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The Meanings of "Malignancy": The Language of Enmity and the Construction of the

Parliamentarian Cause in the English Revolution

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In 1643, the opening year of the English civil war, the royalist general in the north William Cavendish, duke of Newcastle, published a response to allegations made by his parliamentarian rival Ferdinando Lord Fairfax. Amongst other things, Newcastle had been accused of raising an army of "Papists and Malignants," a charge that provoked a revealing answer:

But let us inquire who in their Dialect, are these Malignants; Are they who do not willingly part with their Religion, Laws, Liberties, Lively hoods left them by their Fathers upon Arbitrary Votes? So a Theefe may terme a True-man a Malignant, because he doth refuse to deliver his Purse upon demand; .... Those have hitherto been esteemed Malignant humours in the Body Naturall, which being stubborn, Rebellious, Venomous, are with difficulty, reduced to their right temper, either by strength of Nature, or skill in Physick, not those which are not easily infected, or distempered. This is new Learning, and requires a new Dictionary to warrant it. Before they conclude them Malignant, they should do well to prove them to be Peccant against any authentick rule: The Apostle saith, where there is no Law there is no transgression; To accuse boldly is not sufficient to convince.[i]

That the English civil war inspired literary innovation alongside intellectual creativity is well acknowledged.[ii] Newcastle's quotation suggests that the conflict's protean force was capable of refashioning the English language itself.[iii] For him, the parliamentarian cause had spawned a perverse "dialect," requiring a novel "dictionary" to decipher it. And the word that prompted this act of deconstruction was not chosen accidentally, for the figure of the "malignant" had assumed a central place in the ideological contests of the civil war. From denoting a rebellious internal spirit in need of purgation, by 1643 this word had become associated with the enemies of parliament. For Newcastle, this was an act of linguistic

gymnastics symptomatic of the distortions underpinning parliamentarianism itself. The divisions that had rent England could be encapsulated by a single word.

"Malignant" can hardly be said to be a novel term to civil war historians: on the contrary, it is so familiar as to be rendered almost invisible, implicitly treated as a straightforward synonym for "royalist." But this article will suggest that the word malignant, and its attendant forms, had a rather more specific place within parliamentarian discourse. Identified first in the Grand Remonstrance of November 1641, the "malignant party" was represented as an invasive presence in the body politic, guilty of conspiring to divide king from parliament. Wholeness would only be restored once this enemy had been expelled, a task that had fallen on parliament. But as well as justifying the parliamentarian war effort as an act of loyalty to the crown, the image of the malignant party was used to help identify the nature of the parliamentarian cause itself, its ultimate goals defined against those of this enemy.

In making this argument, the article follows a current of scholarship on modern revolutions in which the image of the enemy is seen as central to revolutionary discourse.[iv] The work of François Furet in particular identified the idea of conspiracy as central to the political culture of the French Revolution: the plot facing the revolutionaries was "a central and polymorphous notion that served as a reference point for organizing and interpreting action."[v] But for Furet, the perceived existence of enemies not only served to explain the Revolution's Manichean logic. The aristocratic nature of the conspiracy also defined the Revolution itself, as the first experiment in democratic politics which found its obverse in the conspiratorial factionalism of the court, now to be replaced by a transparent and egalitarian public politics.[vi] The "purifying act" of defeating the enemy thus became central to the foundation of a new order rooted in "the people": "only its formal exclusion from society

could lend legitimacy to the new national pact."[vii] Furthermore, this discourse of exclusion was also one of integration, for the act of defining the enemy also served to bring cohesion to "the people" as a collective, defined in opposition to the aristocracy.

Leaving aside Furet's assertions about the novelty of French revolutionary politics, this article will focus on the importance of the enemy in the English Revolution. In particular, it will concentrate on the dual capacity for exclusion and integration that Furet posited as central to the concept of conspiracy in French revolutionary discourse. Of course, the image of the enemy is integral to a much wider variety of political contexts than the revolutionary.[viii] But as the enemy is an infinitely contestable concept, its identification has the power to dismantle as well as create an imagined collective, to delegitimize as well as endorse the government that purports to act in the collective's name. Perhaps this is why the concept of the enemy has been so ubiquitous in revolutionary contexts, as it can be both a powerful solvent for one existing political order and the cement that holds the succeeding regime together. Indeed, to Susan Buck-Morss (writing about the foundations of liberal democracy and socialism in the twentieth century), "To define the enemy is, simultaneously, to define the collective. Indeed: defining the enemy is the act that brings the collective into being."[ix]

In the case of the English Revolution, the conspiracy of the malignant party played a crucial role in both legitimizing and defining the parliamentarian cause, as well as the "people" in whose name it fought the civil war. By unveiling the existence of a conspiracy headed by the malignant party, the Long Parliament (or rather a leading faction within it) asserted its status both as the principal intended victim of this conspiracy and the ultimate bulwark against it, so justifying the constitutional claims it was making in the months prior to the outbreak of war. Discursively, the image of this enemy was a strategic part of what Kevin Sharpe called the "contest for representation" that accompanied the armed conflict.[x]

Parliament's eventual success rested not only on its ability to deploy its authority successfully in order to mobilize and manage military resources, but also to represent its exercise of authority as legitimate, a challenge given that the traditional arsenal of images, languages, and rituals that represented authority were heavily weighted towards the regal. However, in the post-Reformation period royal authority was predicated on the monarch's ability to uphold the true religion and to defend it against popery. This meant that the crown had to continually demonstrate its vigilance against an enemy whose identity was the collective property of the Protestant nation and thus to a large extent beyond its discursive control. The familiar conspiracy theory of the popish plot was thus open to appropriation by the designers of the Grand Remonstrance, who fashioned it into a new narrative centered on a malignant party bent on the destruction of the Long Parliament and the reformist program upon which it had embarked. Opposition to this program could thus be stigmatized as illegitimate and unworthy of political representation, so preserving parliament's claims to be the representative of the people, a people now defined against the malignant party.

This article traces the emergence and usage of the language of malignancy by focusing on several key parliamentarian texts of the 1640s, beginning with the Grand Remonstrance. Unveiling the conspiracy of the malignant party was an assertion of the power of parliament to identify and act against the kingdom's enemies, and so the reality of the malignant party became bound up in subsequent contests about the locus of sovereignty in the polity. Pamphleteers who referenced the malignant in their own publications were implicitly intervening in such contests. However, as with the crown before it, the Long Parliament was never able to secure full control over the definition of its enemies: the exigencies of parliamentarian politics led it to relinquish some of this power to activists who claimed to speak for the people. The diagnoses of malignancy that such activists presented in their own

pamphlets and other political interventions could depart from that of parliament, contributing to the fragmentation of its cause.

The article considers how the various splits in the parliamentarian coalition were mirrored by rival conceptions of the enemy. The radicalization of parliamentarian politics during the war itself was justified by the existence of the malignant party, as the ideological challenge of malignancy demanded a fuller statement of the principles for which parliament was fighting for, and stronger assertions of parliamentary- and later popular- sovereignty. Contests within this coalition after the war were related to the question of whether malignancy had been truly defeated: whereas Presbyterians argued that a new enemy, heresy, now posed the greatest threat to the kingdom, their Independent rivals fell back on the specter of the malignant enemy to assert their own claims to be parliament's truest friends. But alternative political narratives presented by the Levellers and the New Model Army in their own remonstrances identified the evil of "kingly government" as the true enemy to be expunged, so preparing the ground for the regicide. Even then, however, the malignant continued to haunt the post-regicidal regimes. The article concludes by considering the ambiguous afterlife of the term following the regicide and its place in a longer term transformation of political culture that saw the eventual institutionalization of partisanship in the form of party politics.

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Conspiracies, and the enemies who engineer them, were far from the invention of the French Revolution.[xi] Indeed, the binary way of thinking that sustains such narratives has been seen as a particular feature of early modern culture, exemplified by the arch-deviant the witch.[xii] For English Protestantism, the defining other was provided by the Catholic Church, and perhaps here we find the antonym of the parliamentary cause, in this last "war of religion" fought in

defense of reformation.[xiii] Historians have shown how before the civil war anti-popery acquired a life of its own, as the crown struggled to maintain discursive control over the identity of its enemies, with popery being used to describe a range of behavior that went far beyond straightforward observance of Catholic forms of worship. Peter Lake has stressed how anti-popery was intimately connected to early Stuart political divisions. Anti-popery (and its obverse, anti-Puritanism) served to explain conflict whilst maintaining the integrity of a political system that was supposed to deliver harmony, each side accounting for division "by labelling the other as intrusive and un-English subverters of a settled system of government."[xiv] Stereotypes such as puritan and papist helped to make sense of the world, but were always contestable, part of a "struggle to seize control over the terms in and through which the contemporary sociopolitical scene could be turned into a narrative, with heroes and villains, a beginning, middle and an end, and thus into an object of polemical and political action."[xv] Stereotypes were not merely the detritus of an underlying "real" political struggle, but were amongst the "discursive materials" through which power was exercised and contested.

Within this pre-civil war discursive contest, malignancy was often an attribute associated with the Catholic Church: "The malignant Church, the Romain Sinagogue, the Kingdome of Anti-christ."[xvi] But the label was also occasionally used by supporters of Charles I and Archbishop Laud to describe their "malignant and cunning adversaries," those "malignant refractory spirits" who disturbed the peace of church and state, part of the Laudian narrative of a "Puritan plot."[xvii] What made malignancy a potent negative attribute was its connotations of illegitimate, spiteful, and baseless opposition to authority; or, as Newcastle put it, of being "Peccant against any authentick rule." Dictionary definitions of "Malignitie" included "Envie, spightfullnesse," "naughtiness, malice," and "A delight taken in another mans harme."[xviii] In natural bodies, malignant humors, spirits, or influences were

harmful precisely because they opposed bodily order: enemies within, to be treated by purgation or excision. The language of malignancy was thus the product of a culture that idealized unity and harmony and struggled to accommodate dissent from these ideals.[xix]

With its connotations of illegitimate opposition, malignant was a label that could be used by anyone speaking in the name of authority in order to silence or delegitimize opposition. By the 1640s, however, the language of malignancy was the near exclusive property of parliamentarians, and royalists were left to fall back on traditional categories such as "rebel" to classify their enemies, although in equally binary terms.[xx] The parliamentarian appropriation of this language can be pinned down with unusual precision to a specific enunciation of its cause: the complaint known to history as the Grand Remonstrance, which was passed by a narrow majority in the Commons on 22 November 1641.[xxi] Here, parliament definitively asserted its authority to identify and act against the enemy, a power on which many of its subsequent constitutional claims rested. However, it is important to note that this was the culmination of a longer term political contest over the definition of the enemy and the state of emergency that its existence entailed. In some respects, such matters were at the crux of what historians have labeled the Elizabethan "monarchical republic," as members of the political nation came together in crisis moments in order to defend church and state against popish threats.[xxii] But it was under the Stuarts and especially Charles I that this contest became a regular feature of political life, prompted in part by the willingness of the crown's defenders to argue that threats to the kingdom might require customary restraints on royal power to be bypassed.[xxiii] Whilst there was widespread consensus that the king was duty-bound to preserve church and state and that this fell under his prerogative power, parties disagreed as to whether this should be the king alone or the king-in-parliament, with parliament as the king's counsel helping to identify the kingdom's dangers.[xxiv] The definition of danger was itself a major bone of contention: opponents of royal policies such as Ship

Money might argue that the state of emergency was not sufficient to justify overriding law, but more dangerous was the tendency to identify alternative threats to which the king was blind. So the Protestation of the House of Commons in 1629 presumed to define those who "shall be reputed a capital enemy to this Kingdom and Commonwealth": innovators in religion, architects of non-parliamentary subsidies, and those willing to pay them.[xxv]

It is notable that as late as 1637 one critic of the crown, the lawyer Oliver St John, conceded that "It is his [the king's] vigilance and watchfulness that discovers who are our friends and foes, and that after such discovery first warns us of them, for he only hath power to make war and peace" (in his famous speech on Ship Money).[xxvi] In practice this vigilance was delegated to local communities through an elaborate system for identifying and nullifying the kingdom's internal enemies, above all papists. This system obliged people of all walks of life to carefully monitor their communities, so constituting a "public" capable of acting autonomously of its supposed royal head.[xxvii] Such political vigilance was bound up in what Richard Cust has termed an early Stuart "patriot" political narrative, whereby the idealized patriot was compelled to act in defense of the kingdom (or "country") against corruption, with parliament as his stage. [xxviii]

It was a short step from this narrative to the idea that parliament, acting in the public's name, possessed the powers that St John had reserved for the king, particularly once parliament itself appeared to be the target of such conspiracies. The so-called "army plot" of April 1641 prompted another Commons Protestation about "pernicious and wicked counsels, practices, plots and conspiracies," going beyond its 1629 predecessor by inviting subscriptions from beyond parliament.[xxix] As Lake has argued, conspiracies by their very nature are secretive, and so their defeat might require that they be unveiled to those under threat, bringing into being a public characterized by its "vigilance and watchfulness."[xxx]

Parliament's assertiveness throughout 1641 was justified by this perceived state of emergency, notably during the king's absence in Scotland throughout the summer when its first ordinances were issued.[xxxi] Already it had acted against the most prominent public enemy, the Earl of Strafford, and throughout 1641 the program of the "Junto" dominant in parliament centered on identifying the king's friends too as they sought to control the selection of his advisors. At the same time the Junto's tactics were facing a rising current of criticism, both within parliament and without, which threatened to derail its program of constitutional and religious reform.[xxxii] The imminent return of Charles to Westminster in the autumn threatened to bring this situation to a head. This was the context for the Grand Remonstrance: an attempt to persuade waverers to unite behind the Junto's agenda, whilst delegitimizing any opposition to it as malignant.

The Grand Remonstrance reconfigured the patriot narrative to incorporate the achievements of the Long Parliament and its historic predecessors, along with the opposition that they had provoked since the beginning of Charles I's reign, thus encouraging a historicizing trend in political discourse over the subsequent decade.[xxxiii] For its drafters, it was important to demonstrate that they were the ones attracting, rather than creating, opposition; the language of malignancy, of illegitimate opposition, thus served their intentions well. The Remonstrance's opening complained of "an abounding Malignity, and opposition in those parties, and factions" who sought to hinder parliament's progress.[xxxiv] These enemies comprised those guilty of dividing the body politic in order to serve their "malignant, and pernicious designe, of subverting the Fundamentall Laws, and Principles of Government; upon which the Religion, and Justice of this Kingdom, are firmly establisht."[xxxv] But the truly novel usage of the word was the identification of a "malignant party" behind this conspiracy, headed by Strafford and Laud but not extinguished by their downfalls.[xxxvi] The malignant party thus collectivized the familiar trope of the "evil

counselor," implying that behind these figureheads lay a much more deeply rooted conspiracy.

In many respects, this malignant conspiracy appears indistinguishable from the familiar trope of the "popish plot." The petition accompanying the remonstrance explained that "we have reason to believe that those malignant parties, whose proceedings evidently appear to be mainly for the advantage and increase of Popery, is composed, set up, and acted by the subtile practice of the Jesuits and other engineers and factors for Rome."[xxxvii] Unquestionably, the ultimate aim of this conspiracy was to advance the malignant church. But the Grand Remonstrance distinguished between the popish and malignant parties, with the latter described as a composite of three distinct factions: "Jesuited Papists," Bishops and other corrupt clergymen, and courtiers in the pay of foreign powers.[xxxviii] The ultimately popish character of this "mixt party" was a product of the first part overpowering the other two, being the "most active" and "predominant Element."[xxxix] But parliament was not simply summoning the tried and tested scapegoat of the papist in order to tap into the deepest, unchanging prejudices of English Protestants.[xl] By identifying a new manifestation of the popish plot, the Grand Remonstrance presented this conspiracy as fundamentally bound up with the fate of the Long Parliament and its historic mission to bring "The multiplied evils and corruption of sixteen yeers" to "judgement and Reformation."[xli] The chief design of the malignant party was to prevent these efforts- detailed exhaustively in the Remonstrance- from coming to fruition, using every effort to poison the king against parliament and foment division within the latter.[xlii] The ultimate ends of this party might have been to destroy the true religion, then, but its defining feature was opposition to parliament, or rather, to the faction within it who sought to have their agenda endorsed as parliament's own. Any opposition to this agenda could now be identified as malignant, and therefore illegitimate. The Grand Remonstrance thus acted as a discursive accompaniment to the more prosaic

techniques of parliamentary management that were allowing parliament to be steered in an increasingly partisan direction.[xliii]

The Remonstrance's stated aim was to restore unity within the body politic by appealing to the king to exercise his powers "in a parliamentary way." This would enable the reestablishment of an idealized state of harmony and balance between crown and parliament, as "the comfort of your gracious presence, and likewise the unity and justice of your royal authority" would "give more life and power to the dutiful and loyal counsels and endeavours of your Parliament." [xliv] As such, it referenced the virtues of concord that the English political system was supposed to sustain. However, as Richard Strier has noted, "It is a profoundly dualistic, almost Manichean document," at odds with the idealized harmony it purports to uphold.[xlv] In fact, the Remonstrance implies that unity can only be restored once the existence of the enemy has been acknowledged, something dependent on reconciliation between a parliament purged of its own internal enemies and the crown: the Remonstrance is a plea for Charles to turn his back on the malignant party that surrounds him. This party is unmasked as the enemy within, whose members are thus positioned outside of the kingdom's moral community and are made unworthy of representation in parliament, justifying the expulsion of bishops and popish lords and their allies who stood in the way of the Junto's designs. The designers of the Grand Remonstrance needed a language to explain why parliament's actions were provoking opposition, internal and external, which did not undermine parliament's status as representative of a united people. They found this in the language of malignancy, which allowed them to exorcise their enemies whilst retaining, indeed conferring, wholeness on parliament: integration through exclusion.[xlvi]

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Thus, the Grand Remonstrance appropriated the popish plot- a widely accepted, indeed near incontrovertible, trope in English Protestant culture- in order to stigmatize the enemies of parliament (or rather, of a faction within it) as contributors to this conspiracy. The malignant party was an imagined enemy not in the sense that there was no substance to the charges against it, for parliament did indeed face enemies, but rather because this was an enemy constructed within the terms of parliamentarian discourse and embedded within a narrative that was intended to serve specific political ends. The success of this narrative is attested to by the rapidity with which the term "malignant party" spread beyond parliament, entering, for instance, into the county petitions that flooded into parliament in the early months of 1642.[xlvii]

Its popularity may in part be attributed to the fateful decision to allow the Remonstrance to be published. Sir Edward Dering famously expressed unease "that we should remonstrate downward," and subsequent events reveal that he was right to be concerned, as the term malignant party exploded into widespread usage.[xlviii] The printed Remonstrance helped to rally crowds of protesters against the presence of bishops and popish lords in parliament during the tumultuous "December Days," leading to their de facto exclusion.[xlix] At the end of the month, Thomas Smith wrote to Sir John Pennington regarding "such jealousies & discontents are daily raised by the Malignant Party betweene the King & People, that wee talke nowe of nothing but drawing of Swords, & a war betweene the Protestants & Papists, which God forbid: for tho wee may knowe the beginning, no man can the end & Consequences of an intestine war."[l] Once Charles left London, Smith reported that "Many of the Popish & malignant Party (as they call them) begin nowe to leave the Houses & retire to their Houses in the Country out of a pannicque feare of the multitude."[li] By the logic of the Grand Remonstrance, those members who left their seats to flock to the departed king had revealed themselves as malignant enemies of parliament, and were thus no longer worthy

of representation within it; they had purged themselves, and parliament remained whole without them.[lii]

The language of malignancy was also popularized due to parliament's frequent recourse to it as the political crisis escalated, such that the epistemic status of the malignant party became an aspect of the crisis itself. In this sense, the civil war was a product not just of rival ideologies, but rival epistemic communities, predicated on belief or unbelief in the existence of a malignant party. Indeed the narrative of the Grand Remonstrance had a self-confirming quality: the more that parliament's actions provoked opposition, the more real the existence of the malignant party became. And as we shall see, the format of the remonstrance, often modeled explicitly on this precedent, would become a major form of political communication alongside the more celebrated petitions of the period. Not for nothing was parliament's self-justificatory collection of official sources entitled <u>An Exact Collection of Remonstrances</u>, with the Grand Remonstrance taking pride of place as the opening statement of parliament's position.[liii]

The flexible nature of the category of malignancy meant that it could be attached to a range of positions that could be delegitimized as "anti-parliamentarian." For instance, parliament cited the existence of the malignant party during the militia dispute that prefigured the outbreak of war, and thus opposition to the militia ordinance became a defining feature of malignancy.[liv] Following Sir John Hotham's refusal to admit the king into Hull, the Commons called on the king to join it in "suppressing this wicked and malignant Party, who, by false Colours and Pretensions of maintaining Your Majesty's Prerogative against the Parliament … have been the Causes of all our Distempers and Dangers"; support for the prerogative now became a mark of the malignant.[lv] The Commons also began labelling certain individuals as part of this party, both inside and outside of the house, amongst them

the Duke of Richmond, whose call for an adjournment of parliament was labeled as "a Motion of dangerous Consequence."[lvi] The charge of malignancy was seen by some as undermining parliament's traditional "freedom of speech," leading one member, Thomas Savile, earl of Sussex, to complain that "in a free Parliament, why it was not lawful for me to vote freely according to my conscience without being made of the malignant party, I could not imagine."[lvii]

On 19 May, parliament voted to publish a sequel to the Grand Remonstrance. The royal response to this was telling.[lviii] Parliament's refusal, "after eight Moneths amusing the Kingdome with the expectation of a discovery of a Malignant Party," to "name any, nor describe them," was but a stratagem designed to rob the king of his independence, notably his freedom to choose his friends and enemies.[lix] Rather than being tempted away from parliament by some spectral malignant party, the reality was that the "true Malignant Party" had "driven" rather than "drawn Vs hither."[lx] In the absence of the king and so many of its members, parliament's claim to represent the kingdom was specious: "If, as in the usage of the word Parliament, they have left Vs out of their thoughts; so by the word Kingdome, they intend to exclude all Our people, who are out of their walls: (for that's grown another Phrase of the Time, the Vote of the major part of both Houses, and sometimes of one, is now called, The Resolution of the whole Kingdome)."[lxi]

By labelling his parliamentarian enemies as "the true Malignant party," the king tapped into widespread fears that parliament was in the thrall of a faction, and thus no longer able to represent the people. Despite this intervention, malignancy continued to be largely associated with royalism, and thereafter the usual royalist response was simply to deny its meaningfulness. In November 1642, the king complained that "to be a Traytor (which is defined, and every man understands) should be no crime, and to be called Malignant, (which

no body knows the meaning of) should be ground enough for close imprisonment."[lxii] This, of course, was precisely the argument deployed by Newcastle in the quote that opened this article, as he posed as defender of the English language and the traditions it embodied against the perverse new "Dialect" of the parliamentarians.[lxiii] Thus, the parliamentarians were under the influence of "malignant Humours," which produced in them a rebellious spirit requiring reduction.[lxiv] The threat of ill humors lurked within the body natural, demanding constant discipline, and the appropriate response to discord in the body politic was a restoration of normal political, and increasingly social, relations. In the royalist reading, popular involvement in politics ("tumults") invariably breeds ferment and discord, and the enemy-unbridled passions, embodied in the madness of the crowd- always remains within.[lxv]

By contrast, in its construction of the malignant party, parliament imagines an enemy that might be defeated absolutely. There is something eschatological in this imagined confrontation and the ensuing state of harmony, which acquires a utopian flavor present even in the Grand Remonstrance, with its seemingly trivial suggestion that one consequence of victory would be the improvement of England's herring fishery.[lxvi] The point here is that the malignant party is the sole obstacle to a more profound revival of the kingdom: a true "reformation of the state."[lxvii] Before this party can be defeated, however, it must first be identified, and as the royalists recognized, parliament had only loosely hinted at its precise identity, a signifier without a stable signified. This perhaps explains the popularization of the term: defining the enemy became a collective effort whereby parliament sketched out characteristics, and its supporters filled in the details. This was a participatory activity, through which individuals and groups could identify themselves as the friends of parliament and thereby influence the parliamentarian cause, which became ever more unstable in the process.

In part this was an activity conducted in print, a technology used as a means of political participation in its own right.[lxviii] On 23 August, parliament voted to have printed <u>A New Remonstrance,</u> which distinguished between an "Arminian party" who had kept the church in bondage and a malignant party responsible for oppressing the commonwealth, comprising "Court-parasites, and fawning flatterers," papists, bishops and "Prelaticall Clergie," judges, and monopolists.[lxix] By implication, its defeat would lead to a new, Protestant politics devoted to the public good. But numerous other pamphlets, with titles such as <u>A Plea for the Parliament, or, Considerations for the satisfaction of such, who are apt to be mis-led by a Malignant Party against the Parliament</u> (London, 1642), performed a similar task with no such official status. <u>The Lively Character of the Malignant Partie</u> described "a company of malevolent, or ill-affected persons to the peace of this Church and State," which "doth daily multiply, and is now become such an Epidemicall disease, that like a Leprosie, it hath over-spread the whole Body of this Nation." Here, the party included papists, prelates, "great Personages" who enjoyed a life of "prodigalitie, riot, excesse, and horse-races" and thus feared reformation, delinquents (a stock name for miscreants named by parliament), evil counselors, and finally violent cavaliers, "the Hot-spurtes of the Times."[lxx] What is more striking than this by now conventional typology is the rancor with which the malignants are described: "(like the Devill himselfe) they may be termed <u>Legion.</u>"[lxxi] In fact, as the parliamentary coalition began to fissure under the strain of war, breeding an active "peace movement" in parliament and on the streets of London, the malignant enemy was demonized ever more vituperatively.[lxxii] Diagnoses of malignancy were thus interventions in an internal contest to define the cause of parliament and the reasons why it had gone to war, as well as how far it was prepared to go in that conflict.[lxxiii] Indeed, the specter of the malignant was used strategically by those who through posing as parliament's truest friends, the "well-affected," sought to goad it into ever more radical directions.[lxxiv]

A desire to sharpen the contours of conflict also informed the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, which was intended to unify the Protestant nation in much the same way that the Grand Remonstrance aimed to unite parliament: by identifying its true enemies, and acting as a shibboleth to expose those who were unwilling to join the battle against it.[lxxv] The ongoing search for "incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments" was enshrined in its fourth clause.[lxxvi] In fact, Hezekiah Woodward argued that the Covenant's integrational power would be enough to unite the three kingdoms into one, something predicated on a purge of "the accursed, Persons and Things."[lxxvii] The lukewarm could not be trusted.[lxxviii] The Un-deceiver went so far as to suggest reviving the law of Solon whereby "all that would not apply themselves to one side or other, should be put to death, because they would not adventure their private persons for the publique good; for men not to declare themselves at such a time, was not accounted Moderation, but Treachery."[lxxix] The pamphlet opened with the brutal assertion, supported by scripture, "all Neuters are in a state of Enmity."

Confronting the enemy in the battlefield was easier, however, than dealing with the malignancy that seemed to lurk within those who were ostensibly loyal to parliament whilst secretly praying for an end to war. How should parliament respond to this threat? One clue is given by a decision taken by the Commons on 18 October 1643, "That the Committee for plundered Ministers shall have Power to enquire after malignant Schoolmasters," who thereafter joined ministers and professors as groups who were specifically to be investigated for signs of malignancy.[lxxx] The attention given to schoolmasters is suggestive of the widening scope of malignancy, as it became increasingly treated as ideological deviancy. The schoolmaster had a powerful hold over the young: to Woodward, "he distelleth, infuseth, droppeth into children what pleaseth them, and that is ever what is worst, whereunto corrupt nature stands most bent and biased."[lxxxi] The effort to educate people out of their malignant errors went beyond the schoolroom; this was a mission taken up by a multitude of authors

who fought the war with "pens and heads," laboring to create "a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets," as Milton put it.[lxxxii] There are parallels here with Protestant efforts to re-educate the population following the Reformation, and one pamphlet mimicked the characteristic form of Protestant pedagogy, the catechism, by presenting itself as a dialogue in which the reservations of a royalist were answered by a "loyalist." The result would be <u>A Medicine for Malignancy: Or, Parliament Pill, serving to purge out the Malignant humours of men dis-affected to the Republick</u> (London, 1644). Thanks to the enemy, many thousands had been "slain in their senses by their Syren devises, having given so much eare to their charmes, that they have plunged themselves into a perpetuall abysse of infamy and slavery both in point of Law and Conscience."[lxxxiii]

A Medicine for Malignancy relied on the Grand Remonstrance to justify parliament's stance, whilst reflecting the subsequent entrenchment of its narrative: harmony would return once the king had been brought to recognize this reality.[lxxxiv] But an underlying eschatology belied any pacific sentiment, suggesting that peace could only follow from a fight to the death.[lxxxv] This battle left no room for "foolish pity," and following parliament's victory "Tiburne and the Scaffold at Tower-hill will have more worke then they have had many a yeere."[lxxxvi]

Unsurprisingly, our "royalist" was ultimately won over. But perhaps such medicine was intended to strengthen the resolve of wavering parliamentarians rather than to cure recalcitrant royalists. Certainly, another published "pill" for that "Frenzie, now raigning amongst divers English Protestants, which will not see the danger that their Religion and Liberties now lie in" advertised itself as for the benefit of both "the weakest of the well-affected" and "the archest Malignant."[lxxxvii] Similarly, for Woodward the Covenant should not just be the occasion for purging malignants from the moral community. It should also

engender an inner purification: "The first worke in well Posturing a mans selfe, is, The subduing Malignant selfe."[lxxxviii] For him, the reformation of the three kingdoms ultimately relied on the reformation of the self.

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Such sentiments suggest alternative fates for the malignant party, should parliament be victorious. Malignant tendencies might be ultimately wiped out by a drive to educate the English people about the justice of the parliamentary cause, or a more exemplary justice might be inflicted upon the enemy: <u>A Medicine for Malignancy</u> hints at what might amount to a parliamentary Terror. However, when war ended, another contest emerging from within the parliamentary coalition came to the fore. Newcastle had prophesized that "If a common Adversary did not keep them in a Kind of Herodian Unity for a Time, your Brownists would soon condemn your ordinary Disciplinarians for Malignants, and your Anabaptists again your Brownists," and by 1646 this was proving prescient, although it was the contest between Presbyterians and Independents that took this form.[lxxxix]

One Presbyterian who adopted this approach was John Bastwick, who had already attacked "malignants" against the Gospel in 1643.[xc] Three years later he discerned another dimension to their conspiracy: "there is a direct harmonie betweene the Independents and Cavaliers of all sorts, whether malignant, or popish Cavaliers."[xci] The "unlawfull Liberty" (of conscience) demanded by Independents would ultimately achieve the designs of the malignant party, "for then Cavaliers, Papists, Prelates, Malignants, Turkes, Iewes and Heathens, would all pretend, that they beleeve, serve, and worship God, according to the Light they have received."[xcii] This meant that those of the malignant party were prepared to "looke upon the <u>Independents,</u> and speak of them usefull as their friends." To another author, this alliance was "Herod and Pilate reconciled."[xciii]

But in other statements of the Presbyterian cause, malignancy was overshadowed by a more alarming sickness in the body politic, the "gangrene" of heresy diagnosed by Thomas Edwards.[xciv] Edwards's fears were echoed in one controversial effort to mobilize Presbyterian support in London, another remonstrance, but one which departed significantly from the Grand Remonstrance. Directed to the House of Lords by London's Corporation in May 1646, this text told a familiar story of high hopes vested in parliament being thwarted, but here the blame did not lie with the malignants. Rather, it lay with the "private and separate Congregations daily erected in divers parts of the City" who were preventing reconciliation between crown and parliament.[xcv] In order to highlight this new danger, the threat of the old enemy was downplayed, allowing the City Remonstrance to argue for fiscal-military demobilization, an appealing stance for war weary Londoners "now that the Enemy hath but few Holds left."[xcvi]

The Independent response focused on restating the terms of the Grand Remonstrance. One riposte purported to "pray God the Malignant has not too great a finger in this Worke," alleging "that a great part of the maine Sticklers in the <u>Remonstrance</u>, are such as were always backward to the Parliament."[xcvii] Indeed, one defender of the City Remonstrance conceded that "it is very probable that Malignants as well as other men are well pleased, that we are true to our Covenant in that Article which concernes our Loyalty to his Majestie." His response, that "If this be an offence, truly I cannot consent to remove it, although scrupled at by so many pretended tender consciences," only accentuates how the narrative of the malignant plot was no longer serving the political needs of peace-seeking Presbyterians.[xcviii]

The opposite was the case for the Independents, who strove to prove their loyalty to parliament by emphasizing their status as the most zealous enemies of the malignant party.[xcix] The Presbyterian position could be contested in other ways, however. Another response was a

rival remonstrance, this time addressed to the Commons, which claimed to speak for "many thousand citizens."[c] Like the City Remonstrance, this text was departed from the narrative contained in the Grand Remonstrance, although it did commend that "First Remonstrance" for having revealed "to all the World" those "Policies and Court Arts" that had kept the English people in bondage.[ci] But the Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens went on to break with the Grand Remonstrance's reading of history, a narrative it sought to transcend, if not contradict.

This was not because the Grand Remonstrance was wrong in identifying a conspiracy at work; rather, it had misidentified its nature. According to this new narrative, the chief conspirators in the plot to subjugate the English people were their post-Norman Conquest monarchs. Charles I was deeply implicated in this plot, a truth that the Grand Remonstrance had inadvertently confirmed.[cii] However, parliament's blindness to its own conclusions had caused it to invent a different conspiracy of which the king was victim, thus masking his own culpability: "you maintaine, The King can doe no wrong, and apply all his Oppressions to Evill Counsellors, begging and intreating him in such submissive language, to returne to his Kingly Office and Parliament."

Partly it was parliament's blindness to the true enemy that had been responsible for the failure to deliver England from its bondage. But parliament had also been misled from within by those Lords and their dependents who had led the people to war in a fit of pique, "male-contents" who had been "vexed that the King had advanced others, and not themselves to the manageing of State-affaires."[ciii] Thus they had stirred up the people's righteous anger about arbitrary government, leading them into war for their own private interests. Ultimately this Junto simply desired to replace one set of evil counselors with another. In order to make sure that "the Supreame Power fall not into the Peoples hands, or House of Commons," the

corrupt Lords had plotted to exhaust the people in a prolonged war before making a peace that failed to "<u>disturbe the King in his</u> Prerogatives, <u>nor his</u> Lords <u>and</u> Prelates <u>in their</u> Priviledges."[civ] Indeed, this remonstrance hints that had the people recognized their bondage from the beginning, war would have been unnecessary: they could simply have reclaimed their rightful power from the king with an irresistible force. The true conspiracy of the last five years, "<u>the mystery of iniquity</u>," was that this had not been allowed to happen.

Whereas the Independents typically claimed their stake in the parliamentary cause by posing as parliament's truest friends, here the Commons was informed bluntly that "Wee are your Principalls, and you our Agents," and that "The Worke yee must note is ours, and not your owne."[cv] Rather than allude to the "well-affected," the common term used to identify parliamentarian activists, this text addressed itself to "all well-minded People," whose chief role is to hold parliament to account.[cvi] Ever since the Protestation, if not before, parliamentarian discourse had evoked a political "public" marked by its vigilance against conspiracy. In this remonstrance, parliament itself is made the chief target of popular scrutiny: the representatives of the people needed to be kept in check by the "radicality of its gaze."[cvii]

In structural terms, the Citizens's Remonstrance evokes the Grand Remonstrance, which had presented the king as in thrall to a malignant party guilty of estranging him from parliament; once the king had recognized this, harmony would be restored. Substitute "the people" for parliament, and "parliament" (or more specifically, "the House of Commons") for the king, and we essentially have the structure of the Citizens's Remonstrance, which sought to restore unity between these two parties, demanding that the Commons "Forsake, and utterly renounce all craftie and subtill intentions, hide not your thoughts from Us, and give us encouragement to be open breasted unto you."[cviii] The role of the malignant enemy could

either be taken by the king himself, or perhaps more accurately by the corruptions of kingly government. The Remonstrance thus demanded that parliament "declare and set forth <u>King Charles</u> his wickednesse openly before the world, and withal ... shew the intollerable inconveniences of having a <u>Kingly Government</u>, from the constant evill practises of those of this Nation; and so to declare <u>King Charles</u> an enemy."[cix] Just as the Grand Remonstrance had implicitly demanded that Charles renounce powers that he felt were essential to his kingship, so the Citizens's Remonstrance suggests that parliament would have to reconstitute itself in order to be freed from the corruptions of kingly government, and fulfill its claims to represent the people: abolishing the House of Lords, dissolving itself, and holding new elections.

Both remonstrances, then, ostensibly sought to heal divisions whilst making demands that were likely to widen them. The similarities go further than that, however. In the Grand Remonstrance, the unveiling of the malignant party was not just a device to bring king and parliament back together and thus to reunite the kingdom; it also served to confer a wholeness on a parliament that was ever more divided. By branding its opponents malignants who were inherently unworthy of representation, parliament could continue to claim to represent the people as a whole. Where the Grand Remonstrance introduces the opposition of parliament versus malignant party, the Citizens's Remonstrance opposes "the People" to "kingly government." The implication is that those who seek to perpetuate "kingly government" cannot be of "the People" themselves.[cx] The unity of "the People" is thus confirmed: the Citizens's Remonstrance talks of them in the singular throughout.[cxi]

Read in this way, <u>The Remonstrance of many thousands of citizens</u> reworks the parliamentary cause in a fundamental way, supporting those who would see its probable authors, Richard Overton and William Walwyn, and the political movement that they helped

found, as radical innovators. But by abandoning the language of malignancy, the Levellers opened themselves up to accusations of belonging to that party themselves, or at least inadvertently doing its work.[cxii] Such continued recourses to this language suggest that, despite the attempts of Levellers (and indeed Presbyterians) to transcend it, the narrative of the Grand Remonstrance still overshadowed parliamentarian politics.

But were the Levellers mistaken in assuming that "the People" could be trusted to reject the evils of "Kingly government"? Another remonstrance that emerged during the post-war period suggests that one party whose journey had for a while followed a similar course to the Levellers, the officer corps of the New Model Army, had drawn this conclusion.[cxiii] The Army Remonstrance, usually attributed to John Ireton and addressed to the House of Commons on 20 November 1648 before publication, was presented as an exit from parliament's post-war impasse. It claimed to identify "where the main danger seems to lie, and where any way to escape."[cxiv] Like The Remonstrance of many thousands of citizens, the Army Remonstrance reveals considerable disenchantment with the recent actions of parliament, although unlike that text it does refer to the malignant.

In a superficial sense, the Army Remonstrance mirrors the structure of the Leveller Remonstrance, only substituting the army for "the People" as the grieved party seeking reconciliation with the House of Commons (again, the Lords is ignored). Certainly such a reunion was stated as the desired outcome, but the argument is subtler than that. Instead, the Army Remonstrance claims to uphold "the Publike Interest of a Nation," which is opposed to "tyranny and injustice in Kings or others."[cxv] This bears some resemblance to the Leveller binary of "the People"/ "Kingly government," but is subtly different, as the former are represented by the "Publike Interest" that the army claims to uphold. In fact, the way that the Army Remonstrance talks about "the People" is very different to the Leveller Remonstrance:

they are divided, unsettled, and apt to be misled, a "troubled people" willing "to follow any party, pretending to end their troubles, and ease their burthens."[cxvi] Public safety was the highest rule in politics- "salus populi suprema Lex"- but the people seem unable to discern their own interests.[cxvii] Thus the historical part of the Army Remonstrance presents the people as having been drawn into a self-destructive conspiracy, from which only the army could save them.

This part of the narrative covers the period from the passage of the vote of no address of 11 February 1648, which is presented as occurring at a time when "settlement" was on the cusp, to its repeal on 24 August and the reopening of negotiations with the king. To the army, this had broken the unity of the parliamentary coalition, allowing its "enemies to conceive fresh hopes and confidences" that in the rush to peace they would preserve "tyranny and injustice."[cxviii] Thus under the banner of a "personal treaty" with the king they had worked to "raise new disturbances, and therein to ingage a numerous and mixt party," fashioned from "the deluded multitude and rabble about the City, with the old Malignants, new Apostates, and late discontented party, both in the City and Parliament it self."[cxix] Just as in the Grand Remonstrance, the interests of the papists overpowered the other parts of the malignant party, so in this new party the malignants would ensure that "the Interest of the King and his party were so incorporated throughout."[cxx] And the unity of this party was fashioned against its own "common Enemy," the army itself. Recognizing that it had been cast in the role of the malignant presence needing purgation before harmony could be restored, the army here attempts to prevent this by offering an alternative diagnosis of the kingdom's ills. The operation, of course, would begin with Pride's Purge, the most famous political purge in English history, intended to free parliament from any taint of malignancy. It continued by reconstituting parliament into a body that might genuinely reflect the "the Publike Interest of

a Nation," although further surgery would be required. In between, the arch-malignant had met his end. But would the malignant party die with the king?

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The malignant was thus present in some form at most of the major turning points in parliamentarian politics throughout the 1640s. Even its absence, for instance from the Leveller Remonstrance, is telling, in this case marking a conscious break from the narrative that had dominated parliamentarian politics since the Grand Remonstrance. It is possible, of course, to see the emergence of labels such as this one as an inevitable by-product of political polarization; this name-calling, surely, mattered much less than the "real" conflict of the civil war. However, as the above article has hoped to show, labelling and stereotyping were intrinsic to the process of polarization, enabling contemporaries to identify the parameters of conflict and locate themselves within them. Categories like malignant were linguistic resources to be drawn on in order to impose some order on a bewildering political landscape, allowing contemporaries to distinguish between friends and enemies and act accordingly; even reluctant participants in the conflict were forced to choose their side or face the consequences. Labels were made meaningful by being fashioned into narratives that rendered complex events legible, allowing them to act as discursive poles around which people were mobilized and organized into the more durable collectives that were essential to fight the war.[cxxi] This contest was fought out discursively, as parties attempted to destabilize their rivals' categories: the history of the malignant party cannot be written apart from royalist attempts to deconstruct it.

Some labels and narratives were official in the sense that they emerged from texts issued by bodies claiming to speak with authority- authority that could then be contested by denying the veracity and meaningfulness of such utterances. However those who embraced

official discourses were not necessarily the passive recipients of propaganda; doing so was a means of political participation in its own right.[cxxii] The rise of the language of malignancy shows how the parliamentarian cause emerged through a series of statements disseminated by parliament in order to justify its position and mobilize support, but these texts were subject to interpretation and revision by readers: a dialogue between the "people" and their representatives. Here, the focus has been on the Grand Remonstrance, which contributed a new character to the repository of stereotypes available to stigmatize opponents. This was a character clearly located within parliament's discursive framework, as opposed to "papist" which was the collective, albeit contested, property of the Protestant nation. That contemporaries recognized its partisan associations is clear from contemporary usages of the term malignant, which proliferated in parliamentarian pamphlets from 1642 onwards. Much of the appeal of the malignant party was that it allowed parliamentarians to frame their stance as loyalist, fighting in defense of the king. However, as the war went on, the image of the malignant was a particularly useful tool for those seeking to derail attempts to blur the boundary between friends and enemies in the name of peace, a strategy also deployed by Independents against Presbyterians. Subsequent attempts to recast parliamentarian politics by the Levellers and New Model Army dispensed with a malignant party playing the strategic role of misleading the king, who was now himself identified as the enemy. But the fact they continued to reference the Grand Remonstrance, mirroring its structure in order to express their own alternative political narratives, surely marks this as one of the "master texts" of the English Revolution.

If the malignant party was a ubiquitous ingredient of parliamentarian politics up to the regicide, its place thereafter is much more problematic. With the execution of the king, we might expect to see the disappearance of the malignant party from parliamentarian discourse. However, just as the regicide failed to erase the presence of the king from the political

imaginations of so many English people, so the presence of the malignant lingered under the Commonwealth and Protectorate, regimes that sometimes appear to have been obsessed with their enemies. London's watermen, the printing press, and even the army itself were all feared at points to be infected with malignancy, not to mention numerous individuals such as one Richard Ford, "a most desperate Malignant" returned from exile and requiring "a speciall Eye upon him."[cxxiii] Cromwell's chief intelligencer John Thurloe was kept informed of the activities of malignant exiles by his correspondents overseas.[cxxiv] Diagnoses of malignancy could also come from closer to home, as when the Council of State noted the shutting of shops in London and Westminster on Christmas Day, "upon the old grounds of superstition and malignancy."[cxxv]

For a regime still facing enemies, the obdurate survival of malignancy helped to make sense of the failure of military victory to deliver harmony. Local activists were able to take advantage of this situation in order to legitimize their continued political engagement. We might expect that this combination of an embattled regime and an enthusiastic cohort of activists willing to act in its defense would give rise to a kind of police state, reliant on a combination of denunciations and surveillance. Indeed, such an impression may be given by the Council of State's reaction to reports from the town of Hereford in May 1649 that few were "well affected to the present government." In response, it instructed its local agent "to have a watchfull Eye upon them, to keepe that Towne & Castle from being surpriszd or kept by any malignant party."[cxxvi] Five years later, "divers Godly and well affected persons" from the town remonstrated to the Protector concerning those who maintained "high hopes of introducing theire old superstitions, and of advancing the malignant interest," suggesting that the regime was indeed reliant on local agents willing to denounce their neighbors as enemies within.[cxxvii]

However, to caricature the post-regicidal regimes as somehow proto-totalitarian on the evidence of such episodes would be misleading, for the context in which these statements were made reveals that the Commonwealth and Protectorate had a more equivocal attitude towards their former enemies. The remonstrance of the well-effected of Hereford was made during elections for the first Protectorate parliament, which had involved participation from those they recognized as "Papists, malignants and men actually in armes for the late king." Their fear was that "men of contrary principles will be advanced to high power; who are either manifestly malignants prelaticall or at the most neuters in the cause of Christ, and may prove to be averse to this present Goverment, and the interest of the Godly and well affected of this nation, and to the power of godlyness it selfe." The well-affected of Hereford appear here as an embattled minority, clinging on to old polarities as a means to retain their increasingly tenuous influence.

Although the Instrument of Government had barred "persons, who have aided, advised, assisted, or abetted in any war against the Parliament" from voting or standing for parliament, the concerns of these Hereford activists were not groundless, for all the post-regicide regimes exhibited a desire for "accommodation" that might allow former enemies to reconcile with the regime.[cxxviii] The Army Remonstrance reflected this duality, calling for "exemplary Justice" to be "done in Capitall punishments upon the principall Author and some prime instruments of our late warres, and thereby the blood thereof expiated," before suggesting that mercy might be extended to "the rest of the Delinquents (English)." [cxxix] The latter sentiment informed the Act of General Pardon and Oblivion of February 1652, which was predicated on a desire that "all Rancour and Evil Will occasioned by the late Differences may be buried in perpetual Oblivion."[cxxx] One of Thurloe's correspondents writing from Bristol in 1655 felt that the lack of "any plott from the old malignant principle, or fermentinge any ugly humour tendinge to the publique mischefe" was thanks to this measure:

"For the truth is, our malignants, and newters, and all sorts are now soe setled againe in their trade since the act of Oblivion, and by reason of peace and quiet the cittie increaseth in trade, that soe they may get money (which is most soveraigne to them) and be in quiet, they will be far from any new plots."[cxxxi]

One provision of this Act was that pardon would only be granted to those who had taken the oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth, the Engagement. Although its preamble argued that "the better uniting of this Nation" could only come from an alliance against "all Invasions from abroad, as the Common Enemy at home," in practice this was presented as an avowal of outward conformity rather than inward conviction, much like the Elizabethan Oath of Supremacy before it.[cxxxii] But would this external obedience be enough for those committed parliamentarians who had hoped to purge all traces of malignancy? Just as the Elizabethan settlement ultimately provoked anxiety from the "hotter sort" of Protestants about the continued Catholic beliefs and habits of many who conformed to the Church of England, so the Commonwealth's loose definitions of loyalty were likely to disturb those of the well-affected who feared that malignancy was being allowed to linger in the hearts and minds of their countrymen.[cxxxiii] In these circumstances, the charge of malignancy could actually be counterproductive for regimes needing to enlarge their dangerously narrow support bases, caught between the priorities of peace making and the instinct to perpetuate the state of emergency that had been a constant companion to parliamentarian politics throughout the 1640s.

Furthermore, as the term came to be used against so many who had sided with parliament in the civil war, it became harder to associate malignancy with the conspiracy originally identified in the Grand Remonstrance. If "by a Malignant, is meant one that opposeth the Parliament," who exactly fell into this category after Pride's Purge, let alone the

dissolution of the Long Parliament?[cxxxiv] Already in 1648 Clement Walker could argue that "the definition of a Malignant is turned the wrong side outward."[cxxxv] Subsequent events would only serve to detach the term further from the political landscape in which it originally found meaning. Arguably, this made it an increasingly easy target for royalists, for whom the malignant party was a clear example of "the artifice of the conspiratours in Parliament to devise names, which the people vnderstood not, and suggest terrours to them from things, that had not entred into their thoughts."[cxxxvi] The Restoration gave free reign to such charges, and so, when on the occasion of his own parliament's Act of Oblivion Charles II expressed his hope that "the old reproaches of Cavalier, and Round-head, and Malignant be commited to the Grave," many former parliamentarians must have breathed a sigh of relief.[cxxxvii] It is unsurprising, therefore, that the term malignant seems to have largely disappeared from political discourse thereafter, too closely associated with the civil war and regicide to be useful for Whigs during the Exclusion Crisis or in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution.[cxxxviii]

But if this suggests a successful royal restoration of language, the other half of the coupling "malignant party" had of course become a ubiquitous part of political life, which increasingly came to be understood as the clash of organized collectives possessed of "rival truth-claims."[cxxxix] The king's hope that public life would henceforth be conducted free from name-calling was to be frustrated; conspiracy theories and the partisan stereotyping of enemies continued to abound in the "age of party."[cxl] However, the eventual institutionalization of political hostility in the form of adversarial party politics provided a solution to the problem of how to accommodate antithetical enemies within a single moral community. Slowly, the idea that parliament might legitimately be the site of organized partisan struggles won acceptance, part of a "move away from the expectations of uniformity, that had been current in the early Stuart period and that the Restoration regime attempted to

resurrect, towards a situation in which diversity of opinions was seldom embraced but had come to be expected and even accepted."[cxli] The "impulse to exclude" persisted on both sides, but in the long term all attempts to purify the body politic failed; now enemies would have to learn to live alongside each other.[cxlii]

Looking back in 1655 at the tumultuous events that had led to Charles I's departure from London fourteen years previously, the church historian Thomas Fuller recalled that "About this time the word Malignant was first born (as to the Common use) in England; the deduction thereof being disputable, whether from malus ignis bad fire; or, malum lignum, bad fewell; but this is sure, betwixt both, the name made a combustion all over England."[cxliii] As a parliamentarian turned royalist who was now seeking to tread as non-partisan a path as possible, Fuller explained that his own usage of the term would be for convenience rather than to express any ideological position, "because one had as good be dumb, as not speak with the Volge." Fuller anticipated how the term has generally come to be used by civil war historians, but this article has hoped to demonstrate that there is much to be gained from a more nuanced attention to the origins and usage of such familiar labels; they were amongst the words that made a revolution. It might only have burned briefly, but the fire that was sparked when parliament unveiled the conspiracy of the malignant party left a political landscape transformed, something which no amount of Restoration forgetting could conceal.

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[1] William Cavendish, An Answer of the Right Honourable the Earle of Newcastle His Excellency (Oxford and Shrewsbury, 1643), 4.

[ii] Nigel Smith, Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660 (New Haven and London, 1994); David Norbrook, Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660 (Cambridge, 1999); Michael J. Braddick, "The English Revolution and its Legacies," in

The English Revolution c.1590-1720: Politics, Religion and Communities, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Manchester, 2007), 27-42.

[iii] Michael J. Braddick, "History, Liberty, Reformation and the Cause: Parliamentarian Military and Ideological Escalation in 1643," in The Experience of Revolution in Stuart Britain and Ireland, ed. Michael J. Braddick and David L. Smith (Cambridge, 2011), 120-21.

[iv] Donald J. Raleigh, "Languages of Power: How the Saratov Bolsheviks Imagined Their Enemies," Slavic Review 57, 2 (1998): 320-49; Arno J. Mayer, The Furies. Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions (Princeton and Oxford, 2000); Conspiracy in the French Revolution, ed. Peter R. Campbell, Thomas E. Kaiser, and Marisa Linton (Manchester, 2007).

[v] François Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge, 1981), 54.

[vi] Ibid., 5.

[vii] Ibid., 54, 27, 55.

[viii] Rodney Barker, Making Enemies (Basingstoke, 2007).

[ix] Susan Buck-Morss, Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2000), 9.

[x] Kevin Sharpe, Image Wars. Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England 1603-1660 (New Haven and London, 2010), 281.

[xi] Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe: From the Waldensians to the French Revolution, ed. Barry Coward and Julian Swann (Aldershot, 2004).

[xii] Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," Past and Present 87 (1980): 98-127.

[xiii] Of course John Morrill, who coined the term, did not present his thesis in such simplistic terms as this: "The Religious Context of the English Civil War," in The Nature of the English Revolution (Harlow, 1993), 45-68. See also England's Wars of Religion, Revisited, ed. Charles W. A. Prior and Glenn Burgess (Farnham, 2011).

[xiv] Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice," in Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London and New York, 1989), 91.

[xv] Peter Lake, "Anti-Puritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice," in Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: essays in honour of Nicholas Tyacke, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, 2006), 84.

[xvi] Thomas Wilson, A Christian dictionarie (London, 1612), 133.

[xvii] John Bruce, ed., Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of Charles I, 1633–34 (1863), 573 (hereafter CSPD); CSPD, Charles I, 1638-9, 586. Jason Peacey, "The Paranoid Prelate: Archbishop Laud and the Puritan Plot," in Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory, ed. Coward and Swann, 113-34.

[xviii] A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and understanding of hard usuall English words (London, 1604), unpaginated; Henry Cockeram, The English

dictionarie: or, An interpreter of hard English vvords (London, 1623), unpaginated; Anthony Nixon, The dignitie of man both in the perfections of his soule and bodie (London, 1612), 108.

xix Kevin Sharpe, Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics (Cambridge, 2000), 117-18; Paul Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic. Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650-1730 (Cambridge, 2003), 3-4.

xx Jerome de Groot, Royalist Identities (Basingstoke, 2004).

xxi For the Grand Remonstrance, see Anthony Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War (London, 1981), 81-87, 145-51; David L. Smith, "From Petition to Remonstrance," in The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649, ed. David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David Bevington (Cambridge, 1995), 209-23; Richard Strier, "From Diagnosis to Operation," in ibid., 224-43; John Adamson, The Noble Revolt. The Overthrow of Charles I (London, 2007), 433-36. Conrad Russell implies that a 1626 speech by Pym marks the point when he began to believe in a "popish and malignant party" corrupting the court, but it is unclear whether this is a direct quote from that particular speech; in any case, even if the phrase was in circulation before the Grand Remonstrance, it seems clear from the evidence presented below that this was the point when it entered into widespread public usage. Conrad Russell, "The Parliamentary Career of John Pym, 1621-9," in The English Commonwealth, ed. Peter Clark, A. G. R. Smith, and N. Tyacke (Leicester, 1979), 161.

xxii Peter Lake, "'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I' (and the Fall of Archbishop Grindal) Revisited," in The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: essays in response to Patrick Collinson, ed. John McDiarmid (Aldershot, 2007), 131-32.

[xxiii] Michael Mendle, "Parliamentary sovereignty: a very English absolutism," in <u>Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain</u>, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), 97-119.

[xxiv] D. Alan Orr, <u>Treason and the State: Law, Politics, and Ideology in the English Civil War</u> (Cambridge, 2002), 57.

[xxv] Samuel Gardiner, ed., <u>The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660</u>, (3rd edition, London, 1906), 83.

[xxvi] Ibid., 109.

[xxvii] Michael Quester, "Practical Antipapistry during the Reign of Elizabeth I," <u>The Journal of British Studies</u> 36, 4 (1997): 371-96.

[xxviii] Richard Cust, "'Patriots' and 'popular' spirits: narratives of conflict in early Stuart politics," in Tyacke, ed., <u>English Revolution</u>, 51-54.

[xxix] Gardiner, <u>Constitutional Documents</u>, 155.

[xxx] Peter Lake, "'The Monarchical Republic of Elizabeth I' Revisited (By its Victims) as a Conspiracy," in <u>Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory</u>, ed. Coward and Swann, 106.

[xxxi] Mendle, "Parliamentary Sovereignty," 113.

[xxxii] Adamson, <u>Noble Revolt</u>, 373-405.

xxxiii Gary Rivett, "'Make use of both things present and past': Thomas May's Histories of Parliament, Printed Public Discourse and the Politics of the Recent Past, 1640-1650," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010.

xxxiv A Remonstrance of The State of The Kingdom (London, 1641), 3.

xxxv Ibid., 4.

xxxvi The term "malignant parties" appears in the petition accompanying the Remonstrance that was not included in the first printed edition and is presented as synonymous with an already mentioned "corrupt and ill-affected party." Gardiner, ed., Constitutional Documents, 203. The printed edition does not make the coupling of "malignant" with "partie" until p.11 (item 69 of the original, numbered remonstrance), when Strafford and Laud are singled out as the party's heads, but both terms had been used several times before then.

xxxvii Gardiner, ed., Constitutional Documents, 203.

xxxviii Remonstrance of the State of the Kingdom, 4.

xxxix Ibid., 5.

xl Lake, "Anti-Puritanism," 81.

xli Remonstrance of the State of the Kingdom, 15.

xlii Ibid., 15-18.

xliii Jason Peacey, "Perception of Parliament: Factions and 'The Public'," in The English Civil War, ed. John Adamson (Basingstoke, 2009), 93.

[xliv] Gardiner, Constitutional Documents, 204.

[xlv] Strier, "From Diagnosis to Operation," 233. See also Fletcher, Outbreak, 145.

[xlvi] See Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic, 6.

[xlvii] CSPD, Charles I, 1641-43, 272; Fletcher, Outbreak, 208.

[xlviii] Quoted in Fletcher, Outbreak, 150.

[xlix] Adamson, Noble Revolt, 468-77.

[l] Thomas Smith to Sir John Pennington, 29 Dec. 1641, The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO), SP 16/484, fol. 102r.

[li] Thomas Smith to Sir John Pennington, 8 Feb. 1642, TNA, PRO SP 16/489, fol. 14r.

[lii] This reasoning is suggested by A Medicine for Malignancy: Or, Parliament Pill, serving to purge out the Malignant humours of men dis-affected to the Republick (London, 1644), 21-24.

[liii] The full title is An Exact Collection of Remonstrances, Declarations, Votes, Orders, Ordinances, Proclamations, Petitions, Messages, Answers, and other Remarkable Passages betweene the Kings most Excellent Majesty, and his High Court of Parliament beginning at his Majesties return from Scotland, being in December 1641, and continued until March the 21, 1643 (London, 1643).

[liv] Journal of the House of Commons (hereafter referred to as CJ): Vol. 2, 1640–1643 (London, 1802), 407.

lv Ibid., 559.

lvi Ibid., 403. For other examples, see ibid., 563, 802, 867.

lvii CSPD, 1641-3, 411. See also Fletcher, Outbreak, 152-53. For freedom of speech, see Markku Peltonen, Rhetoric, Politics and Popularity in Pre-Revolutionary England (Cambridge, 2013), 137-39.

lviii The Declaration or Remonstrance of The Lords and Commons, in Parliament assembled (London, 1642).

lix His Majesties Answer, To a Book, intituled, The Declaration, or Remonstrance of the Lords and Commons, The 19 of May 1642 (Cambridge, 1642), 13.

lx Ibid., 5.

lxi Ibid., 6. For parliament's representational claims, see Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," European Journal of Philosophy 13, no. 2 (2005): 165.

lxii His Majesties declaration to all his loving subjects upon occasion of the late ordinance and declaration of the Lords and Commons for the assessing of all such who have not contributed sufficiently for raising money, plate &c (Oxford, 1642), 6.

lxiii For royalist attitudes to language, see Sharpe, Images Wars, 293, 305, 307.

lxiv Cavendish, Answer of the Right Honourable the Earle of Newcastle, 4.

lxv Cust, "'Patriots and 'popular' spirits," 48.

[lxvi] A Remonstrance of the State of the Kingdom, 18. See Strier, "From Diagnosis to Operation," 240.

[lxvii] For the idea of a "reformation of the state," see Adamson, Noble Revolt, 414.

[lxviii] Jason Peacey, Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution (Cambridge, 2013), part three.

[lxix] A New Remonstrance Wherein is declared who are the malignant party of this Kingdome, and Enemies to the high Court of Parliament With the particular Causes why they are Enemies to the Parliament (London, 1642), unpaginated.

[lxx] The Lively Character of the Malignant Partie (1642), 2, 4, 7.

[lxxi] Ibid., 2.

[lxxii] The Parliaments Kalender of Black Saints (London, 1642); The Devills White Boys: or, a mixture of malicious Malignants (London, 1644).

[lxxiii] For this context, see Braddick, "History, Liberty, Reformation and the Cause"; David Wootton, "From Rebellion to Revolution: the crisis of the winter of 1642/3 and the origins of civil war radicalism," English Historical Review 105, 416 (1990): 654-69.

[lxxiv] For the category of well-affected and its antonyms, ill-affected and disaffected, see Rachel Weil, "Thinking About Allegiance in the English Civil War," History Workshop Journal 61, 1 (2006): 183-91; Thomas Leng, "'Citizens at the Door': Mobilising Against the Enemy in Civil War London," Journal of Historical Sociology, forthcoming.

lxxv Edward Vallance, Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation, 1553-1682 (Woodbridge, 2005), 95-97.

lxxvi Gardiner, ed., Constitutional Documents, 269.

lxxvii Hezekiah Woodward, Three Kingdoms Made One, by entring Covenant with one God (London, 1643), prefatory address.

lxxviii Ibid., 12-13.

lxxix The Un-Deceiver (London, 1643), 1. See also Neutrality is Malignancy (1648).

lxxx CJ, 3: 280. Elizabethanne Boran, "Malignancy and the Reform of the University of Oxford in the Mid-Seventeenth Century," History of Universities 17 (2002): 19-46; Ian Green, "The Persecution of 'Scandalous and 'Malignant' Parish Clergy During the English Civil War," English Historical Review 94, 372 (1979): 507-31.

lxxxi Hezekiah Woodward, A Good Souldier Maintaining his Militia (London, 1644), 9.

lxxxii John Milton, Areopagitica; a speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of vnlicens "d printing, to the Parlament of England (London, 1644), 31.

lxxxiii Medicine for Malignancy, sig. A2v.

lxxxiv Ibid., 29.

lxxxv Ibid., 33.

lxxxvi Ibid., 34, 62.

[lxxxvii] Britannicus His Pill to Cure Malignancy (London, 1644).

[lxxxviii] Woodward, Good Souldier, 19; Woodward, Three Kingdoms, 16. Vallance, Revolutionary England, 88-90.

[lxxxix] Cavendish, Answer of the Right Honourable the Earle of Newcastle, 4.

[xc] John Bastwick, A declaration demonstrating and infallibly proving that all malignants whether they be prelates, popish-cavaleers, with all other ill-affected persons, are enemies to God and the King (London, 1643).

[xci] John Bastwick, The utter routing of the whole army of all the Independents and Sectaries (London, 1646), 656.

[xcii] Ibid., 656-57.

[xciii] Herod and Pilate reconciled. A New Dialogue betwixt a Malignant and an Independent (1647).

[xciv] Ann Hughes, Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution (Oxford, 2004).

[xcv] To the Right Honorable the Lords Assembled in High Court of Parliament: The Humble Remonstrance and Petition of the Lord Major, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common Councell Assembled (London, 1646), 4.

[xcvi] Ibid., 5-6.

[xcvii] The Interest of England Maintained: The Honour of the Parliament vindicated (London, 1646), 12.

xcviii [John Jones], Plain English: or, The Sectaries Anatomized (London, 1646), 13.

xcix Interest of England, 8.

c [Richard Overton and William Walwyn?], A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens, and other Free-born People of England, To their owne House of Commons (London, 1646).

ci Ibid., 4.

cii Ibid., 5.

ciii Ibid., 8.

civ Ibid., 10.

cv Ibid., 3, 19.

cvi Ibid., 19.

cvii Antoine de Baecque, The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France 1770-1800, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, 1993), 218. See also Jason Peacey, "The People of the Agreements: The Levellers, Civil War Radicalism and Political Participation," in The Agreements of the People, The Levellers and the Constitutional Crisis of the English Revolution, ed. Philip Baker and Elliot Vernon (Basingstoke, 2012), 61-62.

cviii Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens, 19.

cix Ibid., 6.

[cx] The potentially authoritarian implications of such an attitude have been noted by Ian Gentles: "The Agreements of the People and their political contexts, 1647-1649," in <u>The Putney Debates of 1647</u>, ed. Michael Mendle (Cambridge, 2001), 162. See Vallance, <u>Revolutionary England</u>, 148.

[cxi] Compare with Hobbes: "the Multitude naturally is not <u>One</u>, but <u>Many</u>." Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," 170.

[cxii] <u>A Declaration of some Proceedings of Lt. Col. John Lilburn, and his associates</u> (London, 1648), 16.

[cxiii] For the context of its writing, see Ian Gentles, "The New Model Army and the Constitutional Crisis of the Late 1640s," in <u>Agreements of the People</u>, eds. Baker and Vernon, 153-55.

[cxiv] <u>A Remonstrance of His Excellency Sir Thomas Lord Fairfax, Lord Generall of the Parliaments Forces. And of the Generall Councell of Officers held at St Albans the 16. of November, 1648</u> (London, 1648), 13.

[cxv] Ibid., 14.

[cxvi] Ibid., 11.

[cxvii] Ibid., 4.

[cxviii] Ibid., 9.

[cxix] Ibid., 9, 11.

[cxx] Ibid., 9.

[cxxi] Lake, "Anti-Puritanism," 90-91.

[cxxii] Jason Peacey, <u>Politicians and Pamphleteers. Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum</u> (Aldershot, 2004); <u>Print and Public Politics</u>.

[cxxiii] Council of State to Sir Hardress Waller, 30 Oct. 1649, TNA, PRO SP 25/94, fol. 509r. For examples of continued concern with malignancy, see <u>CSPD, Interregnum, 1650</u>, 145, 185.

[cxxiv] T. Birch, ed., <u>A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe</u>, 7 vols (London, 1742), ii: 180, 344, 434, 740.

[cxxv] <u>CSPD, Interregnum, 1650</u>, 484.

[cxxvi] Council of State to Sir William Constable, 1 May 1649, TNA, PRO SP 25/94, fol. 125r.

[cxxvii] Petition and remonstrance of "divers godly and well-affected persons" in Hereford to Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, 22 Aug. 1654, TNA, PRO SP 18/74, fol. 237r.

[cxxviii] Gardiner, ed., <u>Constitutional Documents</u>, 410.

[cxxix] <u>A Remonstrance of His Excellency Thomas Lord Fairfax,</u> 64.

[cxxx] C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, eds., <u>Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum</u>, 3 vols. (London, 1911), ii: 566.

[cxxxi] James Powell to Thurloe, Feb. 24, 1654, in Birch, ed., <u>Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe</u>, iii: 169.

cxxxii Firth and Rait, <u>Acts and Ordinances</u> , ii: 325.

cxxxiii Parallels here can be seen with the persistence of the enemy in Soviet ideology despite de-Stalinisation: Miriam Dobson, <u>Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag returnees, crime, and the fate of reform after Stalin</u> (Ithaca, 2009).

cxxxiv Thomas Forde, <u>Virtus rediviva</u> (London, 1660), 25.

cxxxv [Clement Walker], <u>The History of Independency</u> (1648), A2v.

cxxxvi [Joseph Jane], <u>Eikon aklastos</u> (1651), 105.

cxxxvii <u>His Majesties most gracious speech, together with the Lord Chancellours, to the tvvo Houses of Parliament, on Thursday the 13. of September, 1660</u> (London, 1660), 9.

cxxxviii Thanks to Rachel Weil for communication on this point. One much later usage of the term was, tellingly, by Lord George Gordon. Colin Haydon, ''Popery at St. James's: The Conspiracy Theses of William Payne, Thomas Hollis, and Lord George Gordon," in <u>Conspiracy and Conspiracy Theory</u>, ed. Coward and Swann, 186.

cxxxix Mark Knights, <u>Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture</u> (Oxford, 2005), 6. For the debate on the timing of the "rise of party," see the special issue of <u>Albion</u> 25, 4 (1993), "Order and Authority: Creating Party in Restoration England." See also Mark Kishlansky, "The Emergence of Adversary Politics in the Long Parliament," <u>Journal of Modern History</u> 49, 4 (Dec., 1977): 617-40

^{cxl} Ibid., 242-44, 291-95; Rachel Weil, "Mathew Smith versus the 'great men': plot talk, the public sphere and the problem of credibility in the 1690s," in <u>Politics of the Public Sphere</u>, ed. Lake and Pincus, 232-51.

^{cxli} Ibid., 24.

^{cxlii} Halliday, <u>Dismembering the Body Politic</u>, 15. See also John Miller, <u>Cities Divided. Politics and Religion in English Provincial Towns, 1660-1722</u> (Oxford, 2007); Sharpe, <u>Remapping Early Modern England</u>, 121-22.

^{cxliii} Thomas Fuller, <u>The Church-History of Britain</u> (London, 1655), book 11, 175-76.