Introduction

The Other Voice

Lady Mary Carey (*b*. ca. 1609, *d*. in or after 1680) represents the other voice of those seventeenth-century English women who examined their lives and expressed their views in handwritten manuscripts created for restricted audiences of family and friends rather than seeking out print publication of their writings.[1] Carey's poetry and prose, composed and revised in her autograph manuscript between 1649/50 and 1657/8,[2] were seen as important enough to her inner circle that her entire manuscript was copied in a fair hand (that is, a clean copy that does not show marks of revision, as does the autograph original) decades after Carey first composed her multi-generic, hybrid texts. Charles Hutton meticulously copied her manuscript in 1681, a fact that serves as a reminder that an early modern woman could, under certain circumstances, write in manuscript with patriarchal approval—indeed, her compositions might be seen as worthy of special preservation—even as she questioned mainstream patriarchal views.[3]

1. On women's participation in manuscript culture in seventeenth-century England, see especially Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 39–65; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 54–58; Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 30–61; and Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For a fascinating account of provincial manuscript culture, see Steven W. May and Arthur F. Marotti, *Ink, Stink Bait, Revenge, and Queen Elizabeth: A Yorkshire Yeoman's Household Book* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 7–12.

2. Carey uses old-style dates, which means that she understood each calendar year to begin on March 25 rather than January 1. Thus, for dated entries that fall between January 1 and March 24, I indicate the year by first giving Carey's old-style date followed by a slash mark and the appropriate new-style date.

3. Charles Hutton, ed., *My Lady Carey's Meditations, & Poetry* (Bodleian, MS Rawlinson D. 1308, 1681), 1–222. Hutton copied Carey's text in the same manuscript with others he copied; these take up the remainder of the manuscript: *The Late Thomas Lord Fairfax's Relation of His Actions in the Late Civil Wars Together with His Grace the Duke of Buckingham's Verses upon the Memory of the Late Thomas Lord Fairfax*. For Hutton to transcribe these materials into one manuscript suggests some of his coterie connections. I have not been able to discover further details about Hutton. On the importance of Hutton transcribing Carey's *complete* manuscript, see Margaret J. M. Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 67. On early modern men supporting women's religious and familial writing, see Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Marion Wynne-Davies, *Women Writers and Familial Discourse in the English Renaissance: Relative Values* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Although Carey fits the dominant model of a good and proper early modern woman in some ways, in her many declarations of love for her second husband and hints of equality with him, she disregarded widespread views against remarriage and the corresponding demonization of widows during the English seventeenth century. Moreover, while Carey expresses what would be considered theologically and culturally appropriate self-blame as a mother for the deaths of six of her children (one of which was a miscarriage) through writing multiple elegies, she concludes her manuscript with an extraordinary poem that boldly asks God to justify his ways to her. In addition to providing us with key insights into women's multi-dimensional roles as wives, widows, and mothers during the seventeenth century in England, Carey teaches us a great deal about a woman's deepest emotional and spiritual states while confronting the hardships of life—from the fears of childbearing to the sorrows over child loss to the terrors of war. Finally, through the hundreds of precisely chosen biblical glosses she adds to her compositions, she shows us how deeply learned a woman could be in theological matters.

Life and Works

Carey's father was Sir John Jackson of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland,[4] and her youth was spent participating in elite pastimes. She reports that a dire illness when she was eighteen years old led her to rethink what she came to believe were frivolities and to convert to Calvinism,[5] a particularly strict branch of Protestant Christianity. In Carey's long prose work, "A Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body," she has Soul explain that

> [i]t was the Lord's pleasure to smite me with a sore sickness (in my apprehension, it was unto death), when I was about 18 years old, in the midst of my jollity, when I was taking my fill of worldly contentments and restrained my heart from nothing it fancied to follow, delighting myself and spending my time in carding, dice, dancing, masking, dressing, vain company, going to plays, following fashions, and the like. . . . I found myself in a miserable and hopeless condition, which made me wish, O, that God would spare my life until I

4. All biographical information in this introduction is from Carey's autograph manuscript, *Spiritual Dialogue, Meditations, and Poems of Lady Mary Carey* (Folger, V.a.628); and Sara H. Mendelson, "Mary Carey (b. ca. 1609, d. in or after 1680)," in *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45811.

5. On Calvinism, see Rachel Adcock, Sara Read, and Anna Ziomek, eds., *Flesh and Spirit: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Writing* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 23–26; and Bruce Gordon, *John Calvin's* Institutes of the Christian Religion*: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

> learn to know him. O, might I live, I would forever quit all my vain company, leave my most beloved pleasures, be a careful hearer of God's word, and give myself up to his service! (46)

Mary married her first husband, Pelham Carey (ca. 1612–1642/3), son of Henry Carey, first Earl of Dover, in June 1630. After twelve years of marriage, Pelham died. In June 1643, Mary married her second husband, George Payler (*d*. in or before 1678), with whom she had a deeply loving, mutual relationship.[6] Mary and George had seven children and at least one miscarriage. Sadly, all their children but two, Bethia (1652/3–1671) and Nathaniel (1654/5–1680?), died in infancy. Mary outlived George and her adult children.

George was paymaster of the garrison at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, before Mary married him, and between 1643 and 1659 he took on many roles: he served as an officer of the ordnance and armory, went to study law at Gray's Inn in London, worked as a navy commissioner, and became the Member of Parliament for Berwick in 1659. Because of George's positions, Mary lived in at least seventeen different locations:

> I have lived in Berwick, London oft, Kent, Hunsdon, Edinburgh, Thistleworth, Hackney, Totteridge, Greenwich, Bendall Green, Clapham, York, Nun Monkton, St. James's, Newington, Covent Garden, and dear St. Katherine's, and in all these I acknowledge the continual receipt of all useful, comfortable, and desirable mercies and bless God for them all. . . . In all these wars, I was safe in garrisons and was not straitened, nor plundered, nor separated from my dear relations. (103)

Her awareness of her good fortune during wartime, which she considered the direct result of God's divine providence, is one among many preservations from danger that she details in this comprehensive passage:

> God hath taken special care of me in times of war: I ever dwelt in safety. In times of raining, raging sickness, I have been kept in health; in ill company, great protection; and much good have I seen follow to me from disappointments. And who is able to number preservations from evils known and from evils unknown? I have been oft delivered, not only from feeling but fearing evils of sundry kinds. What dangers was incident to me before my birth, in infancy, childhood, and all along my youth in all places and conditions, changes and

6. Sara Mendelson speculates that "[a]lthough deeply attached to her second husband [*sic*] Mary kept the surname of her first, presumably because of Sir Pelham's titled status." Mendelson, "Mary Carey," para. 1.

> companies? And considering my first estate in marriage—my then associates and inclination—I must acknowledge my deliverances and preventing mercies very great, known to God and myself. (101–2)

Carey was acutely aware of and meditated repeatedly upon the many dangers she faced—for example, war, plague, and temptations to sin. That she was profoundly conscious of the precarity of her life is shown when she asks how she could possibly make a complete accounting of the ways in which she has been "preserv[ed] from evils known and from evils unknown." Given the many threats that were all too visible and tangible to her, how many surrounded her without her ever knowing because she was silently saved from them? God has not only had to "deliver" her from "feeling . . . evils" (that is, experiencing them), but from the emotional consequences—such as terror—of living in such difficult times. Her viewpoint as a mother and the experiential knowledge that comes with motherhood shines through here as well: she has known the pain and sorrow of the deaths of multiple children and thus reflects on the fragility of her own survival from the time she was growing in her mother's womb through her early years. During eight years of her middle age, Carey wrote in multiple, hybrid genres to cope with, to process, and to share her inner and outer worlds; in doing so, she contemplates in deeply moving ways her present, past, and future.

Carey wrote her manuscript between 1649/50 and 1657/8. The items it contains are not presented in the order in which she composed them. For instance, the work she created when she first put pen to blank page was her long dramatic prose text, "A Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body,"[7] dated February 11, 1649/50; however, years later, she added as the opening text of her book her dedicatory letter to her husband, "To My Most Loving and Dearly Beloved Husband, George Payler, Esquire," signed on October 17, 1653. After "A Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body," the next entry is a simple statement from May 14, 1652: "I have now buried four sons and a daughter. God hath my all of children; I have his all (beloved Christ), a sweet change. In greatest sorrows content and happy" (95). This sad comment is followed by an elegy authored by George Payler upon the occasion of the death of the couple's fourth child, Robert, dated December 8, 1650, and two elegies by Mary Carey: one for Robert (written on the same day as George's poem), and one for Peregrine, her fifth child, dated May 12, 1652. Next, she includes three undated spiritual meditations: "A Meditation or Commemoration of the Love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"; "A Meditation or Commemoration of the Love of Christ"; and "A Meditation or Commemoration

7. On dialogues between the body and soul, see Rosalie Osmond, *Mutual Accusation: Seventeenth-Century Body and Soul Dialogues in Their Literary and Theological Context* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). See also Michelle M. Dowd, "Genealogical Counternarratives in the Writings of Mary Carey," *Modern Philology* 109, no. 4 (May 2012): 444, https://doi.org/10.1086/665736; and Adcock, Read, and Ziomek, *Flesh and Spirit*, 4–11.

of the Love of the Holy Ghost." Carey's manuscript concludes with her stunning masterpiece: a long, complex elegy, "Upon the Sight of My Abortive Birth the 31 of December 1657" (although the miscarriage occurred on December 31, 1657, Carey signed her poem on January 12, 1657/8). Thus, the last item in the manuscript was written around eight years after she started "A Dialogue Betwixt the Body and the Soul" and almost five years after her dedication letter to George. While Carey's writings are already complex due to their multiple genres (a dedicatory letter, a dialogue between the body and soul, spiritual meditations, and elegies), they are made all the richer by the threads of two additional major genres that run through them all: the maternal legacy and the conversion narrative.[8]

This volume also includes in its appendices writings by Carey that circulated independently and do not appear in her manuscript. Appendix 1 contains the transcription of a letter from Carey to Sir Thomas Pelham, dated 1644.[9] Appendix 2 includes a verse exchange between Mary Carey and Sir Thomas Fairfax: "The Lady Carey's Elegy on My Dear Wife," copied by Sir Thomas Fairfax after the death of his wife, Anne, in 1665, and "To the Lady Carey Upon Her Verses on My Dear Wife,"[10] Fairfax's poetic answer to Carey.[11] These rare copies show beyond the shadow of a doubt that Carey was part of a manuscript coterie—a group of friends and family who shared their writings.[12]

The Historical Context and Analysis of Carey's Writings

Carey was personally affected by the many tumultuous events that occurred in England during the seventeenth century. She was born approximately six years

8. On the relationship between "A Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body" and the conversion narrative and maternal legacy, see Dowd, "Genealogical Counternarratives," 444–49; and Rachel Adcock, "'In order to spirituall good the body often afflicted': Bodily Affliction in Lady Mary Carey's Conversion Narrative, 1649–57," *The Glass* 25 (Spring 2013): 18–29.

9. Mary Carey, Letter to Sir Thomas Pelham, in *Correspondence of the Family of Pelham, of Sussex, Consisting of Official, Business, and Private and Domestic Letters, 1543–1722* (BL, Additional MS 33084), fol. 51r. Sir Thomas Pelham was her uncle by her first marriage to Pelham Carey.

10. Mary Carey, "The Lady Carey's Elegy on My Dear Wife," in *The Imployment of my Solitude, T[homas] F[airfax], written in about 1600–1700 by lord Fairfax*, ed. and copied by Thomas Fairfax (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 40), 596–97.

11. Thomas Fairfax, "To the Lady Carey Upon Her Verses on My Dear Wife," in *The Imployment of my Solitude, T[homas] F[airfax], written in about 1600–1700 by lord Fairfax* (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 40), 598–600.

12. On the circulation and reception of Mary Carey's texts, see RECIRC: The Reception and Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700, "Mary Carey," accessed January 12, 2022, https://recirc.nuigalway.ie/people/person/1802. RECIRC shows that the poetic exchange between Carey and Fairfax was transcribed by Fairfax's cousin, Henry Fairfax, Dean of Norwich, in his collection, *A transcript of Translations and Poems by lord Thomas Fairfax* (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 38), 267–70.

after Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, after having famously ruled England as an unmarried woman for more than four decades. Carey was thus born during the reign of Elizabeth's successor, James I, and lived through the entire reign of James's son, Charles I, who acceded to the throne in 1625. James and Charles favored a strongly authoritarian form of kingship, and this monarchical absolutism—in conjunction with many complex political, religious, social, and economic conflicts—led to the start of the English Civil Wars in 1642, when Carey would have been in her early thirties. The main opponents in the Civil Wars were King Charles's forces and the Parliamentary army. Carey and her second husband, George Payler, took the side of the Parliamentarians. Charles I's reign ended when he was defeated, captured, found guilty of high treason, dethroned, and beheaded in January 1649. As a mature widow, remarried wife, and woman who sought fervently to be a mother as she tried to make a life in England during and after the Civil Wars, Carey was impacted directly by their uncertainties and terrors. By 1653, no monarch was officially recognized in England, and Oliver Cromwell assumed the role of the nation's Lord Protector. In 1660, Charles II, the son of Charles I who had been in exile in France during this time, was restored to the English throne as king. Since Carey wrote her manuscript between 1649/50 and 1657/8, she did so primarily at the end of the Civil Wars and under Cromwell's Protectorate.

Carey survived the English Civil Wars in the companionship of her second husband, George, to whom she was devoted, as is evident in her loving dedicatory letter to him. This letter is complex rhetorically because it recognizes that she should display her subordinate status to her husband, as was expected according to the gender hierarchy of the day, but also suggests that they are equals in marriage. Her use of conventions of the patronage letter typically offered to a social superior implies her inferiority to the letter's recipient:

> And were I to speak what you should not hear and to write what you read not, I could and would say much in thy praise, upon just grounds, but being I speak to you, I must deny myself herein. Yet shall I to avoid the false suspicion of flattery be guilty of ingratitude? Give me leave to take liberty for one word, to say that I daily bless God for thee and esteem thee the best of all my outward blessings, the sweetest of all my creature comforts, yea, as precious a mercy to me in thy relation (every way considered) as any wife doth enjoy. I wish I were to thee what thou deservest and had power to express my affection further than I can, but I hope the Lord will reward thy love and goodness towards me. (35)

She shows concern that her fulsome praise of George will seem like flattery as part of a strategy that allows her to characterize that praise as gratitude. Her husband is "the best of all [her] outward blessings, the sweetest of all [her] creature comforts," and her rhetorical framing of these words emphasizes their sincerity. This strategy is typical of patronage letters that introduce a literary work as a gift from a lower-ranking person to a higher-ranking one, and its use here is one of many indicators throughout Carey's writings that she read a variety of texts. In this brief passage, she also uses a humility trope, a standard feature of patronage texts: "I wish I were to thee what thou deservest and had power to express my affection further than I can." It was commonplace in patronage letters for the writers—whether male or female—to state humbly the inadequacy of their abilities while simultaneously displaying the excellence of those abilities. Given the superficiality of this kind of apologetic, self-deprecating writerly stance, this line does not suggest any incapability on Carey's part; instead, it shows her awareness of the conventions of patronage letters, which she borrows here to elevate her husband over herself, as if he were superior in social rank.

Given the pervasive early modern gender ideology that expected good wives to subordinate themselves willingly to their husbands, it makes sense for Carey to borrow the already status-inflected language of the patronage letter to suggest George's superiority as her husband. Implying an audience of one approving patriarchal figure of her manuscript also contributes to her self-representation as a proper wife who does not seek to expose her ideas to the common masses. These intimations of being a good, subordinate wife are also important because George was the second husband to the widowed Carey, and remarriage was typically frowned upon by patriarchal authorities. One of the negative stereotypes of the remarrying widow was that she would assert authority and control over her second husband.[13] Using the self-deprecating features of the patronage letter thus could be Carey's way not only of resisting this damaging stereotype but also of compensating for portraying her marriage as a balanced, mutual one of equals in the same letter.

Carey strongly implies equality with George: "God hath . . . made us of one mind: our judgments are one, our wills, our way, our aims in spirituals, and it

13. On early modern stereotypes of widows, see Barbara J. Todd, "The Remarrying Widow: A Stereotype Reconsidered," in *Women in English Society: 1500–1800*, ed. Mary Prior (New York: Methuen, 1985), 54–92; Sara H. Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550–1720* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 68–69, 175; and Barbara J. Todd, "The Virtuous Widow in Protestant England," in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (New York: Pearson Education, 1999), 66–83. On Carey's resistance to stereotyping, see Pamela S. Hammons, "Mothers and Widows: World-Making against Stereotypes in Early Modern English Women's Manuscript Writings," in *World-Making Renaissance Women: Rethinking Early Modern Women's Place in Literature and Culture*, ed. Pamela S. Hammons and Brandie Siegfried (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 230–43.

is no small mercy to be totally freed from any of those many sufferings which a married condition makes many sensible of. Now preventing mercy hath kept us from knowing them, but as we may guess by the rule of contraries" (35–36). The repetition of "one" and "our" emphasizes unity and equality in their relationship. This diction matters because married women were considered by law as being under coverture, which means that wives were treated as legally and economically eclipsed by their husbands. *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632) explains coverture by asserting that husband and wife "bee by intent and wise fiction of Law, one person [i.e., the husband]," which may make "a married Woman perhaps . . . either doubt whether shee bee either none or no more then halfe a person."[14] Wives were supposed to be subsumed within the personhood of their husbands: it might have seemed to some wives as if they were not persons at all. Thus, it is striking that Carey uses her agency as a writer in addressing her husband to combine herself and George conceptually into "one" who shares "our judgments . . . our wills, our way, our aim." As the named author of this letter asserting her voice, Carey is far from eclipsed and invisible; in fact, *she* is the *one* who has the most presence. Her words thus suggest unity and equality in her marriage with George. She notes that "it is no small mercy to be totally freed from any of those many sufferings which a married condition makes many sensible of." Mary and George's marriage is much better than what most couples have: the implication is that she is "totally freed from any of those sufferings" that coverture typically brings to wives.

In Carey's "Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body," she goes further to suggest equality between men and women through her narrative of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. This origin story was so influential that *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* justifies coverture by grounding the concept in Genesis:[15]

> REturne a little to Genesis, in the 3. Chap. whereof is declared our first parents transgression in eating the forbidden fruit: for which Adam, Eve, the serpent first, and lastly, the earth it selfe is cursed: and besides, the participation of Adams punishment, which was subjection to mortality, exiled from the garden of Eden, injoyned to labor, Eve because shee had helped to seduce her husband hath inflicted on her, an especiall bane. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth

14. *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights*, in *Legal Treatises*, Vol. 1, ed. Lynne A. Greenberg, in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women: Part I*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 4.

15. On coverture, see Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129–35; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 24; and Greenberg, introduction to *Legal Treatises*, Vol. 1, in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women: Part I*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), xxiii–xxvii.

> thy children, thy desires shall be subject to the husband, and he shall rule over thee.
>
> See here the reason of that which I touched before, that Women have no voyce in Parliament, They make no Lawes, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to bee married and their desires or [*sic*] subject to their husband, I know no remedy though some women can shift it well enough. The common Law here shaketh hand with Divinitie.[16]

According to *The Lawes Resolutions*, because Eve's transgression was worse than Adam's, wives must be ruled by their husbands: as Adam "shall rule over" Eve, so shall all husbands rule over all wives.

By contrast, when Carey has Soul express her beliefs to Body, she declares:

> I believe that God in the beginning created our first parents after his own image, holy and happy, as Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his own image; in the image of God, created he him; male and female created he them." But they falling from God, listening to Satan, eating the forbidden fruit, brought a curse upon themselves and all their posterity being in their loins (Genesis 3): "she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (verses 6, 17, 18, 19), so that all mankind is equally guilty of all sin and liable to all miseries, curse, wrath, death, hell, as Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned," and "death reigned from Adam" (verse 14). "By the offence of one, judgement came upon all men unto condemnation," etc. (verse 18). "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners" (verse 19 etc.). "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3). (45)

Soul prioritizes the first creation narrative in Genesis, which portrays man and woman as having been made in God's image simultaneously.[17] She does not even mention the story in which Eve is secondarily created out of Adam's rib. Although

16. *Lawes Resolutions*, 6.

17. Adcock, Read, and Ziomek note that "Carey follows the Westminster Shorter Catechism in referencing the first of the two biblical creation stories" (*Flesh and Spirit*, 48n38). On women rewriting the Fall, see Michelle M. Dowd and Thomas Festa, eds., *Early Modern Women on the Fall: An Anthology* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012); and Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).

Soul quotes from Genesis 3, in which Eve disobediently eats the forbidden fruit, Soul frames that quotation by introducing it with the claim that "they [fell] from God" and by concluding that "all mankind is equally guilty of all sin and liable to all miseries." She incorporates quotations that emphasize Adam's guilt, and she never again mentions Eve or womankind. That Carey portrays Soul's belief in the Judeo-Christian origin story by erasing the idea of Eve's secondary nature, emphasizing Adam's guilt, and quoting from the Bible as an authority to reinforce her claims results in the intimation that, as she and George are mutual partners, so are other wives and husbands. Carey's revision of her era's ideas about Genesis as the religious basis for beliefs in female inferiority answers back to documents such as *The Lawes Resolutions*.

There is more at stake for Carey in Soul's revision of Genesis than mutuality in marriage. Eve, of course, was the first mother, and hence, in a traditional reading of Genesis that focuses on blaming Eve for the Fall of humankind, the maternal body becomes the vehicle through which original sin is passed to future generations. Carey's revision minimizes Eve's guilt and thereby downplays the association of motherhood, stretching back to Eve, with sin. This is important because many seventeenth-century discourses not only associated mothers with sin but also assumed that especially sinful mothers could cause their children to die. Carey's first three children with George had already died when she started "A Dialogue Betwixt the Soul and the Body." It is no wonder that Carey downplays Eve; it is also no wonder that she turns strategically to the genres of the mother's legacy and the conversion narrative throughout her writings to suggest that she is not a sinful mother whose spiritual shortcomings have killed her own children—or if, tragically, she is, she will do absolutely anything that God, in his omnipotence, will allow her to do to compensate for or to correct her sinful nature. Failed motherhood and dead children haunt and shape Carey's writings.

Few members of seventeenth-century English society were more likely to be demonized than mothers.[18] For example, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* illustrate how monstrous representations of mothers could become. Spenser's Errour is a mother "Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine," and Milton's Sin gives birth to Death himself, a "shape, / If shape

18. On early modern maternal demonization, see Margaret Olofson Thickstun, *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 10–13; Pamela S. Hammons, "Despised Creatures: The Illusion of Maternal Self-Effacement in Seventeenth-Century Child Loss Poetry," *ELH: English Literary History* 66, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 25–49, https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.1999.0005; Kathryn Schwarz, "Mother Love: Clichés and Amazons in Early Modern England," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 299–300; and Pamela S. Hammons, *Poetic Resistance: English Women Writers and the Early Modern Lyric* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 13–54.