffy describes late-medieval tradition as 'tightly knit' in that it was closely bound up with community life, both in the sense of the actual community, who were present in parish worship, and the spiritual communities affirmed by the veneration of saints and by prayers for the dead.³ Indeed, the observance of particular rituals and the reception of sacraments administered by the church were considered necessary for personal salvation. Saints were considered to be intermediaries between God and human beings, and it was thought that they could answer the prayers of the faithful. After death, it was believed that those who were destined for salvation had to pass into purgatory, a place of trial and cleansing which, for Duffy, is '*the defining doctrine of late medieval Catholicism*'.⁴ Private devotions reinforced the communal ethos of traditional religion, for example, church buildings provided visual inspiration for religious teachings.

During the sixteenth century, Catholicism gave way to Protestantism. In contrast to the traditions associated with Catholicism, Protestant theory stressed that salvation depended primarily on personal faith rather than participation in the rituals of the church. Furthermore, rather than depending on a hierarchy of priests and bishops, Protestants asserted that one should draw spiritual inspiration directly from God. As such, they argued that ultimate authority lay in the original text of the prayer book, and that 'preaching was the only way in which Christians should [...] receive God's truth', rather than through church traditions.⁵ The concept of purgatory was rejected. Rather, the correct place for purging was 'here on earth', because the 'penance of sins was far more easily done in life than after

² Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p.3.

³ Duffy, pp.6-7.

⁴ Duffy, p.8, my emphasis.

⁵ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* [Kindle Edition], (Penguin/Amazon Media, 2004): Chapter Eight 'The North: Protestant Heartlands' – Subsection: 'Elizabethan England: A Reformed Church?'

death'.⁶ It was also reasoned that church buildings had to be much plainer; the colourful rituals and images were 'whitewashed' because they were seen as distractions from essential spiritual realities and had to be suppressed.⁷ However, the Religious Settlement, signed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1559 allowed the Church of England to retain some traditional features, such as the hierarchy of bishops, to try and unite the country.⁸

Grindal's Agenda

In spite of the Queen's settlement, during the ensuing decades the church continued to come under attack from both sides: by the Catholics who wished to restore all traditional religious practices; and by radical Protestants, known as Puritans, who insisted that the settlement did not go far enough. One such energetic reformer was Edmund Grindal, who, as Archbishop of York in 1571, drew up a list of injunctions to churchwardens in the north of England. The purpose of this list was to make the Protestant agenda fully explicit. In his instructions, Grindal averred that all images, especially church rood lofts, were to be, 'taken downe and cleane remooued' so no part of them should be preserved.⁹ Furthermore, clergy were no longer to wear colourful vestments but merely 'a cleane and decent surples with large sléeues'.¹⁰ In other words, the interior of churches, including the dress of the clergy, should be much plainer, and visual representations of Christian teaching should give way to written ones. More specifically, Christian teaching was now to be communicated through the study of the biblical text; by participation in the prescribed language of the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer; and by preaching. However, implementing such an extreme change was always going to be a long and complicated process: it has been noted that several years after Grindal's injunctions it had been observed that there had been no amendments of any kind in several parishes.¹¹ Indeed, as Collinson remarks, 'It would be naïve to suppose that the archbishop's purge could in itself have made an immediate and revolutionary change'.¹² Grindal was aware of this, as he wrote in a letter to the Queen in 1576 that it was 'rather to be wished than hoped for' that every parish might have a preaching pastor.¹³ Rather than instant change, then, it is apparent that Catholic traditions were still very much visible in the parish over a decade after Elizabeth's coronation.

⁶ Duffy, p.340-343.

⁷ Duffy, p.xiv.

⁸ MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided*, Chapter 6 'Reunion Scorned, 1547-70, Subsection: 'Turning-points for Dynasties'.

⁹ Grindal, p.[15].

¹⁰ Grindal, p.[3].

¹¹ Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press).

¹² Collinson, p.204.

¹³ Quoted in Collinson, p205.

The implementation of such a controversial theory, though, was met with just as much opposition as support. In some respects, as Collinson explains, ‘Grindal had been deeply respected by his contemporaries, not only for his moderation and pastoral excellence but for learning, judgment, and even that very capacity for [a] resolute government which later observers found wanting’.¹⁴ However, at the same time, Grindal’s agenda was highly controversial, coming up against stern opposition. Grindal was forced to take action in an attempt to ensure adherence to his instructions by demanding that punishments be handed out to bishops who persisted with ‘survivalism’.¹⁵ One such example occurred at Gisburn of Craven, where, ‘the curate was quoted as saying before witnesses that “the pope was and is the head of the church”’.¹⁶ The opposition was not just from Catholics, but also from less radical Protestants. This fact would also suggest that, while radicals such as Grindal strongly desired to root out all Catholic objects and practices and replace them with Protestant ones, many contemporary parish clergies were more reluctant to do so, preferring to combine aspects of both in their religious practice. Indeed, Grindal later found himself suspended from office because he refused to comply with Queen Elizabeth’s instructions to suppress the more radical Protestant orders which she thought would be politically harmful. After receiving numerous complaints, Elizabeth demanded that Grindal ‘convey to his suffragans an order for the “utter suppression” of the “exercises of prophesying”’, which was becoming increasingly popular in the Elizabethan Church.¹⁷ Grindal’s response to the queen was not only his refusal to ‘assent to the suppression of the prophesyings’, but to remind Elizabeth that she was but a mere mortal being in the eyes of God.¹⁸ As such, Grindal’s comments reject the notion of the divine right of kings, according to which it was averred that the king’s spiritual body transcended the earth and served as a symbol of his divine right to rule.¹⁹ Indeed, Grindal’s observation is redolent of *King Lear*, when Lear realises that contrary to the medieval belief in the divine right of kings, beneath his crown and royal clothing he is but ‘a poor, bare, forked animal’ in the eyes of God, just like everybody else.²⁰ Grindal, just like Shakespeare, is arguing that no human being, not even the monarchy, has been given such a Godly right.

Dudley’s Tomb

In light of the above discussion, the effigy of Privy Councillor to Elizabeth I, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, is an interesting case study (see figures 1&2). He was one of Elizabeth’s most trusted Privy

¹⁴ Collinson, p.16.

¹⁵ Collinson, p.203.

¹⁶ Collinson, p.204.

¹⁷ Collinson, p.16.

¹⁸ Collinson, p.16.

¹⁹ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies* (New Jersey/Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2016).

²⁰ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 1997) III.4.105-106.

Councillors and, like Grindal, championed the Puritan drive to eradicate religious imagery. Dudley, too, tried to convince the Queen to rid the churches of all traces of Catholicism. However, given that, as observed by considering Grindal's agenda, such theology was concerned with displaying less grandeur inside the church, the examination of a fellow Puritan's tomb produces exciting results. As William Field describes: the monument consists of four grand Corinthian pillars supporting an 'entablature [which is] placed over an arch [and] adorned in front with a rich fascia', formed by cinquefoils.²¹ Field asserts that above the 'entablature' is a grand *achievement* (the representation of a coat of arms to which the bearer is entitled) in the centre.²² On either side of this *achievement*, there are pyramidal temples: a male figure is standing before the temple on the right, while a female statue is at the front of the temple on the left.²³ Field continues by explaining that 'just below the arch, on a table of marble', the statue of Dudley is positioned, 'clad in armour', and 'covered with a mantle'.²⁴ Next to Dudley, is a statue of his wife, Lettice Knollys, who is covered in a 'coronet and mantle of ermine'.²⁵ The hands of both statues are elevated in prayer and, I observe, each figure is wearing a coronet and robes of state. There are sixteen flags positioned within the arch. On the keystone, there is a cinquefoil ermine.²⁶ In the 'spandrils of the arch' is the coat of arms impaling Dudley and Knollys.²⁷ Worthy of note, I would contend, is that, as with the statues, each shield has a crown placed on top of it. The *achievement* over the entablature displays 'the arms of Dudley with quarterings impaling Knollys, encircled by the garter, supported by two lions [...] and surrounded by a crest and a lion's head'.²⁸ A cinquefoil ermine is placed over these arms, while at the very top there is a crested bear and ragged staff.²⁹ As well as significant allusions about crowns and coat of arms, the monument contains a substantial amount of gold.

Given the specific detail of gold and crowns associated with this monument, the effigy would appear to celebrate the life of a person or persons of the power, wealth, and status associated with royalty. The statue of Dudley also indicates that this is someone who has achieved the honour and glory of his status through human endeavour on the battlefield. However, a brief character review of Dudley would suggest that rather than reaching glory, Dudley returned home from military employment in the Netherlands, where he led the English support of the Dutch Revolt in disgrace, having 'proved to be

²¹ William Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town & Castle of Warwick; And of the Neighbouring Spa of Leamington* (London: Warwick Publishers, 1815) P.122. Subsequent references to this text are referred to as: *An Historical and Descriptive Account*.

²² Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²³ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²⁴ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²⁵ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²⁶ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²⁷ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.122.

²⁸ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.123.

²⁹ Field, *An Historical and Descriptive Account*, p.123.



Figure 1: Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick: front view of monument to Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester (died 1588), 2010. Image is courtesy of Roland Turner, under the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence Agreement.



Figure 2: Warwick, St Mary's church, Robert Dudley tomb detail, 2017. Image is courtesy of Jules and Jenny, under the Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 2.0 Generic Licence Agreement. Image and Licence can be viewed at <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/78914786@N06/36753395865>> [accessed 06 February 2018].

not only an incompetent commander but also a failure in his political role'.³⁰ Furthermore, he returned in substantial debt having financed the war.³¹ In spite of this, as a backer of Francis Drake, he regained some kudos with the Queen for the success of the fight against the Spanish Armada, and was observed riding in grand fashion throughout London 'as if he were a king'.³² It is this image of the Earl, rather than the political and financial failure that his tomb represents: rather than functioning as an accurate representation of Robert Dudley's actual achievements, this effigy might be regarded as a mythical representation of the man that he aspired to be.

The other reason for representing Dudley in such a way might be connected to these new ideas that were developing in the teaching of Christianity. In the first instance, given that the most exuberant Protestant reformers, such as Grindal, argued against visual teachings of religion, the extent to which they followed their own advice is debatable. One final change from Catholicism to Protestantism which is relevant to this discussion is that Protestants reconceptualised work as a duty, benefiting both the individual and society at large. As such, while Catholicism teaches that Catholics would be rewarded for good work, Protestant theory took this idea further. Protestants argued that only those who were predestined to be saved would be saved, but it was impossible to determine who was predestined, and so many of the reformers were 'disciplined, self-reliant people, with a powerful sense of their elect status and ready to defend their right to make decisions for themselves'.³³ As such, the idea developed that it possible to determine those who were elect by observing their way of life. In other words, hard work, self-control and frugality were considered to be three important factors linked with the elect, and so many Protestants became attracted to these qualities and aspired to reach them.³⁴

This assertion brings me back to the Protestant theory of salvation through human endeavour. In the first instance, while it has been observed above that the Puritan movement rejected drawing on visual inspiration for religious teachings, there are strong grounds to suggest that, studying Dudley's tomb alongside Grindal's agenda exposes notable hypocrisies. Alongside this destruction of iconic religious imagery in churches was the creation of colourful images of people who had just died, which raises the question as to whether personal humility matched this new-found simplicity in religious observance. On the one hand, given that this wealth and prosperity is what people were expected to

³⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester: English Nobel', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2018) <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Dudley-earl-of-Leicester-Baron-Denbigh>> [accessed 03 Feb 2018].

³¹ Simon Adams, 'Dudley, Robert, earl of Leicester (1532/3-1588)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8160>> [accessed 30 Jan 2018].

³² Martin A.S. Hume, *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating To English Affairs Preserved In Or Originally Belonging To, The Archives Of Simancas: Vol IV. Elizabeth, 1587-1603*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1899), pp.420-21.

³³ MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided*, Chapter 14 'Death, Life and Discipline', Section: 'A Spirit of Protestantism'.

³⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Vigeo Press, 2017), p.21.

aspire to if they were destined for salvation, Dudley's tomb can be considered as a religious lesson in salvation through work.

On the other hand, the statue suggests a lack of humility, affording more credit and glory to Dudley than he might have earned. Therefore, given that the representation of the Earl is just as mythical as anything depicted on the rood lofts, it seems appropriate to query why it was acceptable to represent certain human beings in a glorified way, but it was forbidden to present biblical figures similarly. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the vandalising of decorative religious artefacts in religion while simultaneously decorating tombs of individuals shows a shift in the movement from worshipping God to celebrating human beings and their 'achievements'. On the other hand, the fact that both Dudley and Knollys are deep in prayer shows that religion is still important in this new and complicated way of thinking. However, the other detail suggests that religious devotion is just one criterion among many which define a good person; it is equally important to possess qualities associated with individual endeavour, such as courage and intelligence. Dudley's monument is as much a glorification of his life and 'achievements', as it is about his devotion to God. Given that this new Protestant attitude placed a greater emphasis on the self and individual endeavour, there is a hint of irony that this tomb is still using visual imagery to teach religion, albeit in a different way. They are the same but different: these monuments are exaggerating human achievements so that others may aspire towards individual success and, thus, ensure that they are one of the elect.

To complicate matters further, although Grindal took pains to remind the Queen that she was but a mortal being in the eyes of God, this tomb's emphasis on the incumbents' high status somewhat undercuts Grindal's assertion. Rather than representing them as biblical figures, Dudley and Knollys are wearing coronets and dressed almost like royalty. This flamboyant representation of the couple sharply contrasts the idea that zealous reformers such as Grindal had for the clergy, who it was argued should wear plain clothes in church. As such, there is higher importance placed on a mortal human than commentators such as Grindal might admit. Dudley certainly looks more significant than a 'mere' mortal. Therefore, while Grindal explicitly rejected the notion of the divine right of the monarchy by insisting that the Queen is just like everybody else, this tomb, on some level, suggests that even her counsellor is more powerful than the church clergy. If looked at from this perspective, it is possible to detect a rift between the church and the state. Not only, then, does this representation of Dudley expose the hypocrisy that it is acceptable for those in a position of power to be splendidly dressed in church, but it is arguably hinting that the monarchy, and those associated with them, are worthier of observation than God is.

On another level, due to their lack of religious imagery and emphasis on wealth and human courage and endeavour, the tombs might also assert the importance of capitalism over religion. Indeed, early twentieth-century commentator Max Weber argued that the Protestant work ethic of self-help was

a significant factor in the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.³⁵ Although much of Weber's work itself is open to debate, these tombs do emphasise the importance of an individual's worldly success, with piety seemingly accorded secondary importance. This theme of capitalism and wealth became increasingly important in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the expansion of the British Empire. The fact that the symbolism of these tombs almost prefigures this later era, I would argue, suggests that, in many respects, they can be interpreted as anticipating the rise of capitalism and colonial expansion.

Conclusion

The interdisciplinary nature of this paper has juxtaposed the agenda of one early-modern Puritan, and the tomb of another. It has been observed that during the Reformation, Protestants, particularly the zealous ones associated with Puritanism, sought to replace visual teachings of Christianity and traditions of ritual with the book of prayer. This article has highlighted some of the problems and contradictions associated with this change in philosophy. By discussing Dudley's tomb alongside Grindal's agenda, I have raised questions about the destruction of iconic imagery of religion by radical reformers who were happy to display grand images of people who had just died, particularly if such a person was of high social status. As such, this paper is questioning why some images were allowed, and others were not. On the one hand, this political doublethink reflects a new way of teaching religion: the work ethic associated with Protestants is evident here given that the monument is endorsing wealthy and powerful humans, rather than saints. Given that Protestant theology encourages admiration of people who work hard, taking control of their own destiny, it is perhaps not surprising that Dudley has been offered as an example for emulation. On the other hand, I have asserted that, on some level, while the tomb still features some devotional references (the praying), religion and God would appear to be of secondary importance to the splendidly represented person in the sculpture. As such, I have claimed that it might be the case that such tombs show a tension between the church and the state; or at the very least they acknowledge that there are other important factors in life besides religion. Finally, the nature of this study led me to the idea that tombs such as Dudley's anticipate the rise of capitalism and imperial power.

³⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. See also: R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Pelican/Penguin, 1961).

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