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Founded in 1980 as *JRMMRA* (*The Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*), the journal is published once a year. In 1998 the Association voted to change the journal's name to *Quidditas*, but retained the former title, *JRMMRA*, as a subtitle for that year of transition. The present volume for 1999 is thus the official inaugural volume of *Quidditas*.

Scholars of the Middle Ages or Renaissance are cordially invited to submit essays (twenty to thirty double-spaced manuscript pages) that would appeal to readers of medieval and early modern disciplines. As always, submissions will be refereed.

Manuscripts dealing with medieval or Renaissance studies, regardless of field or nationality, should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* and be submitted without the author's name appearing therein. A cover letter containing the author's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and title of paper should accompany the submission. Please send four copies of the manuscript to:

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FROM THE EDITOR

The title of the journal has been changed from *JRMMRA* in order to reflect the national and international contributions included in each volume. Rather than remain a “regional” publication, with readers and articles drawn primarily from the Rocky Mountain states, the journal (as well as the Association itself) has expanded its focus and now seeks to publicize that change through this inaugural volume of *Quidditas*.

Quidditas. This is a Latin legal term that originally meant “the essential nature of a thing” and appeared in fourteenth-century French as “*quiddité*.” In the Renaissance, the English adaptation, “quiddity,” came to mean “logical subtleties” or “a captious nicety in argument” (OED) and is so used in *Hamlet* (“Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his *quiddities* now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?” V.i.95–97). Thus, the original Latin meaning, together with the later implied notions of intense scrutiny, systematic reasoning, and witty wordplay, is well suited to the contents of the journal.

Cover design by Winston Vanderhoof, Truman State University designer. Photograph by Umberto Montioli, “Valentina Cervi in Agnès Merlet’s *Artemisia*.” Courtesy of Miramax-Zöe film studio.

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"There is nothing more divine than these, except Man":

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GATHERING

Re-visioning Renaissance Women: On the Perils and Pleasures of Re-viewing the Past

Sara Jayne Steen
Montana State University, Bozeman
Susan Frye
University of Wyoming

Two years ago, editor Sharon Beehler and the editorial board of the journal *Quidditas* (formerly the *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*) requested that we—Sara Jayne Steen and Susan Frye—edit a gathering of essays on women in the Renaissance as one way to mark the journal's new name and critical directions. The gathering printed here, even more than we had hoped, announces this journal's position as interdisciplinary, historically grounded, and willing to ask of history, literature, and the arts both familiar, recurring questions and those newer questions occasioned by a variety of theoretical perspectives.

In particular, the five internationally recognized scholars in this gathering undertake to reexamine female figures from history, literature, and art. If in 1986 Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers termed their enterprise *Rewriting the Renaissance*, this gathering in 2000 continues the rewriting of the Renaissance by re-visioning it, by resifting the evidence in order to see anew the women it constructs. The emphasis in these essays is not just on the discrepancies between how women were seen then and how we might see them now, but on the distortions that have been and continue to be introduced.

The scholars who contributed to this gathering represent a variety of disciplines: Retha Warnicke is professor of history at Arizona State University; Elizabeth McCutcheon, professor emerita of English at the University of Hawaii; James Fitzmaurice, professor of English at Northern Arizona University; Carole Levin, professor of history at the University of Nebraska; and Sheila ffolliott, professor of art history at George Mason University. Although each scholar is necessarily located within a given department, their work here illustrates the richness and possibility inherent in interdisciplinary work, as historians evaluate documents with care and turn to literary examples, literary historians affirm the importance of contextualizing the past through archival research, and the art historian provides not only important information for understanding Artemisia

8 Gathering

Gentileschi from her own period, but evaluates the effect of the male gaze on the production of a current film about the artist's life.

In "Inventing the Wicked Woman of Tudor England: Alice More, Anne Boleyn, and Anne Stanhope," Retha Warnicke argues that three levels of gender bias are built into Tudor historiography, from the early modern cultural biases reflected in the archival records and the largely uncorroborated evidence of those who first commented on women's lives to later accounts by those whose own agendas led them to perpetuate the misinterpretation of evidence and even to concoct details corroborating a given view. Warnicke examines three women who have been invented as wicked: Alice More (second wife of Sir Thomas); Queen Anne Boleyn; and Anne Stanhope, Lady Somerset. Warnicke demonstrates the subtle ways in which archival evidence reflects the concerns of these women's contemporaries, followed by the less subtle ways in which myths of physical and moral deformity have served—and in some cases, continue to serve—those who study Tudor history.

Elizabeth McCutcheon's "Playing the Waiting Game: The Life and Letters of Elizabeth Wolley" further reminds us of the complexity of women as biographical subjects by considering Queen Elizabeth's gentlewoman of the privy chamber as neither the wanton fool of Jacobean satire nor a woman to be idealized, trivialized, or demonized. Instead, primary documents, especially Wolley's letters from court, here read by McCutcheon in the context of recent studies of patronage and clientage, reveal the intricacy of the game of "waiting" in which Wolley was engaged. Through her sophisticated letters, Wolley registers the politics of being a conduit to the queen while acting as a loyal promoter of her family's interests. McCutcheon's research allows Wolley to begin to emerge from the shadows of stereotype, to be re-visioned as an individual.

In considering Margaret Cavendish, the larger-than-life woman whose talents and outspokenness have caused her to be vilified and celebrated, James Fitzmaurice further illustrates the perils of depending too closely on intervening biographers and critical consensus. "The Life and the Literary Reputation of Margaret Cavendish" traces the transmission of the colorful ideas and phrases that so often have shaped our understanding of Cavendish, including Dorothy Osborne's assertion that there are "many soberer People in Bedlam." As does McCutcheon in the case of Elizabeth Wolley, Fitzmaurice advocates our return to the writing of the woman herself as providing stronger evidence than the judgments of contemporaries or intervening biographers; he argues, however, that we must read even Cavendish's self-statements with a critical awareness of the larger context for her remarks.

Our fourth and fifth essays turn to portrayals of early modern French and Italian women in drama and film—intentional fictions, but fictions

suggesting historicity. In “‘Murder Not Then the Fruit Within My Womb’: Shakespeare’s Joan, Foxe’s Guernsey Martyr, and Women Pleading Pregnancy in Early Modern English History and Culture,” Carole Levin contextualizes the character Joan’s (not the historical Joan’s) final pleas for her life in Shakespeare’s *I Henry VI*. In Shakespeare, Joan affirms her virginity, then panics and “pleads her belly,” thus suggesting she is a loose woman rather than an honorable leader. Would a historical English or Scottish woman have lived if she claimed pregnancy? How might have Shakespeare’s audience responded to Joan’s assertion? Levin here examines cases of women accused of capital crimes who pled pregnancy and women accused of witchcraft (always, it seems, an accusation with a political background), including the Guernsey Martyr described by John Foxe. Levin concludes that Shakespeare’s audience probably varied in opinion, but that Shakespeare’s Joan might have been executed even if her pregnancy could have been proved because of the damning accusations of witchcraft and illicit sexuality made against her.

Sheila ffolliott’s “Learning to be Looked At: The Portrait of [The Artist as] a Young Woman in Agnès Merlet’s *Artemisia*” extends this gathering’s re-visioning of Renaissance women into the visual areas of painting and film. In spite of Artemisia Gentileschi’s lengthy and successful career as an artist, as a young woman she was raped at her father’s home and a trial ensued that comprises most of the documentary evidence about this painter. ffolliott argues that Merlet’s film, like several current films about historical Renaissance women, emphasizes the romantic, sexual young woman, linking her emergence as an artist to her sexual awakening, even though the relationship between Gentileschi’s rape and her productive career cannot be so easily understood. Moreover, the film, operating in accordance with remarkably durable early modern concepts of how the artist represents the female figure, presents Gentileschi to us not as an artist, but as a model like that represented by Dürer, as a female figure on display.

As Sheila ffolliott points out, in the early modern period women “were under constant scrutiny: their behavior monitored and apt to be criticized.” How important, then, that we scrutinize the scrutinizers—the contemporaries, biographers, authors, editors, scholars, even filmmakers—who have served up literary and historical women as examples, shorn of their complexities, their own voices, their local contexts. As different as the subjects of these five essays may be, these authors provide a variety of ways for us to re-vision early modern women and a reminder of the care and caution that our re-visioning requires.

Inventing the Wicked Women of Tudor England: Alice More, Anne Boleyn, and Anne Stanhope

Retha M. Warnicke
Arizona State University

In Tudor histories, perhaps more than in other histories, writers have failed to distinguish, as Judith Shapiro has pointed out with reference to anthropological literature, “consistently between the sex bias emanating from the observer and the sex bias characteristic of the community under study.”¹ The sex and gender bias of early modern society was, of course, pervasive and ubiquitous. Prescriptive works instructed women to confine their activities to domestic and family matters. Even as litigators in the courts of law, they were disadvantaged.² Generally defining women as the inferior sex, their male contemporaries judged women’s worth by their chastity, silence, piety, obedience, and household efficiency and accused them of being garrulous, materialistic, and driven by lustful intentions.

While neglecting to allow for gender bias in the archives, many scholars have also credited the biased observations of early modern authors who wrote their accounts long after the women were dead. This largely uncorroborated evidence functions as a second layer of gender bias, serving to confirm the original biased documentation. Finally, Tudor scholars have too often ignored the role of their own biases in their interpretations, adding yet another layer of gender bias to studies of Tudor women. In this essay, an analysis of the contemporary and subsequent treatment of Alice More, Anne Boleyn, and Anne Stanhope will demonstrate the existence of this triple bias in Tudor historiography.

In order to uncover these layers, I shall first present the mostly inadequate evidence that is available about these women, which will be, as much as is possible, shorn of biased facts. Next, I shall examine the writings left by their acquaintances that have shaped the narratives of their lives. Then, after discussing later secondhand accounts, I shall demonstrate how present-minded historians added their biased opinions to this accumula-

¹Judith Shapiro, “Anthropology and the Study of Gender,” *Soundings* 64 (1981): 460.

²See, for example, Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

tion of distorted information and misinformation, thereby reinforcing the invention of these Tudor women as wicked.

ALICE MORE

Lady Alice More,³ second wife of Sir Thomas More, was born about 1475 to Elizabeth, coheirress of Sir Peter Ardern of Markhall, Essex, and her second husband Sir Richard Harpur. Before 1492 Alice married John Middleton, a London mercer and merchant of the Staple of Calais, who named her coexecutor of his will in 1509 and left dowries for their daughters, Alice, who was born in 1501, and the younger Helen, whose birth date is unknown, but who seems to have died before her mother's second marriage. John bequeathed his considerable estate to Alice and stipulated that it was to be divided equally between their two daughters at her death.⁴

Sometime after May 1511 when Thomas's first wife Jane Colt was last referred to as living and before 1516 when Alice was first named as his wife,⁵ Alice and Thomas were wed. According to the later testimony of Father Bouge, vicar of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, who officiated at the wedding, Thomas procured a license within a month of Jane's death to marry Alice. As a freeman of the Mercer's Company, Thomas was probably a longtime acquaintance of hers. Having been born in 1477/78, he was somewhat younger than she.⁶

With her daughter, Alice moved to the Barge at Bucklersbury, London, which he had leased from the Mercer's. She took charge of his four young children, Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John and ultimately several wards. As his career advanced, the family changed residences, moving to a new home at Chelsea in 1525. It was here that Hans Holbein the Younger sketched the now famous portrait of the More family.⁷

Increasingly, Thomas was absent on the king's business, and in 1529, underscoring Alice's importance as supervisor of his family and estate, he wrote to her about a disastrous fire in their barns, trusting her, he explained, to make the necessary arrangements for obtaining sufficient corn for the household. This letter is the only extant correspondence

³I wish to thank John Guy for his comments on the Alice More section of this paper. His book, *Thomas More*, was published by Edward Arnold in England and by Oxford University Press in the United States in the spring of 2000.

⁴Most of the biographical information about Alice comes from Ruth Norrington, *In the Shadow of a Saint: Lady Alice More* (Waddeston, U.K.: The Kylin Press, 1983); some of the points below were made in Retha M. Warnicke, "The Making of a Shrew: The Legendary History of Alice More," *Rendezvous* 15(1980): 25-37.

⁵The harpy allusion on which the date of 1511 is based will be explained later.

⁶This information is well known. See, for example, Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

⁷Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, frontispiece, for the portrait.

between them.⁸ In 1530, one of the last notices about her before his resignation as lord chancellor indicates that they had joined the Fraternity of Christ's Cathedral out of devotion to St. Thomas Becket.⁹

After his imprisonment in 1534 for refusing to take the oath attached to the Statute of Succession, Alice joined his children in petitioning the government for his relief, pointing out that his offense was of a "long-continued and deep-rooted scruple as passeth his power to avoid and put away." The petition also referred to the difficulties the family had suffered because of the crown's confiscation of their property and noted that Thomas's lodging and servant cost fifteen shillings per week. In 1535 Alice complained to Thomas Cromwell, principal secretary, about the debts she had incurred because of her husband's imprisonment and pled for help "to the comforting" of him and her in their "great heaviness, extreme age, and necessity."¹⁰

Following his execution in 1535, the crown voided the trust he had belatedly established for her but granted her an annuity of twenty pounds in 1537. She subsequently became entangled in lawsuits over property, one of them initiated by William Roper, her stepson-in-law, the husband of her stepdaughter Margaret. Sir Giles Alington, the second husband of her daughter Alice, helped her settle this case out of court.¹¹ She died before 25 April 1551 and was probably buried at Chelsea where she lived out her life, comforted by visits of her grandchildren. Her daughter Alice bore three children by Thomas Elrington, her first husband who died in 1523, and nine by Giles Alington. Through the Alington line, Alice is an ancestor of Elizabeth II.¹²

Thomas More made few extant comments about Lady Alice in which she was clearly identified. In 1516 he forwarded her thanks to Erasmus for wishing her a long life: She was "all the eager for this," she had responded, because it would mean that she would be able to "plague" her husband "all the longer."¹³ To Ulrich von Hutton in 1519 Erasmus claimed that Thomas had referred to her as *nec bella admodum nec puella*, a phrase which may be translated as "neither young nor beautiful" and which was a matter-of-fact admission that he had married a widow rather than a young girl. Its meaning has been twisted by P. S. Allen, a twentieth-century trans-

⁸Elizabeth Francis Rogers, *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 174.

⁹Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 70, 115.

¹⁰*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London: HMSO, 1862–1932), 7:1591; 8:800.

¹¹Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 82, 112, 114.

¹²Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 135.

¹³R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, *The Correspondence of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 4:172.

lator, who rendered it as “neither a pearl nor a girl.”¹⁴ Somewhat belying the intent of Allen’s future translation, Thomas lauded both his wives in an epitaph placed in the east window of the side chapel to the Chelsea house:

The first united to me in my youthful days, gave me a boy and three girls to call me father. The second, a rare distinction in a step-mother, is as affectionate as if the children were her own. It is hard to say if the first lived with me more beloved than the second does now.¹⁵

Moreover, in his *A Dialogue concerning Heresies*, sometimes called *A Dialogue concerning Tyndale*, in 1529, Thomas informed a messenger that his “lady,” presumably Alice, would rather delay a meal than miss a religious discussion. In his letters from the Tower to his daughter Margaret, Thomas asked that his children and their spouses “be servisable” to their “good mother my wife,” and sent warm regards to Alice.¹⁶

Erasmus left a mixed record about his friend’s wife. In letters to her relatives, however, he made only complimentary statements. For example, in 1517 he sent a kind message to Alice in a letter to Thomas, and in 1529 asked Margaret to give his warm respects to her mother. Only in his letters to individuals outside the extended More family can somewhat critical remarks of her be found. For example, in 1516, he commented to a friend that when he was in London Alice had grown weary of him as a houseguest, and in the above cited letter to von Hutton, he said that although she was not naturally of a yielding nature, she was always compliant to her husband’s will. Years later, in a 1532 letter to another correspondent, Erasmus reported that Thomas, who favored the marrying of widows, has an old one who has “lived a little too long.” This comment was quite consistent with the demeaning contemporary criticism of women, as a sex generally.¹⁷

The record against Alice became negative only after William Roper, her step-son-in-law, wrote his treatise on the martyrdom of Thomas in 1556 or 1557, more than twenty years after the execution. In the account,

¹⁴Mynors and Thomson, *Correspondence of Erasmus*, 4:21; P. S. and H. M. Allen, *Sir Thomas More: Selections from His English Works and from the Lives by Erasmus and Roper* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924), 6. More will be said about Allen’s translations later; see also, Clarence H. Miller, “Thomas More’s Letters to Frans van Cranevelt, including Seven Recently Discovered Autographs,” *Moreana* 31(1994): 3–66.

¹⁵Leicester Bradner and Charles Arthur Lynch, eds., *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 226; Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 56.

¹⁶Thomas More, *A Dialogue concerning Tyndale*, ed. W. E. Campbell (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, Ltd., 1927), 2:77, 128; Rogers, *Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, 532, 544. See also, Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 94; Marius, *Sir Thomas More*, 338–39.

¹⁷Mynors and Thomson, *Correspondence of Erasmus*, 4:38, 171, 372; 7:21; *Opus Epistolarum des Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. and H. M. Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906–58), 8:274; J. A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (New York: C. Scribners’ Sons, 1896), 402.

which takes up only 57 pages in the Yale paperback edition, he referred to Alice three times. The first was to explain her husband's failed property arrangements for her, the second to relate how Thomas revealed to her his resignation as lord chancellor, and the third to vilify her visit with him at the Tower. It is and was this Tower dialogue that has framed her subsequent life history.¹⁸

William recalled how like a "simple, ignorant woman, and somewhat worldly, too" she attempted to persuade Thomas in her "accustomed homely fashion" to take the oath and return home with her. When he refused, William recalled, she responded with "Tilly-valle, tilly valle." This exchange makes for compelling reading, but it is unlikely that after twenty years, he would have been able to remember her exact words, even if he had witnessed the visit. Interestingly, his account does not make it clear that he was present during their interview. It is noteworthy that while he reviled Alice's attempts to persuade Thomas to give up his scruples, William failed also to mention that her views coincided with those of the entire family, including himself and Margaret. In this dialogue William transferred the family's lack of understanding about the reasons for the martyrdom to the shoulders of his stepmother-in-law alone: She becomes a temptress, a type of Eve, although in fact, it was Margaret's attempts to persuade Thomas to take the oath that most deeply disturbed him. It was she whom he called his temptress.¹⁹

William wrote this study for Nicholas Harpsfield, archdeacon of Canterbury, who utilized it for his biography of Thomas that remained in manuscript until 1932. In it, Harpsfield condemned Alice for refusing to support her husband's scruples. Misled by William, the archdeacon assumed it was Alice rather than Margaret who had played the role of Eve. He turned to Thomas's works for information about their lives and became the first, but by no means the last, author to identify Alice as the shrewish, anonymous women in his anecdotes, especially the ones in *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*.²⁰

The *Dialogue of Comfort*, written by Thomas in the Tower, is an imaginary conversation between two Hungarian gentlemen about the possibility of martyrdom in the face of Turkish incursions into Central Europe. Stories that satirized women, which were already quite stale, form its major comic relief. Their details are consistent with the view of women as

¹⁸Richard S. Sylvester and Davis P. Harding, eds., *Two Early Tudor Lives: The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey: The Life of Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 227–28, 242, 243–44.

¹⁹Rogers, *Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, 515, 529; see also R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 311.

²⁰*The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More, Knight, Sometime Lord High Chancellor of England, Written in the Time of Queen Mary by Nicholas Harpsfield*, ed. Elsie V. Hitchcock, Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press Reprint, 1963), 94–98.

the weaker, inferior sex. In one anecdote Thomas told of a woman who complained to her husband about his lack of worldly ambition. She chastised him for being so “foolish to be ruled” where he might rule. His rejoinder to her was: “By my troth...I never found you willing to be ruled yet.”²¹ This remark directly contradicted the one of Erasmus about Alice’s compliance to her husband’s will.

In 1630, almost one hundred years after Thomas’s martyrdom, his great-grandson, Cresacre More, wrote a biography of his famous ancestor. It may have been based in part on oral family history, but when his information can be checked, it sometimes proves to be incorrect. He believed, for example, that Thomas had waited two or three years after Jane’s death before marrying Alice. Cresacre accepted both Roper’s description of Alice as a worldly, ignorant woman and Harpsfield’s identification of her as the *Dialogue of Comfort* women. He also condemned Alice’s pride in an episode in which he had Thomas refer to her nose: “Do you not perceive that your mothers nose standeth somewhat awry?” His meaning is not clear but it probably has less to do with her appearance than with her state of mind.²²

Although Cresacre was the first writer to refer to her nose, it was P. S. Allen who brought great attention to it in his edition of Erasmus’s Latin letters. Cresacre said that Jane and Thomas, who had wed in 1505, had been married six years.²³ The last extant contemporary reference to Jane was in May 1511. Allen combed Erasmus’s correspondence in 1511 looking for a reference that would pinpoint the precise date. He decided he had found it in an obscure allusion to a harpy in a letter of Andreas Amonius to Erasmus on 27 October 1511. To Erasmus, who was at Cambridge University, Amonius explained that since he would shortly move out of the More home, he would no longer have to look at *tes harpuias to ankylon rhomphon* (a transliteration of the Greek). Allen translated this garbled Greek as the crooked or hooked beak of the harpy, a creature which he identified as Alice, although the Holbein sketch clearly indicates that she did not have a crooked, hooked, or birdlike nose.²⁴

²¹C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding Drama* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1954), 177; Sir Thomas More, *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, ed. Frank Manley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 225; Harpsfield, *Sir Thomas More*, 95. In his biography of Thomas More published in 1588, Thomas Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, ed. R. R. Reynolds, trans. P. E. Hall (Bronx, N.Y.: Fordham, 1966), who had access to some of the More family’s private papers and who discussed the events of the martyr’s life with members of his household, did not follow Harpsfield’s lead in associating Alice with the anecdotes in *Dialogue of Comfort*.

²²Cresacre More, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore (1630)*, ed. D. M. Rogers, *English Recusant Literature, 1558–1640*, 66 (Menston, U.K.: Scholar Press, 1971), 126, 245.

²³ More, *Sir Thomas More*, 47.

²⁴Retha M. Warnicke, “The Harpy in More’s Household: Was It Alice More? *Moreana* 3 (1985): 5–13; *Opus Epistolarum Des Erasmi*, 1:476 n. 47.

Apparently, Allen associated her with the harpy because he was reminded of the English word harpy that means talkative. However, by using a Greek phrase in a letter that was otherwise written in Latin, Amonious must actually have meant the ancient mythological winged creatures, those greedy gatherers of goods who enriched themselves through the deaths and misfortunes of their victims. It is possible that Jane had recently died and that Amonious was referring to an individual who made his living from the tragedy of death, a surgeon, an embalmer, even a priest; in 1515 Erasmus complained that some greedy priests had taken advantage of a recent death to exact a number of payments from the deceased's family.²⁵

These biases have continued to appear in recent accounts. In his biography of Thomas in 1984, for example, Richard Marius admitted that the *Dialogue of Comfort* jokes about women were unkind and that Alice's primary function in most histories of her husband was as a foil to demonstrate "his meekness and goodness." Even so, Marius also validated the tales as references to her, adding that she had a "sharp tongue" and was "testy." Trusting Allen's identification of her as the harpy, Marius even accused Holbein, who had failed to paint her with a hooked nose, of having altered her appearance. No contemporary evidence even hints that the great master's work was flawed.²⁶

In her full-length biography of Alice, which was published in 1983, Ruth Norrington assumed that the *Dialogue of Comfort* stories, the insensitivity of which she consistently downplayed and even denied, did satirize Alice. While most critics have identified the anecdotes as meanspirited, Norrington has dismissed their negativism with the explanation that Thomas had a "great sense of humour" and that Alice was "born to tease and be teased." Alice was, she remarked, "not only 'a good foil' for her husband's 'teasing ways,' but she also 'gave him as good as she got in wit and repartee.'" Norrington's misguided opinion is myopic, for the *Dialogue of Comfort* women are definitely garrulous, ridiculous, even irreligious. While reworking the traditional approach to them in her haste to defend *Saint* Thomas More from criticism, Norrington has reaffirmed the antifeminist attitudes of his culture. She has failed to perceive that the tales were definitely not funny to those who were the butts of the jokes, not to Alice nor to any woman.²⁷

²⁵Warnicke, "The Harpy in More's Household," 10; *The Adages of Erasmus*, ed. Margaret Mann Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 226–27, 229. See also *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 368–69.

²⁶Marius, *Thomas More*, xxxiv, 94, 218–21; Retha M. Warnicke, *The Marrying of Anne of Cleves: Royal Protocol in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1816), I–i, 492–93.

²⁷Norrington, *Lady Alice More*, 2–4.

ANNE BOLEYN

Anne Boleyn, whose biographies also contain abundant evidence of triple bias, was born sometime between 1501 and 1507. The child of Sir Thomas Boleyn and Elizabeth Howard, daughter to Thomas Howard, second duke of Norfolk, Anne spent her youth at the courts of Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, and Francis I, king of France. In 1521 she returned to England to reside at Henry VIII's court with the expectation that she would marry James Butler, future earl of Ormond. After this alliance was abandoned, she was betrothed to Henry Percy, future earl of Northumberland, but Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey, opposed this match and had her rusticated.²⁸

By 1527, having returned to court, she captured the affections of the king, who believed that the deaths of his infant sons signaled that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon violated divine law. Determined to wed Anne, he soon discovered that Pope Clement VII would not annul his first marriage. The events of the Reformation then unfolded under the leadership of Thomas Cromwell. In January 1533 Henry wed Anne secretly, probably because she was pregnant. By authority of the newly enacted Appeals Statute, Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, annulled Henry's marriage with Catherine and thus validated his union with Anne.

The king was disappointed when their child Elizabeth, who was born in September, was female but he still hoped for sons by Anne. Probably in the summer of 1534 and certainly in January 1536, she suffered miscarriages. Four months later, Henry ordered her and five members of his privy chamber, including her brother George, Lord Rochford, imprisoned in the Tower. She was charged with and convicted of having used French kisses to entice each one of these men into having sexual relations with her twice between October 1533 and December 1535. The men were also convicted of adultery and then executed. On 17 May, two days before she was beheaded by a swordsman from Calais, Cranmer pronounced her marriage invalid. She was buried at St. Peter ad Vincula at the Tower.

Negative statements about her can be found mainly in the works of Catholics who were sympathetic to Catherine. The most damning statements lie in the letters of the Imperial ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, who arrived in England in 1529. In his dispatches he characterized Anne as a she-devil, an Agrippina, and a concubine. He also accused her of bewitching Henry and predicted that if she could only be removed from court, the king would return to Catherine. As ambassador, Chapuys's principal duty was to gather news from friends whom he bribed for information. His let-

²⁸These facts are well known. See Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), especially 1–28.

ters, therefore, are filled with rumors, even falsehoods, some of them leaked by his bribed contacts deliberately to mislead him about court occurrences.²⁹

In contrast to Chapuys, John Foxe praised Anne, extolling her beneficence to the poor and her support for evangelicals in the various editions of *Acts and Monuments* from 1559 to 1583.³⁰ Although some Catholic works in manuscript claimed Anne had committed sexual excesses, it may well have been the popularity of Foxe's volumes that provoked the English priest, Nicholas Sander, a leader of Catholic refugees, to condemn her behavior. In his Latin work on the Anglican schism, which was published posthumously in 1585 by Edward Rishton, Sander claimed she had committed the illicit acts for which she had died. He also cited all the gossip he could unearth about her alleged lecherous behavior, even stating she had indulged in sexual relations with her father as well as Sir Thomas Wyatt and others. He described her as a witch: She was tall with black hair, a sallow complexion, a protruding upper tooth, a large growth under her chin, and six fingers. He also implied that she was born about 1500.³¹

For their evidence numerous modern historians have relied heavily upon Chapuys's letters and Sander's inaccuracies with the result that their view of her as a witch or as a manipulative female remains intact, albeit in muted form. The works of four historians are especially important to this discussion: Paul Friedmann, Eric Ives, G. W. Bernard, and my own. Friedmann's two-volume biography of Anne, which was published in 1884, is noteworthy as the first study to rely on the gossip in Chapuys's correspondence as evidence for her life. Ironically, since Cromwell confided to Chapuys that he was planning to effect her downfall to prevent her from interfering with his attempts to arrange a rapprochement with the emperor, Friedmann actually believed she was innocent of the charges for which she died although he also described her as a temptress with uncontrollable lust.³²

²⁹*Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain*, ed. G. A. Bergenroth, P. de Gayangos, G. Mattingly, M. A. S. Hume, and R. Taylor (London: 1862–1954), IV–ii–i, 590 (p. 12), 720 (p. 153), 753 (p. 198), 765 (p. 212), 775, 778; IV–ii–ii, 1061 (p. 643), 1161 (p. 884); V–ii, 54 (p. 120); *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, 5:1114.

³⁰Thomas S. Freeman, "Research, Rumour, and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Historical Journal* 38(1995): 797–819.

³¹Nicholas Sander, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, trans. David Lewis (London: Burns & Oates, 1877), 25–28; Retha M. Warnicke, "Conflicting Rhetoric about Tudor Women: The Example of Queen Anne Boleyn," *Political Rhetoric, Power, and Renaissance Women*, ed. Carole Levin and Patricia A. Sullivan (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 45–46.

³²Paul Friedmann, *Anne Boleyn: A Chapter of English History, 1527–1536* (London: MacMillan, 1884), especially vol. 2.

Twisting the Chapuys/Sander characterizations somewhat, Ives and Bernard have also viewed her through gender-biased lenses. Ives's 1986 biography of her is somewhat bifurcated, however, for while he validated Foxe's claim that she was an evangelical, his description of her also vaguely reflects Sander's work. Claiming she was born with a slightly deformed hand, Ives accepted a 1501 birth date for her, probably because he used the framework of courtly love to interpret her role at court. As he defined it, courtly love involved an older, usually married woman, in this case Anne, manipulating a younger infatuated man, in this instance, Wyatt and others. Ives's ideas about courtly love were based upon John Steven's scholarship that depended heavily upon C. S. Lewis's vision of medieval gender relations. Almost all critics now reject the notion that social customs mirrored this literary convention, which was actually less prevalent in medieval literature than was once believed. It is an interesting but erroneous assertion that it was, as Ives claimed, an acceptable custom for older women (usually married ones) to have extramarital affairs with younger men. Despite painting her as a manipulative older woman, Ives agreed with Friedmann that she was a victim of Cromwell's factional victory and therefore innocent of the charges for which she died.³³

In contrast to Ives, Bernard concluded in an article in the *English Historical Review* in 1991 that Anne was guilty of incest and adultery, although he admitted that the evidence for his claim is incomplete and circumstantial. He explained the reason for her promiscuity: "perhaps the most plausible might be her jealousy of Henry VIII's continuing affairs, a defiant resentment of the double standard which allowed that freedom to men but not to women." He seemed to have viewed her as a prototype of modern feminists who some believe, including apparently himself, are naturally promiscuous. Bernard also denied that his interpretation was the "surmise of a man lacking in understanding of female psychology, just a 'wicked women' view of history which sees nymphomaniacs everywhere."³⁴ In fact, his interpretation is that of a "'wicked' woman" view of history, and he stands almost alone among modern scholars in believing in her guilt.

Like these other historians, I have consistently maintained that Anne was innocent. The most plausible explanation for Henry's assenting to the deaths of his innocent wife and five men can be derived from an under-

³³John Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961), 344, 338–89; C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 2. For a detailed treatment of this theory, see Retha M. Warnicke, "The Conventions of Courtly Love and Anne Boleyn," *State, Sovereigns & Society in Early Modern England*, ed. Charles Carlton (Thrupp, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 103–18.

³⁴G. W. Bernard, "The Fall of Anne Boleyn," *English Historical Review* 106 (1991): 609.

standing of the history of sexuality. Early modern folk were ignorant about many facets of childbirth, most especially about deformed fetuses, whose existence they interpreted as God's way of punishing sinful parents. If Anne's fetus were deformed, Henry's reaction to her made sense by the standards of his society. If she had committed adultery with five men in the two years before the miscarriage, as she was accused, the father of the fetus could not possibly have been identified. As the head of a schismatic church, Henry could never have admitted even to himself that he had sired this fetus. He would also have wanted to defend himself against his enemies' belief that the aborted fetus, if its existence were discovered, was divine punishment for his activities. The blame for its birth was transferred to Anne, who was subsequently convicted and executed for having had sexual relations with five men after enticing them with witchlike activities.³⁵

ANNE STANHOPE

The historiography of Anne Stanhope does not follow the triple-biased model quite so well as that of Anne Boleyn and Alice More because a book-length biography of her has never been written. Evidence for her life survives principally in works about her husband and his family. She was born about 1510³⁶ to Sir Edward Stanhope of Rampton, Nottinghamshire, and his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Fulk Bouchier, Lord FitzWarin, a descendant of Edward III.³⁷ Before 9 March 1535, Anne became the second wife of Sir Edward Seymour, who had repudiated his late wife Catharine Fillol, probably because of questions about her fidelity. In 1540 he was to give precedence to the children by his second wife over the two by his first wife.³⁸

In the spring of 1536, Henry VIII installed Anne and Edward at Greenwich Palace as chaperons of their sister Jane Seymour whom he married on 30 May. As the queen's close relatives, they won his special favor. In 1536 the king ennobled Edward as Viscount Beaufort and in

³⁵Warnicke, *Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, 191–233, and for my acceptance of the younger birthdate of 1507, which William Camden maintained, 6–28. Unlike Ives, my suggestion about her fall does not require any particular age, but I see no reason to deny Camden and to validate Sander.

³⁶John G. Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series 23 (1845): 371, said she was born in 1497 and this date was repeated in the *Dictionary of National Biography* but S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509–1558* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1982), 3:368–69, has determined that her older half-brother, Michael, was born about 1508.

³⁷Sir Egerton Brydges, *Collins's Peerage of England* (London: F. C. & J. Rivington, et al., 1812), 3:413.

³⁸*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, 8:481(p. 13); Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 371, points out that Anne has been blamed for manipulating this repudiation, but he believes that Seymour would have acted this way regardless of who his second wife was.

1537 as earl of Hertford, following the birth of the royal heir, the future Edward VI.³⁹

Lady Hertford, herself, was delivered of ten children: in 1537 Edward, who died in infancy, in 1538 Anne, in 1539 the heir Edward, in 1540 Henry, then Margaret, in 1541 Jane, then Mary, Catherine, in 1548 another Edward, who died in 1574 and was a godchild of Edward VI who named him after himself, and in 1550 Elizabeth. Following the lead of the royal family, the Hertfords provided their three eldest daughters with classical instruction.⁴⁰

In the meantime, as Queen Jane had died in childbirth, Lady Hertford served Henry's other wives: she was at the reception of Anne of Cleves in 1540 and attended Catherine Howard in 1540–41 and Katherine Parr in 1543–47.⁴¹ In his work on the Protestant martyr Anne Askew, John Bale reported that in 1547 Lady Hertford had sent her a present of ten shillings from court.⁴²

After Edward VI's accession in January 1547, Lord Hertford assumed the position of lord protector and was ennobled as duke of Somerset. He began to use the royal plural "we" and was raised to the highest dignity of the peerage in parliament.⁴³ When the king learned that spring that a younger uncle, Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, had married Katherine Parr, his widowed stepmother, he commented in his journal that the Lord Protector was "much offended."⁴⁴ Lady Somerset seems also to have taken offense at the marriage of the queen dowager so soon after the decease of the king.⁴⁵ Following Katherine's death in childbirth in 1548, the duchess, who briefly sheltered her infant,⁴⁶ assumed the late queen's sponsorship of the second volume of the translations of Erasmus's *Paraphrases*, which appeared twice in 1549 with John Olde's dedication.⁴⁷

³⁹Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 371; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, 10:601 (p. 245).

⁴⁰*Dictionary of National Biography*; Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 381.

⁴¹Anne Somerset, *Ladies-in-Waiting: From the Tudor to the Present Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 35, 44–48.

⁴²*Select Works of John Bale, D.D. Bishop of Ossory*, ed. Henry Christmas, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 218–27.

⁴³John Maclean, *The Life of Sir Thomas Seymour, Knight, Lord High Admiral of England and Master of the Ordnance* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869), 46; *The Literary Remains of Edward VI*, ed. John G. Nichols (London: Roxburgh Club, 1857), xci; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series* (London: HMSO, 1856–1872), 1:#20; hereafter CSP Domestic.

⁴⁴W. K. Jordan, *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 6.

⁴⁵Maclean, *Thomas Seymour*, 47.

⁴⁶Anthony Martiensen, *Queen Katherine Parr* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), 240.

⁴⁷*The Second Tome or Volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the New Testament*, ed. John Old (London: E. Whitechurch, 1549), dedication after Epistle to the Hebrews.

The weakness of Somerset's rule became evident early in 1549 when he agreed to the execution of his brother, who had used his office of lord high admiral and his marriage to Katherine Parr to challenge for power and who had attempted to persuade the king to favor him over his older brother. In his March and April sermons at court, following Lord Seymour's execution, Hugh Latimer commented: "But surely he was a wicked man: the realm is well rid of him: it hath a treasure that he is gone."⁴⁸

After a summer of religious and economic upheaval, John Dudley, future duke of Northumberland, led the council in its October 1549 arrest of Somerset, who remained a prisoner until February 1550. During his confinement, his wife must have lobbied fiercely for his release and must have denounced her deceased brother-in-law, for during a Lenten sermon at court, just about the time of the duke's release, Latimer denied that the duchess had had anything to do with his previous criticisms of Seymour and went on to remark that if he could preach the sermon again, he would repeat the same statements.⁴⁹

During these troubled years, between 1548 and 1551, nine publications were dedicated to Lady Somerset, a larger number than for any other Englishwoman in the early Tudor period. In her honor Walter Lynne produced three volumes, one a *Concordance*, Nicholas Lesse two, William Samuel one, and the family chaplain, Thomas Becon, one entitled, *The Flower of Godly Prayers*, which, reprinted twice by 1551, praised her patronage of learning, godliness, liberality, and "gentle nature."⁵⁰ At Martin Bucer's death in 1551, she also obtained a large portion of the religious works in his library.⁵¹

⁴⁸*Sermons by Hugh Latimer Sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, ed. George E. Corrie, Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), 1:161, 228; Dale Hoak, "Seymour, Thomas, Baron Seymour of Sudeley (ca. 1509–1549)," *Historical Dictionary of Tudor England, 1485–1603*, ed. Ronald H. Fritze (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 462–64, points out that Seymour was not guilty of the charges of treason for which he died. According to Hoak, he was "a victim of his own ambition and driven by envy of his brother's position."

⁴⁹*Selected Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. Alan G. Chester (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1968), 143.

⁵⁰St. Augustine, *A Work of the Predestination of Saints*, trans. Nicholas Lesse (London: Widow of J. Herford, 1550); Thomas Becon, *The Flower of Godly Prayers* (London: J. Day, ca. 1550, ca. 1551); Francis Lambert, *The Mind and Judgment of Master Francis Lambert of the Will of Man*, trans. Nicholas Lesse (London: John Day and W. Seres, 1548); Walter Lynne, *A Brief and Compendious Table in a Manner of a Concordance* (London: S. Mierdman, 1550); *A Brief Collection of All Such Texts of the scripture As Do Declare the Happy Estate of They That Be Visited With Sicknes: Whereunto Are Added Two Sermons by M. Luther* (London: S. Mierdman, 1549); *The True Belief in Christ and His Sacraments, Set Forth in a Dialogue between a Christian Father and His Son* (London: S. Mierdman, 1550); William Samuel, *The Abridgement of God's Statutes (The Pentateuch) in Meter* (London: R. Grafton, 1551).

⁵¹John Strype, *Memorials of the Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas Cranmer, Sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, new edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1812), 1:358.

After Somerset's release, he remained free until October 1551 when Northumberland once again had him incarcerated in the Tower. This time the duchess was also imprisoned there.⁵² She requested and obtained a royal license for John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, to visit her in the Tower occasionally.⁵³ Although Protestant, she remained on good terms with Edward's sister Mary, who succeeded to the throne in July 1553. The new queen freed the duchess on 10 August 1553 and entrusted to her care her cousins and royal claimants, Katherine and Mary Grey.⁵⁴

Following the queen's grant to her of Hanworth Palace, Middlesex, in March 1558, the duchess wed her late husband's steward, Francis Newdegate. Some eight years younger than she, Francis was the fifth son of John Newdegate of Harefield, Middlesex, and Anne, daughter of Nicholas Hilton of Cambridge. Although Northumberland had also ordered Newdegate's imprisonment, he had pardoned and released him about nine months after Somerset's execution. While the duchess was still incarcerated, Newdegate seems to have spent his time salvaging and supervising the family's estates. After she became his wife, Lady Somerset used her influence to obtain parliamentary seats for him in 1559, 1563, and 1571, positions in which he continued to look after her business affairs.⁵⁵

In 1561 Elizabeth I imprisoned the duchess's eldest son Edward, earl of Hertford, and Katherine Grey, a major claimant to the throne, when she learned about their secret marriage. Katherine, who died in 1568, gave birth in prison to their two sons who were for a time placed in Lady Somerset's care. During the plague outbreak of 1563, she was able to obtain custody of Hertford, but after his subsequent removal although she repeatedly pleaded for his freedom, he remained in confinement elsewhere until 1571.⁵⁶

Newdegate continued faithfully to look after his wife's interests. In 1564 royal officials questioned him, as a member of parliament, about his support for Katherine's claims to the throne, a political position that probably reflected his wife's views.⁵⁷ At Newdegate's death in January 1582,

⁵²Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 372; *The Diary of Henry Mackyn, Citizen and Merchant Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John G. Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1848), 10.

⁵³Strype, *Thomas Cranmer*, 1:314.

⁵⁴John Gough Nichols, ed., *The Chronicles of Queen Jane and Two Years of Queen Mary, and Especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London: Camden Society, 1850), 14, 16.

⁵⁵Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 373–75; P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558–1603* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1981), 125–27.

⁵⁶Henry Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, second series (London: Harding & Lepard, 1827), 2:286–88; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Pepys Manuscripts Preserved at Magdalene College, Cambridge* (London: HMSO, 1911), 73; Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 380; Richard Davey, *The Sisters of Lady Jane Grey and Their Wicked Grandfather* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1911), 173n, 217.

⁵⁷Hasler, *House of Commons*, 125–27.

he left his entire estate to her in his will, which had been drawn up two years earlier.⁵⁸

During Elizabeth's reign, more books with dedications to Lady Somerset appeared. Between 1560 and 1570, Becon's *Prayers* was reprinted three times and Lynne's *Concordance* once. In 1570 Edward Crane and in 1585 Ephraim Pagett saluted her in their English translations of Latin works.⁵⁹

By her will, dated 14 July 1586, she left bequests to four of her children: Hertford, whom she favored as her sole executor; Henry, husband of Joan Percy, daughter of the seventh earl of Northumberland; Mary, wife of Andrew Rogers of Dorset and later of Sir Henry Peyton; and Elizabeth, second wife of Sir Richard Knightly of Northamptonshire. She died on the following Easter Sunday, 16 April, and was buried at Westminster Abbey.⁶⁰

Some negative evidence about her has survived in the records of five contemporaries: Sir Thomas Smith, Queen Katherine Parr, Sir William Paget, Sir John Cheke, and Katherine, dowager duchess of Suffolk. In 1547, shortly after Somerset became Lord Protector, Sir Thomas Smith wrote a letter in which he responded to charges concerning his lack of religious fervor. It is unclear whether the addressee was the duke or the duchess. Highly incensed by the groveling of Smith, "a true and faithful servant of the Duke," the historian John Strype (d.1737) identified the addressee as the duchess and referred to her as "haughty," "imperious and ill-natured." This identification is problematic, for John G. Nichols, the author of a sympathetic article on Lady Somerset in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1845, has argued that Strype mistook duchess for duke in the salutation.⁶¹

By July 1547, when Katherine Parr's secret marriage to Lord Seymour had become known to the Somersets, she was at Chelsea where she had removed in April or May. To signal her isolation from court politics as a result of her late husband, the king's leaving her out of his will, Somerset confiscated her jewels, many of which were transferred to his duchess.

⁵⁸John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and Other Occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign*, new edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1824), 89–91.

⁵⁹Becon, *The Flower of Godly Prayers* (London: J. Day, 1560, 1561, 1570); Stephanus Bodonius, *The Fortress of Faith Defended Both by Scripture and the Doctors*, trans. E. Crane (London: W. Griffith, 1570); Ludwig Lavater, *The Book of Ruth Expounded in Twenty Eight Sermons Published in Latin*, trans. Ephraim Paget (London: R. Waldegrave, 1586); Walter Lynne, *A Brief and Compendious Table in a Manor of a Concordance* (London: J. Tysdale, 1563).

⁶⁰Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 375–81.

⁶¹John Strype, *Sir Thomas Smith, Kt, D.C.L., Principal Secretary of State to King Edward the Sixth, and Queen Elizabeth*, new edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1820), 32–33; Nichols, "Anne Duchess of Somerset," 380.

From Chelsea, Katherine wrote to her husband about some action of Somerset, who made her “a little warm,” and then asked, “What cause have they to fear having such a wife?” Perhaps this was a reference to the duchess’s possession of the jewels. This quarrel over the jewels was more significant than a mere contest between the two ladies for their control, however, for it was a dispute about whether these valuable gems belonged to the crown and, therefore, should be worn by the duchess as the wife of the lord protector, or whether they were the private property of Katherine. Lord Seymour continued to campaign for them after his wife’s death, and if his suits had been successful, they would have become his personal possessions.⁶²

Two years later, in March 1549, Paget complained to the duke concerning a failed petition of his. In his letter, he confessed that although he had at first believed the duchess had influenced her husband to reject his petition, Paget had learned from her that she had favored it. That October, after the king’s council had placed the duke under arrest, she pleaded with Paget, his good and faithful friend, to help him.⁶³

The above letters seem to reflect an amicable relationship between Paget and the duchess, but they contradict his statement to Francis van der Delft, the Imperial ambassador. In August 1549, the ambassador informed his government that Paget had characterized her as a “bad wife,” and in October, at her husband’s downfall, Delft claimed that some courtiers were blaming her for his troubles.⁶⁴ As previously noted in the discussion of Chapuys’s letters, the use of diplomatic correspondence as evidence is problematic because it often contained uncorroborated gossip. Furthermore, royal officials regularly misled these envoys by blaming someone other than the king, or the lord protector in this case, for their troubles.⁶⁵ Paget had earlier been concerned enough about the conduct of the duke in council meetings to remonstrate with him about his angry exchanges with its members. By labeling Lady Somerset as a bad wife, Paget may have hoped to conceal from the ambassador her husband’s on-going difficulties with his colleagues.⁶⁶

The next year, in 1550, having apologized for some offense of Mary his wife, Sir John Cheke sent Lady Somerset thanks for supporting his court appointment. He referred to her “favorable goodness and good

⁶²Martienssen, *Queen Katherine Parr*, 232; G. W. Bernard, “The Downfall of Sir Thomas Seymour,” *The Tudor Nobility* (Manchester University Press, 1992), 214.

⁶³Barrett Beer and Sybil Jack, eds., *The Letters of William, Lord Paget of Beaudesert, 1547–63*, Camden Miscellany, 25 (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1974), 28, 135.

⁶⁴*Calendar of State Papers Spanish*, 9:429, 457; hereafter *CSP Spanish*.

⁶⁵*CSP Spanish*, 9:429, 457; Warnicke, *Marrying of Anne of Cleves*, 12–35.

⁶⁶*CSP Domestic*, 2:#5; 3:#4.

mind toward him,” which were “his chief comforts in his diligent service of the king’s majesty.”⁶⁷

That same year Katherine, dowager duchess of Suffolk, complained about Lady Somerset’s influence over the lord protector’s patronage. The dowager duchess, who was attempting to win a post, probably the marshalship of the Court of King’s Bench, for William Naunton, a servant of her late husband’s, wrote several times on his behalf to William Cecil in 1550. In October she blamed Lady Somerset with whom she had recently corresponded for the lord protector’s failure to favor him. If Lady Somerset had been blocking Naunton’s appointment, she relented, for the duke raised him to the post in November.⁶⁸

The above letters indicate that many of Lady Somerset’s acquaintances believed that she had an assertive personality and that she had great influence on the patronage decisions of her husband, whose ineptness as a leader led to his death and to her imprisonment in the Tower. Subsequent references to her by early modern writers and historians compounded and enlarged upon this criticism.

In his second English edition of the *Acts and Monuments* in 1570, Foxe reported, “upon what occasion” he knew not but “a displeasure betwixt” Lady Somerset and Queen Katherine, whom he greatly admired, had escalated into a conflict between their spouses and “as many as there were which reported that the Duchess of Somerset had wrought his death; so many more there were who thought...that the fall of one brother would be the ruin of the other.” It is puzzling that Foxe, who was in England in 1549, although probably not in London and certainly not at court, should have failed to include these rumors in his earlier editions. There is no extant reference to them before 1570, although Latimer’s denial that Lady Somerset had encouraged him to denounce Seymour might have been motivated by gossip such as this. Edward VI had, as noted above, explicitly written in 1547 that Seymour’s marriage to the queen dowager had offended the lord protector. Although their union surely also offended Lady Somerset, her influence was not needed to ignite her husband’s anger against Seymour, who shortly after the king’s death had begun conspiring, with the support of Queen Katherine, his future bride, to undermine his brother’s authority as lord protector. The council, furthermore, needed no special urging from the Somersets to condemn Seymour when they learned of his conniving actions.⁶⁹

⁶⁷John Strype, *The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke, Kt., First Instructor, Afterwards Secretary of State to King Edward VI*, new edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1821).

⁶⁸Bindoff, *House of Commons*, 3:2–3; *CSP Domestic*, 1:#29, #46.

⁶⁹John Foxe, *The Ecclesiastical History, containing the Acts and Monuments* (London: John Day, 1570), 1545, 1548, 1549; Latimer had also said “So where there is any content-

It is entirely possible that Foxe chose to refer to rumors about Lady Somerset's complicity in Seymour's death because he hoped to soften the story of the fratricide of Somerset, whom he praised as the "good duke."⁷⁰ In the *Acts and Monuments*, then, Foxe's Lady Somerset became a type of Eve, her shrewishness and pride serving to thwart her husband's natural goodness.⁷¹

Embellishing upon Foxe's comments, first Sander in his work on the Anglican schism published posthumously in 1585, next John Clapham in his study of Queen Elizabeth published in 1603, and then John Hayward in his book on Edward VI and his reign published in 1630 charged the duchess with demanding precedence over the queen dowager after her marriage to Seymour, a claim that lacks contemporary corroboration. Barrett Beer, who edited the book on Edward VI, has recently pointed out that Hayward generally demonstrated in it an "antipathy" to women.⁷² According to Hayward:

The Duke had taken to wife Anne Stanhope a woman for many imperfections intolerable, but for pride monstrous.... [S]he was exceeding both subtle and violent in accomplishing her ends, for which she spurred over all respects both of conscience and of shame. This woman did bear such invincible hate, first against the Queen Dowager for light causes and woman's quarrels, especially for that she had precedence of place before her.... That albeit the Queen Dowager died by childbirth, yet would not her malice either die or decrease. But continually she rubbed into the Duke's dull capacity, that the Lord Sudley [Seymour]...sought nothing more than to take away his life ...as thereby happily to attain his place.

Hayward went on to say:

tion between brother and brother for land, commonly they are both undone by it." *Sermons by Hugh Latimer*, ed. Corrie, 1:271; Bernard, "Downfall of Sir Thomas Seymour," 214; for the letters of the queen dowager to Seymour, see Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1999), 402–12.

⁷⁰Foxe, *The Ecclesiastical History* (1570), 1545, 1548, 1549.

⁷¹For a study of Foxe's veracity, see Thomas Freeman, "Texts, Lies, and Microfilm: Reading and Misreading Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,'" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (1999): 23–46.

⁷²Sander, *Anglican Schism*, 184; John Clapham, *Elizabeth of England: Certain Observations concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Evelyn Read and Conyers Read (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951), 51–53; John Hayward, *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth*, ed. B. L. Beer (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 1993), 2. Beer (p. 17) doubts that Hayward actually saw the work of Sander.

The Duke embracing this woman's counsel (a woman's counsel indeed and nothing better) yielded himself both to advise and devise for destruction of his brother.⁷³

Despite the Sander/Clapham/Hayward thesis, since Katherine Parr was in mourning and not expected to participate in public events while she remained at court during the first few weeks after Henry's death, a struggle for precedence between the two ladies could not easily have taken place. Neither, for example, attended the funeral of Henry VIII or the coronation of Edward VI where the issue of placement might have been raised. Perhaps the writers' claim arose from their assumption that Lady Somerset would, as they believed women were wont to do, demand the highest position in court ceremony once her husband had obtained precedence over all other peers in parliament.⁷⁴

In twentieth-century studies, modern writers have mostly adopted the Sander/Clapham/Hayward characterization, perhaps relying on it, as A. F. Pollard and W. K. Jordan seem to have done, to emphasize Somerset's role as the idealistic, liberal duke.⁷⁵ Although some later historians, such as M. L. Bush in 1975, have successfully challenged Foxe's invention of Somerset as the good duke, pointing out that he had an "obsessional nature" and "stubbornness," they have continued to validate Strype's identification of Lady Somerset as the addressee of Smith's letter in 1547. In fact, these writers seem to have been unaware of Nichols's article about her in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Even the most recent family history, published in 1972 by William Seymour, accepts the negative characterizations of her.⁷⁶ In addition, modern biographers of Katherine Parr, who extol her promotion of religious writings, who condone her romantic marriage to Seymour, and who rightly recall her death in childbirth with great sympathy, continue to condemn Lady Somerset for receiving the royal jewels and for her alleged complicity in Seymour's downfall.⁷⁷

Most of these writers have omitted references to her pious and charitable works and her patronage of learning. Eager to credit her with the malice that led to the death of her husband's brother, they fail to praise her

⁷³Hayward, *Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth*, 98–99.

⁷⁴*Literary Remains of Edward VI*, 1:xcii, xciv.

⁷⁵A. F. Pollard, *England under Protector Somerset: An Essay* (New York: R. & R. Reprint, 1966), 182–84; W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King, The Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (London: George Allen, 1968), 1:496–97.

⁷⁶M. L. Bush, *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), 67; Hoak, "Seymour, Edward, Duke of Somerset (ca. 1500–1552)," *Historical Dictionary*, 459–61, also denies that he was a "good duke." William Seymour, *Ordeal by Ambition: An English Family in the Shadow of the Tudors* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972), 221–22, 318–19.

⁷⁷James, *Kateryn Parr*, 308–10, for example; Antonia Fraser, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992), 396–414.

for attending, however briefly, to the child that cost Katherine Parr her life. Like the queen, the duchess patronized churchmen, including John Hooper and John Olde, and took over her sponsorship of the printing of Erasmus's paraphrases. Many writers dedicated religious works to Lady Somerset, some even after she no longer had access to political power, a true indication of her devout religious commitment.

Studies of the lives of Alice More, Anne Boleyn, and Anne Stanhope have followed similar paths. Contemporary criticisms of these women as aggressive when the prevailing ideal for women was chastity, silence, and obedience were enlarged upon and twisted by early modern historians whose interpretations have led to the invention of them as the wicked women of Tudor England. These inventions have continued to hold sway in many modern studies because the authors, perhaps unable to recognize the personal biases that have fueled their own interpretations, have failed to filter out the gender bias of the secondhand early modern observer and to take adequate cognizance of the gender bias of the culture in which the women lived.

Playing the Waiting Game: The Life and Letters of Elizabeth Wolley

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ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO Wallace Notestein, an English historian, commented that while both the men and the women of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England remain “strangers” and “shadowy figures” to us, the women are “much more shadowy.”¹ Pointing out that “Our knowledge of women comes largely from the incidental mention of them by men who seldom took pains to characterize and individualize them,” he insisted that “It is as individuals that we must know them, if we are to understand them as members of a sex.”² Obviously a great deal has changed for the better. We know much more about the lives of some women in early modern England, thanks to recent developments in women’s studies, the impact of feminist theory, and the sustained interdisciplinary research that has led to the recovery of diaries, memoirs, and letters; the exploration of records, inventories, and other documents (household, parish, and court); and biographies, sophisticated studies, and critical editions of the texts of writers and public figures—including Queen Elizabeth, Mary Sidney, the Cooke sisters, Anne Clifford, Lucy, countess of Bedford, and Arbella Stuart.

But many women in early modern England remain in the shadows, whether they are royal or noble (groups for whom records are more likely to exist), gentry, middling, or granted little or no status.³ I want to discuss

¹Wallace Notestein, “The English Woman, 1580–1650,” *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Travelyan*, ed. John Harold Plumb (1955; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 71.

²Notestein, “The English Woman,” 71.

³In this connection, see Kathy Lynn Emerson, *Wives and Daughters: The Women of Sixteenth-Century England* (Troy, N.Y.: The Whitson Publishing Company, 1984); there are few entries for women who were not elite.

J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), includes a useful definition of the *gentry*, a notoriously slippery term. I am following that definition here: “families owning landed property which were headed by baronets or knights or men described as ‘esquire’ or ‘gentleman’ in such official documents as heraldic visitation records, subsidy rolls and hearth tax returns,” vii. For general information on gentry life, I have found the following especially useful: Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500–1700* (Stanford: Stanford Uni-

the life and letters of one such woman, Elizabeth Wolley (to use the name she was best known by),⁴ who was born into the gentry and became a gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber of Elizabeth I.⁵ The queen referred to her with a special term of endearment, a sure sign of favor, and one historian has characterized her as a “leading member of the Queen’s household.”⁶ Literary historians remember her because John Donne secretly married her niece, Anne More, in December 1601, while he was a secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Elizabeth Wolley’s third husband, and a member of Egerton’s household, where Ann More had been staying.⁷ Otherwise, she is almost invisible today,⁸ despite a variety of manuscript materials, some published in the early and mid-nineteenth century, which include an account of gifts presented and costs incurred for her first marriage and let-

versity Press, 1994); Kate Mertens, *The English Noble Household 1250–1600* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), which, despite its title, also discusses gentry life; and Lena Cowen Orlin, *Elizabethan Households: An Anthology* (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1995).

⁴In fact, she can be discussed under one of four surnames—More, Polsted, Wolley, or Egerton; moreover, the first three names appear in variant spellings, including Moore, Polstead, and Wooley.

⁵Studies of women in waiting at court that I have found particularly valuable include Simon Adams, “Eliza Enthroned? The Court and Its Politics,” *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (London: MacMillan, 1984), 55–77; Elizabeth A. Brown, “Companion Me with My Mistress’: Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, and Their Waiting Women,” *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women’s Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 131–45; Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 2d edition (London: Longman, 1998), chapter on “The Queen and Court,” 90–110; and Pam Wright, “A Change in Direction: The Ramifications of a Female Household, 1558–1603,” *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey et al. (London: Longman, 1987), 147–72. There are also a number of more general books on ladies-in-waiting, including Dulcie M. Ashdown, *Ladies-in-Waiting* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976); and Anne Somerset, *Ladies-in-Waiting: From the Tudors to the Present Day* (New York: Knopf, 1984). These proved less useful for my concerns, however.

⁶Louis A. Knafla, *Law and Politics in Jacobean England: The Tracts of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 30.

⁷R. C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), has much on Donne’s marriage, easily located through the index. Lady Wolley, who had died the year before her niece was married, left her a bequest of one hundred pounds, which helped the Donnes during the very difficult years following their secret marriage (Bald 140, Plate VIIa). See too I. A. Shapiro, “The Date of a Donne Elegy, and Its Implications,” *English Renaissance Studies: Presented to Dame Helen Gardner in Honour of Her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980), 141–43. As yet forthcoming, a biography of John Donne by Dennis Flynn, currently called “Nothing Else Is,” will focus upon Donne’s married years and promises to provide much new material about Anne More and their marriage, based on extensive archival research.

⁸Her name rarely appears in the standard histories of sixteenth-century England, in biographies of Queen Elizabeth I, or in studies of the Tudor court or of English waiting women. However, she is succinctly discussed in Emerson, 154 (as Elizabeth More), and in P. W. Hasler, ed., *The House of Commons 1558–1603*, 3 vols. (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1981) [hereafter cited as *HOC*]: see the entries for her father and each of her husbands.

ters that she wrote to her brother and her father while she was in attendance upon the queen in the 1590s.⁹

Drawing on research in and recent interpretations of the English gentry, marriage and the family, the court, and patronage and clientage, I want to provide the contexts from which we can better understand Lady Wolley's life and letters and see her both as an individual and by way of her family, status, and gender. Recovering even part of her life is a challenge, because so much of it is fragmentary and half-hidden behind references to her father or husbands. The elaborate funeral monument in the Loseley Chapel at St. Nicolas Church, in Guildford, for example, which her brother, Sir George More, erected in honor of the family, shows Elizabeth and her younger sister kneeling to the far right of their parents' tomb, while the inscription above the figure of Elizabeth names her father, each of her husbands, and her son.¹⁰ Similarly, the tombstone erected for her second husband, Sir John Wolley, beside whom she was buried, dwells upon her marital relationship to him and to her third husband, although it also suggests a connection with the queen: "Clara domi per se: sed Elizam ascivit Eliza" (that is, [she was] celebrated by virtue of her house, but Eliza "adopted" Eliza).¹¹ The risks, including overgeneralizing or extrapolating a too-coherent pattern, are obvious.

But there are rewards, too. Her life and letters offer invaluable pictures of Elizabethan court life as seen by one of the very few women to participate in it as a member of a privileged community. More specifically, they show the influence that she enjoyed, thanks to her status, her connections in general, and her place in the Privy Chamber as an attendant of the queen. As G. R. Elton has observed, "Access and exclusion mattered so much because the game of politics, unlike the government of the realm, remained so firmly fixed upon the monarch's person."¹² And Pam Wright

⁹In addition to the studies of women-in-waiting, listed above, I have also found the following, on the Elizabethan court, invaluable: G. R. Elton, "Tudor Government: The Points of Contact: III: The Court," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 26 (1976): 211–28; Haigh, *Elizabeth I*; David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1986); J. E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene," *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), 59–84; David Starkey, "The Age of the Household: Politics, Society and the Arts," *The Later Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Medcalf (London: Methuen, 1981), 225–90, much of which is also applicable to the court of Queen Elizabeth; David Starkey, "Introduction: Court History in Perspective," *The English Court*, 1–24; and Penry Williams, "Court and Polity under Elizabeth I," *The John Rylands University Library* 65 (1983): 259–86.

¹⁰In situ, Guildford, Surrey. For a close-up of this part of the monument, see fig. 1.

¹¹Stowe, as cited in John Nichols, *The Progresses and Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (1823; New York: Burt Franklin, n.d. [1966]), 3:82.

¹²Elton, 218. Interestingly, later in this same address, Elton asks for "painful studies...of ladies of the Privy Chamber," instead of more "pretty pictures of gallants and galliards" (225).



Figure 1. Elizabeth Wolley and her younger sister, Ann (Anne), by their parents' tomb, Loseley Chapel, St. Nicolas Church, Guildford Surrey. Courtesy of the More-Molyneux Family.

emphasizes the potential political influence: “Despite the neutralization of the Privy Chamber [the queen’s attendants’ first loyalty was to her], the key to political power at court remained—as it always had been—access to

the sovereign.”¹³ So the networking that seems to have occupied much of Lady Wolley’s life at court, to judge by her letters, inevitably had political implications, however indirect, as she advanced the careers of family and friends. At the same time, her letters, written *from* court, rather than *to* it (as in letters of suit), let her speak in her own words and show an incisive, lively, and clearheaded social and political intelligence: the game of “waiting” was one that Lady Wolley played extremely well.¹⁴

Elizabeth More, successively the wife of Richard Polsted, John Wolley, and Thomas Egerton, was born on 28 April 1552; she was the oldest child of Margaret Daniell and William More, of Loseley, Surrey. Her mother, More’s second wife, was the daughter and heiress of Ralph Daniell, of Swaffham, Norfolk.¹⁵ Otherwise, Margaret More remains one of Notestein’s “shadowy figures,” except for glimpses provided by the contents of her handsomely outfitted “closet” as itemized in an inventory of the older manor house that was drawn up in 1556, by a letter that she wrote to her “Lovinge Daughter Wolley” on 9 November 1579, by her husband’s characterization of her, and by her epitaph. Her room contained a “ioyned” chestnut table, a “ioyned” cupboard, a “fayre” desk, a variety of chests, coffers, caskets, baskets, trunks, and hampers, as well as glasses, pots, jugs, ewers, trenchers, a case of knives, a mold for pastries, a box for spices, shears, snuffers, an hourglass, a urinal, three “workyng baskets” (for needlework), and, tellingly, a book on childbirth and several books of prayers.¹⁶ Elizabeth’s mother, then, was a careful household manager and a literate and pious gentlewoman—she ends her letter to Elizabeth by committing her “to the preservac[i]on of god: who blesse yo^w.”¹⁷ In his “pedigree,” written in 1586, Sir William calls her (and his

¹³Wright, 159; cf. 161; see too Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 101–4.

¹⁴In May 1984 I gave a paper on Elizabeth Wolley at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, and in the fall of 1990 I spoke about her letters as a participant in a workshop, “The Cloak of Language: Interpreting Women’s Letters,” at the first symposium on “Attending to Women in Early Modern England,” at the University of Maryland. Obviously the present study has been long in the making, then, and it is a pleasure to return to it at a time when it is possible to integrate studies of the court with studies exploring gender issues more specifically.

¹⁵J. C. Henderson / M. A. Phillips, *HOC* 3:80.

¹⁶John Evans, “Extracts from the Private Account Book of Sir William More, of Loseley, in Surrey, in the Time of Queen Mary and of Queen Elizabeth,” *Archaeologia* 36 (1855): 292–93.

¹⁷Margaret More, Loseley Manuscripts, LM/COR/3/304, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey. This and subsequent extracts of documents formerly at the Guildford Munitment Room or Loseley Park and now at the Surrey History Centre are reproduced by permission of Mr. Michael G. More-Molyneux. I am very grateful for the generous help I received from Miss Jill Beck and Mrs. Shirley Corke when I visited the Guildford Muniment Room in the summer of 1983 (when these manuscripts were there), and for the interest and assistance of Mary Mackey of the new Surrey History Centre. I also want to acknowledge information received from Laetitia Yeandle, of the Folger Library. For more on the history of the Loseley manuscripts, see Laetitia Yeandle and W. R. Streitberger, “The Loseley Collection of Manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987): 201–7.

first wife) “chaste & verye virtuous.”¹⁸ The inscription on the monument that Elizabeth More’s brother had erected in memory of their parents makes a similar point, calling Margaret More “a faithfull wife, carefull of her familie, bountifull to the Poore, & religious towards God.”¹⁹

By contrast, the life of her father, who has been characterized as “the perfect Elizabethan country gentleman,” is well documented.²⁰ He was born on 30 January 1520, the son of Sir Christopher More, who was the king’s remembrancer of the Exchequer (1542–1549). Knighted in 1576, William More is a good example of the type celebrated by Ben Jonson, and a counterpart, on the county level, of lawyers and administrators like Sir William Cecil (Lord Burghley), Elizabeth I’s lord treasurer and chief minister of state, and Sir Nicholas Bacon, her first lord keeper. In a list, circa 1598, of the 272 “principal gentlemen that dwell usually in their counties,” William More is one of six named for Surrey.²¹ He was twice sheriff of Surrey and Sussex, the vice-admiral of Sussex from 1559 to 1594, and a chamberlain of the Exchequer from 1591. He represented the county or a borough in Surrey in every Elizabethan parliament before he died in July 1600. An active committee man, he participated vigorously enough in parliamentary debate to be cited by J. E. Neale and in the entry for him in Hasler’s invaluable edition of members of the House of Commons from 1558 to 1603.²² Like other Tudor gentry who served the crown and commonweal, William More was a well-to-do landowner and a great-house builder, too; the queen stayed at his new house in Loseley, completed by 1569, at least four times.²³ Early associated with the reformers of the church, he held strong Protestant convictions. He was also a man of learn-

¹⁸William More, Loseley Manuscripts, LM 1617, fol. 1, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey. I first saw this manuscript on a visit to the Centre during the John Donne conference in May 2000, and I am grateful to Dennis Flynn for his subsequent assistance.

¹⁹As printed in Owen Manning and William Bray, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* 1 (London, 1804), 66. See, too, the inscription in situ, in the Loseley Chapel, St. Nicolas Church, Guildford, Surrey.

²⁰See the entry by M. A. Phillips, *HOC*, 3:86. Besides this entry (86–89), I am drawing on Alfred John Kempe’s introductory and other explanatory materials in *The Loseley Manuscripts*, ed. John Alfred Kempe (London: John Murray, 1836). Many other details can be gleaned from Sir William More’s autobiographical “pedigree,” written in his sixty-seventh year, where he describes various temptations that he resisted with God’s help (including gaming and what he calls “whoredom”) as a young man at the Inns of Court, and the many blessings, both worldly and heavenly, among them a loving and virtuous family, a fair house, the good favor of his sovereign, and the growth of his estate, that he has received from God. See LM 1617, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

²¹From State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth, 269/46, as cited in Williams, 268 and 285.

²²J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1584–1601* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1958), 49, 182, 229, and 303; Phillips, *HOC*, 3:86–87.

²³Phillips, *HOC*, 3:88. See too the building records in Evans, “Extracts,” 294–310. The house, which is about two miles from Guildford, still stands and can be visited; see the attractive brochure, *Loseley Park: Official Guide* (Derby: English Life Publications, 1982) and a later version, also called *Loseley Park* (Derby: English Life Publications, 2000).

ing and, like other humanists, was interested in education. He had one of the best collections of books in a private library in sixteenth-century England, with works in English, Latin, Italian, and French.²⁴

More's only son, George (1553–1632), attended Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and the Inner Temple,²⁵ but we do not know how he, Elizabeth, and their younger sister, Anne, were educated as children, although almost certainly they would have had tutors, like other children of the gentry. We do know that Elizabeth later owned John Knox's *An Answer to a Great Number of Blasphemous Cauillations Written by an Anabaptist* (1560); the volume, now part of the Bridgewater collection at the Huntington Library, contains her signature (as Elizabeth Wolley) on the title page.²⁶ And Robert Moore mentions her interest in astronomy in dedicating his *Diarivm Historicopoeticvm* (Oxford, 1595) to her and her second husband.²⁷ She counted on her father to oversee her son's early education (while she was at court, he seems to have stayed at Loseley with his grandfather, uncle, and cousins), but clearly she kept in touch with his progress. On 16 September 1595, for instance, she wrote her father that the Queen "hath comaunded me to send for my sonne; notwthstanding if yt shall please you to forgett yt, I meane to forgett also to send for him. In the meane tyme I praie yo^u to gyve charge that he may practise his Frenche, for feare her Ma^{tie} shall call to me for him agayne. She sayeth she will pose him in his learynge. I pray yo^u therfore to cause Mr. Pyke to see him take paynes between this and then."²⁸

A few details hint at other aspects of her early life. She was born in London at the house of George Medley, esquire, "marchant of the Staple," and baptized on 1 May 1552; her godfather was John Whetstone, a haberdasher; her godmothers, Elizabeth Medley and Alys Polsted.²⁹ She was raised in comfort at Loseley; the children's chamber, which was heated (her father's inventory, completed in 1556, when she would have been just a little over four years old, lists a little fire shovel) was well furnished, with a bedstead, a featherbed and another mattress, blankets and

²⁴See Elizabeth McCutcheon, "A Mid-Tudor Owner of More's *Utopia*: Sir Thomas More," *Moreana* 18 (1981): 32–35. This note is based on an early inventory in Evans, "Extracts," 290–92; later lists are part of the Folger Library holdings.

²⁵See Henderson / Phillips, *HOC*, 3:80–83, which now largely supersedes the entry in the *DNB*.

²⁶Call number 62158.

²⁷Robert Moore, *Diarivm Historicopoeticvm* (Oxford, 1595), fol. *2v; call number 28902. The *Diarivm* is a calendar of events, organized by the months of the year. Bald (142) notes that John Donne read the Wolleys' copy of this book while he was staying at Pyrford, Surrey, with Francis Wolley.

²⁸When possible, I am citing Elizabeth Wolley's letters in Kempe's edition, since the letters he selected are among her most interesting and were otherwise not accessible to me; for this letter, see Kempe, 318.

²⁹William More, "Book of Indentures," Loseley Manuscripts, LM/1327/6, fol. 112v, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

pillows, a cradle, a cupboard and coffer, hangings, curtains, and two little “close stoles [stools] for childerne.”³⁰ A description of a royal progress in the summer of 1569 that stopped for two days at the then newly completed manor house at Loseley mentions one of the children “playing on a lute and singing, her Majesty sitting upon the threshold of the door, my Lord of Leicester kneeling by her Highness.”³¹ This could have been any of the More children, of course, but all of them must have been taught music and dancing.³²

Like other women from affluent gentry families, Elizabeth More married early and remarried after she was widowed; in her case, in particular, we can trace a steady and impressive social (and political) rise for her and the rest of her family, which functioned like a family firm.³³ She was married for the first time on 3 November 1567, when she was just a little more than fifteen and a half years old. Her husband, Richard Polsted (1545–1576), by then in his early twenties, was the only son of another well-to-do gentry family.³⁴ He had already inherited an estate near the Mores and the two families must have had a friendship of long standing, since an Alys Polsted was one of Elizabeth More’s godmothers. As W. J. Jones describes it, the wedding “was an event of the year”; the festivities at Blackfriars, in London, which followed the wedding, lasted from 3 to 17 November.³⁵ A list of the presents, which are carefully itemized in an order that reflects the More family’s status and Elizabeth’s father’s office as the vice admiral of Sussex, begins with the generous gifts of the person under whom he served, the lord admiral (Edward Clinton, subsequently the earl of Lincoln); he and Lady Clinton gave four swans, four fat turkeys, six capons, seven partridges, six woodcocks, one hare, ten “Muttons ffatt,” two great sugar loaves, two great boxes of marmalade, two barrels of sweetmeats, and a hogshhead of wine. Other notable guests included the lord viscount

³⁰Evans, “Extracts,” 289.

³¹Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Biography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 172.

³²The inventory of the Mores’s earlier house lists a pair of virginals, a base lute, and a cittern; see Evans, “Extracts,” 289.

³³In this connection, compare and contrast the discussion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century families in Mertes, 161–82, and Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). In a general sense, the More family could be seen as an example of what Stone calls “the Restricted Patriarchal Nuclear Family,” 7. But there is one striking difference; although the family structure is patriarchal, it is the father on the maternal side who is important. I have seen nothing to suggest that Elizabeth More was absorbed into her second husband’s family; rather, John Wolley effectively became a functional part of the More family, and Sir William More’s manor house at Loseley served as an important family base, even though the Wolleys had their own estate in Surrey, acquiring Pyrford in 1589, and other estates thereafter.

³⁴For Polsted, see W. J. Jones, *HOC*, 3:230.

³⁵Jones’s comment is in *HOC* 3:230; for more on the wedding festivities see John Evans, “An Account of the Presents Received and Expenses Incurred at the Wedding of Richard Polsted, of Albury, Esquire, and Elizabeth, Eldest Daughter of William More, of Loseley, Esquire,” *Archaeologia* 36 (1855): 33–52; the presents are listed on 36–39.

Montagu (Sir Anthony Browne) of Sussex (also the steward of Haslemere, Surrey), who gave a fat doe; the bishop of Winchester (Robert Horne), who gave a hind; and "Mr. Secretary" (William) Cecil, who gave a fat doe. Richard Polsted's life resembles the earlier years of his father-in-law's; he represented Hindon, Surrey, in the 1571 and 1572 parliaments; served as the justice of the peace for Surrey from 1573 or so, and became the sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in 1575. Not yet thirty-one when he died, he left all but twenty pounds of his estate to his wife, Elizabeth.

Among the suitors (potential or actual) for the young widow, now a wealthy and well-connected heiress, were a certain "Mr. Horsman," twice recommended by Cecil;³⁶ a "shameless if reverend place-seeker," Tobie Matthew (dean of Christ Church, and eventually the archbishop of York);³⁷ and the man who became her second husband, John Wolley—the best-placed of these three suitors.³⁸ Wolley was a protégé of Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, who had long been a friend of her father's—Leicester knighted William More on the queen's behalf in 1576 and her brother was serving in his household by 1579.³⁹ A widower, Wolley was originally from Dorset. His date of birth is not known, but he must have been close to twenty years older than Elizabeth; a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, he received his B.A. in 1553, his M.A. in 1557. By 1563 he was already in Queen Elizabeth's service, and he became her Latin secretary in 1568. The marriage of John Wolley and Elizabeth Polsted, which took place at Loseley sometime before 3 July 1577,⁴⁰ gave him invaluable affiliations with a major Surrey family and a valuable base in a county within easy reach of London (Wolley later obtained a manor house at Pyr-

³⁶Loseley Manuscripts, "Papers of Sir Christopher and Sir Wm. More," 6729/box 4/40–41, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey (two letters, dated 11 August and 22 August 1576). Horsman is almost certainly Thomas Horsman (ca. 1536–1610), who "was brought up in the family of Lord Burghley who launched him upon a career at court which lasted for 40 years"; see entry by N. M. Sutherland, *HOC*, 2:342.

³⁷See Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene," 64; Kempe, 261–62, for a letter to William More regarding a marriage suit to Elizabeth Polsted, dated 9 December 1576. Kempe points out that Matthew was a good friend of George More. A number of Matthew's many other letters of suit are prominently featured in Frank Whigham, "The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitors' Letters," *PMLA* 96 (1981): 864–82.

³⁸There is an excellent summary of Wolley's life by P. W. Hasler in *HOC*, 3:644–45; note, though, that Elizabeth Polsted and John Wolley were married by 1577—see below. See also the *DNB*, 787–88, and Kempe. Also invaluable is Stephen W. May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1991), which includes a brief summary of Wolley's life along with a copy of his Latin elegy to Bishop Jewel, 379–80.

³⁹See Henderson / Phillips, *HOC*, 3:80–83; Kempe, xiii.

⁴⁰See the letter from Wolley, dated 3 July 1577, addressed "to his father-in-law Sir William More, knt"; John Cordy Jeaffreson, "The Manuscripts of William More Molyneux, Esq., of Loseley Park, Guildford, Co. Surrey," *Seventh Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: Part I: Report and Appendix* (1879; Nendeln: Kraus, 1979), 630; cf. Kempe, 313, for a letter from Wolley to his "very good father," Sir William More, dated 6 October 1579.

ford, formerly the earl of Lincoln's, where William More had been knighted),⁴¹ while it brought Elizabeth (and her family) much closer to the court, giving them increased opportunities to build upon already well established connections with the two persons who were probably closest to the queen: William Cecil, with whom Wolley worked closely, and the earl of Leicester. Like his father-in-law, Wolley served in the House of Commons (in Wolley's case, from 1571 until he died in 1596); he became a member of the Privy Council in 1586, and was knighted in 1592. Both More and Wolley appear to have been extremely hardworking, able, and well-read administrators, though not, for the most part, major policy makers.⁴² In fact, what P. W. Hasler says of Wolley, that "he filled the role of a government spokesman and upholder of the royal prerogative, supporting official policy on all possible occasions,"⁴³ could equally well have been said of William More, throughout his life one of the queen's most loyal supporters. John and Elizabeth Wolley had one child, Francis, who was born in 1583 but died in 1609, when he was only twenty-six; he left no son to carry on the family line and inherit the Wolley estates.

Within a year of John Wolley's death, Elizabeth Wolley married again—in a private ceremony in early October 1597. Her third husband, Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), whom Louis Knafla characterizes as independent and tough-minded, extraordinarily hardworking, and a moderate in politics, had a long and distinguished legal career. He attended Brasenose College, Oxford, and Lincoln's Inn and went on to become Queen Elizabeth's solicitor general (1581–92); attorney general (1592–94); master of the rolls (1594–1603); and lord keeper (1596–1603). He was knighted in 1594; made lord chancellor under James I, he became Baron Ellesmere in 1603 and Viscount Brackley in 1616.⁴⁴ As Knafla describes the alliance between Lady Wolley and Egerton, it was he who had more to gain; "She provided Egerton with his first personal entry into the royal court" and a dowry that "brought his first lands outside of the Welsh marches and its approaches."⁴⁵ Yet the advantages could not have been quite so one-sided. Although we can never know why Lady Wolley chose to marry Egerton,⁴⁶ she may have acted, in part, out of a desire to solidify

⁴¹*The Victoria History of the County of Surrey*, ed. H. E. Malden (London: Constable and Co., 1911), 3:432. Elizabeth Wolley held the manor as dower for life, following her husband's death, and thereafter it passed to her son.

⁴²But Wolley did have diplomatic credentials; see A. E. B. Owen, "Sir John Wolley's Letter-Book as Latin Secretary to Elizabeth I," *Archives* 11 (1973): 16–18 plus illustration. Cf. May on Wolley.

⁴³Hasler, *HOC*, 3:644.

⁴⁴Knafla, 35–36; 59–61; W. J. Jones / P. W. Hasler, *HOC*, 2:80–83; cf. Bald, 94–96.

⁴⁵Knafla, 30, 31; cf. 59.

⁴⁶I use the word "chose" cautiously, but deliberately. Almost certainly her first marriage was arranged by her parents. She surely had some voice in her second marriage, but her

a future for Francis Wolley, her only child, who was then about fourteen years old.⁴⁷ Both John and Elizabeth Wolley seem to have been ambitious (in fact too ambitious) for Francis, whose marriage to Mary Hawtry, a wealthy heiress, took place on 11 September 1594, when he was only eleven years old.⁴⁸ The Hawtrys and the Wolleys were friends, but this marriage—obviously arranged by the parents—could also indicate parental ambitions and/or a desire for an advantageous financial settlement; by 1595 John Wolley was angling for an appointment for Francis in the Exchequer. In 1598 Francis received a B.A. from Merton College (his father's college) and subsequently attended Lincoln's Inn, with which Egerton had been long and closely associated. Egerton's position as head of the Chancery court and his expertise with land law would also have been of great value to Elizabeth Wolley, given her estates and other holdings. Moreover, Egerton was not only a serious and hardworking administrator, like her father and previous husbands, but a more original thinker and a policy maker at the height of a very distinguished career. In sixteenth-century terms, it was a very fortunate marriage for both parties, and one that suggests how adept Elizabeth Wolley was in assessing both character and the politics of the court. By all accounts it was a happy marriage, too, although it was cut short by her death in January 1600. Egerton was desolated; contemporaries noted that, "My Lady Egerton died three days since; and the Lord Keeper doth sorrow more than the wisdom of so great a man ought to do. He keeps private, and it is thought he will not come abroad this term. The queen sent to comfort him, and to

father, and possibly her brother, were also involved, judging by correspondence that her father preserved at Loseley; see Kempe, xiii–xiv. By 1597, however, Lady Wolley was well established, with excellent connections and resources of her own.

⁴⁷For an interesting study of mother-son relations in an earlier period, which is relevant for the later Tudor period as well, see Barbara J. Harris, "Property, Power, and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England," *Signs* 15 (1990): 606–32. For more on the life of Francis Wolley (1583–1609) see the entry by A. M. Mimardière, *HOC*, 3:644, and Bald; on 147–48 he discusses Francis's life following the death of his mother and grandfather. Like other young men from the upper gentry, Francis started life on the fast track. In 1600 he exchanged New Year's gifts with the queen; see Nichols, 3:457, 465. He served in parliament the next year, having been nominated by his uncle, Sir George More; in 1603 he was knighted. Thereafter, however, according to Bald (147), he "embarked on a spendthrift career at court"; certainly he gambled with King James I and other courtiers for high stakes. Bald also describes his marriage to Mary Hawtry (or Hawtre), the oldest daughter of Sir William Hawtry, a good friend of Sir John Wolley's, as "unsatisfactory" (Bald, 96, 147). To his credit, though, Francis helped his cousin Anne More Donne and her husband, who lived at his estate in Pyrford, Surrey, in the early years of their marriage. Francis was buried, with his parents, in St. Paul's Cathedral. He acknowledged and left a bequest to his only child, an illegitimate daughter, but most of his estate went to Sir Arthur Mainwaring.

⁴⁸The certificate of marriage between them is included in Jeaffreson's survey of "The Manuscripts of William More Molyneux," 652.

remind him that the public service must be preferred before private [passions].”⁴⁹ So, later, Egerton compared his third wife, the strong-willed Alice, countess of Derby, unfavorably to his second one, observing that “I thank God I never desired long life, nor never had less cause to desire it than since this, my last marriage, for before I was never acquainted with such tempests and storms.”⁵⁰

* * *

While Elizabeth Wolley’s third marriage was her most prestigious, her second one was crucial, insofar as it took her from Surrey to London, the court, and the queen’s circle. She could well have met Elizabeth I at one or another of her summer progresses in Surrey, but the first sure reference is 8 October 1581, when John Wolley wrote Sir William More that the Queen “is exceeding sorrye for my wives sicknesse, saying she would not lose her swete aple for all the gold in the world.”⁵¹ When Francis Wolley was christened, on 4 April 1583, the queen, represented by Lady Lincoln, was his godmother.⁵² His godfathers, not so incidentally, were the earls of Lincoln and Leicester, Francis’s grandfather noting, with obvious satisfaction, that they “were there in p^{er}son at the Baptyzyng and at conffyrmacon.”⁵³ If we compare Elizabeth Wolley’s son’s godparents with her own (wealthy merchants and country gentry), we can see how far her fortunes have risen in about thirty years. So, too, she exchanged New Year’s gifts with the queen in 1585, and again in 1589, 1597, 1598, 1599, and 1600.⁵⁴

In a letter written on 9 October 1591 to his father-in-law, John Wolley reported that his wife “was very favorably welcomed of her Maj-

⁴⁹Included as “Court News,” a composite of contemporary sources, in G. B. Harrison, *A Last Elizabethan Journal: Being a Record of Those Things Most Talked of during the Years 1599–1603* (London: Constable & Co., 1933), 67. See too Sir John Davies’ epigram to Sir Thomas Egerton on the death of his second wife in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Robert Krueger (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), 202.

⁵⁰W. J. Jones, *The Elizabethan Court of Chancery* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 95; cf. Jones / Hasler, *HOC*, 2:83, and Knafla.

⁵¹Loseley Manuscripts, LM/COR/3/320, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey. I am grateful to Jill Beck, the former archivist at the Guildford Muniment Room, for calling this letter to my attention in her letter to me of 19 February 1984.

⁵²May explains just what an honor this was, pointing out that Elizabeth I’s christening records “cluster in the main around those who were nearest the queen at court” (27). Constance E. B. Rye, “Queen Elizabeth’s Godchildren,” *The Genealogist*, n.s., 2 (1885): 292–96, includes a list of 102 children; on her list Francis is number 61.

⁵³See William More, “Book of Indentures,” Loseley Manuscripts, LM 1327/6, fol. 113, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey.

⁵⁴Personal correspondence from Steven May on 22 November 1988; I want to thank him for sharing his work with the courtier poets with me prior to the publication of his book. Nichols describes some of the gifts she presented and received from the queen: see 3:11, 19, 452, and 463. For the record, her husband exchanged gifts in 1578, 1580, 1581, 1584, 1585, 1588, and 1589: see May, 379; cf. Nichols, 2:263, 271, 290; 3:12, 20. There is an

estyte.”⁵⁵ Although not all of Elizabeth Wolley’s extant correspondence is dated, the letters that are and datable allusions in them likewise place her at court in the 1590s. This means that she was part of the Privy Chamber at a particularly critical period. The historians of early modern England have frequently analyzed both the factionalism at court in the 1590s and the increasingly bitter competition for offices.⁵⁶ Moreover, by the 1590s many of the queen’s most trusted servants were aging and dying, if not already deceased; William Cecil, Lord Burghley, died in 1598, after a long illness, for instance, and Lady Wolley’s father, Burghley’s contemporary, was also failing by then, although he actually outlived his daughter. In addition, the queen, herself aging (though shown ageless in representations of her), was becoming less accessible, if not more isolated, increasingly relying for company upon her gentlewomen-in-waiting and others in her personal circle.⁵⁷

The Mores and Wolleys had their own more immediate concerns as well. In 1591 Elizabeth Wolley’s father received his first appointment in the central administration, as a chancellor of the Exchequer, a prestigious post that must have been, in some part, a reward for his long service to the queen.⁵⁸ By 1594 and 1595 Sir William More had even more urgent reasons for wanting to maintain the best possible connections with court and queen, as the lord admiral gave the vice-admiralty of Sussex, a profitable appointment that More had long held and enjoyed, to Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, the queen’s cousin. At about the same time, John Wolley was seeking a new post for himself as well as for Francis, which would have made Lady Wolley’s attendance at court more important still.⁵⁹ In fact, Elizabeth and John Wolley, who were court-based, and her father and brother, who were usually in Surrey but moved from the country to London, the court, and back, constituted something like a partnership, in

interesting discussion of gifts like these by Peter Burke: see “Renaissance Jewels in Their Social Setting,” *Princely Magnificence: An Exhibition Catalogue* (London: Debrett’s Peerage in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1980), 8–11.

⁵⁵Kempe, 314–15.

⁵⁶See, for example, J. D. Alsop, “Government, Finance and the Community of the Exchequer,” *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (London: MacMillan, 1984), 109; Adams, 55–77; and Haigh, *Elizabeth I*.

⁵⁷See, in particular, Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 99–107; see also Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 104; and Williams, 259–86. For a more theoretical treatment of distance and intimacy at court, see David Starkey, “Representations through Intimacy,” *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-Cultural Studies in Symbolism*, ed. Joan Lewis (London: Academic Press, 1977), 187–224.

⁵⁸Alsop, 111, 114; he points out that, despite More’s advanced age, this was not a sinecure. Adams, 60–61, observes that the queen generally used “office as a reward rather than as a means of advancement: service was not dependent on office-holding so much as award of office followed on years of service” (61).

⁵⁹Hasler, *HOC*, 3:644, 645.

which she was essential, by way of her link with the queen and those in attendance there.

Unlike letters of suit, which have their own peculiar rhetoric,⁶⁰ Lady Wolley's letters are more candid, though not without their own rhetorical strategies—she is sensitive to her father's feelings. Equally striking is her consciousness of self—surely sharpened by her situation as one of about twenty privileged women in an otherwise male court.⁶¹ Her actual letters, which sometimes sound more like notes, are written (rather unusually) in a secretary hand, and contain an occasional crossing-out, which suggests that she must have written them quickly.⁶² Naturally she takes the context for granted, too, so that the situation sometimes needs to be teased out. It is obvious, though, that she often writes at critical moments in the fortunes of the Mores and Wolleys. Sometimes she writes about personal matters (she worries about her family's health and well-being), sometimes social-political, and sometimes a little of both, as when she writes her father on 5 September 1595, to tell him that the queen would not be visiting Loseley (or the Wolley house) this year—but plans to visit next year—news at once good and bad, as such visits were costly and exhausting.⁶³ What she doesn't write about is important, too; she does not comment on the court ceremonies and rituals that so fascinated foreign travelers like Paul Hentzner when they came to London; by contrast, hers is an insider's perspective.

A particularly interesting letter, undated but written between 1592 and 1597,⁶⁴ lets us document Elizabeth Wolley's role and some of her functions at court. She has recently come to court, it appears, and she represents herself with something like a camera's eye as she oscillates between her situation, which she describes at some length, and her pithy assessment of it:

⁶⁰Studied in Whigham, 864–82.

⁶¹The actual number fluctuated slightly, as the queen was attended by “ordinary” members and, on occasion, “extraordinary” members; some of the “ordinary” attendants were feed, but others were not. For more details, see Wright, 148–51; she concludes that “The Privy Chamber was, therefore, staffed by a maximum of sixteen waged female servants, with a small unsalaried group of women in attendance and a further reserve list ‘on call.’” Lady Wolley was unfeed, but, as Wright points out, “Although the unfeed Privy Chamber staff did not receive financial recompense for their services, it cannot be assumed that their positions were merely honorific.” Cf. Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 93, and the list of women who were ladies or gentlewomen in waiting, to whom Lok wrote sonnets in Henry Lok, *Ecclesiastes* (London, 1597)—again about twenty.

⁶²I am grateful to Dennis Flynn, who loaned me a photocopy of LM 348/108, a Latin deed that is written and signed by Elizabeth Polsted (as she then was), which is also in secretary hand.

⁶³Kempe, 316–17.

⁶⁴For more on the earliest possible date, see discussion of Lady Edmonds, below. Since she signs her letter as “Elizabeth Wolley” (Kempe, 321), she must have written it before her marriage to Egerton in 1597. The most likely date, I think, is the middle of the 1590s.

Synce my commyng to the Corte I have had manie gracious wordes of her Ma^{tie}, and manye tymes she bad me welcom wth all her hart, evere since I have waited. Yesterdaye she wore the gowne you gave her, and toke therby occasion to speake of yo^u, saying er long I should find a mother-in-lawe, w^{ch} was herself, but she was affrayd of the tow [sic] wydows that ar ther wth yo^u, that they would be angrye wth her for yt, and that she would gyve ten thowsand poundes you were twenty yeeeres younger, for that she hath but few suche servauntes as you ar, wth many mor gracious speeches both of your self and my brother, w^{ch} is too long to write, and thereffor will leave to tell you when we meete. My Lo. Admyrall came to me and bad me welcome wth all his harte, and tould me he had seene you, willing me to comaunde him in any ffriendshippe he can shewe unto me. I thought good at this time to use no further speeches unto him. I went to my Lo. of Buckhurst and gave him humble thanks for his kind usage of yo^u, he did assure me he would be a most ffaythfull freind [sic] both unto yow and to myself, sayeing, if he could be assured of my friendship, he had rather have yt than any other lady that serves in the place, w^{ch} I did assure him of. My brother is verie much bownde and beholding to my Lo. Chamberlen [Lord Hunsdon] and my La. Warwicke [Anne Russell], I will tell you wherfore when I see yo^u next. Thus hetherto I have had a good beginning at Cort, and have no doute but to contynew yf frends be constant; if they ffaile it salbe thorough no desarte of myne, for I will lyve very warilie amongst them.⁶⁵

We could hardly improve upon this as an index of More-Wolley political affiliations in the mid-1590s. The order, beginning with the Queen and moving on to Charles Howard of Effingham, who had succeeded the earl of Lincoln as lord admiral, and then to Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, is exact, and almost certainly reflects her father's anxiety about the vice-admiralty office.⁶⁶ This letter also illuminates the complicated role that Lady Wolley fulfilled—one that could be characterized by the words “friendship” and “friend,” as Elizabethan England understood them. In early modern England such words were often used, as here, in a political

⁶⁵Kempe, 319–20.

⁶⁶The office was a lucrative one. Vice Admirals, who served under patents from the lord admiral, were charged with enforcing the rights of the admiralty in the maritime counties. A major source of revenue was derived from the results of privateering. For more on Charles Howard of Effingham, later the earl of Nottingham, who held the office of lord admiral during the latter part of Elizabeth I's reign, see Robert W. Kenny, *Elizabeth's Admiral: The Political Career of Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, 1536–1624* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).

context: the Privy Council invariably addressed its official letters to its loving friends.⁶⁷ “Friend” might also be personal; at the end of this letter Lady Wolley will commend herself “to my good brother and the rest of my ffreindes there.”⁶⁸ It is impossible wholly to disentangle the instrumental from the expressive functions of “friendship,” in fact, at a time when there was a system of personal monarchy and the political and the personal were almost inextricably mixed, although, significantly, not confused by Lady Wolley. Then too, many of these people were interconnected by kin or marriage, while everyone but the queen herself was in a relationship of service to someone—and Elizabeth I liked to represent herself as married (in some sense in service) to the people of England.⁶⁹

What we see in Lady Wolley’s letter, then, is a sixteenth-century version of what we would recognize as networking, if not lobbying (and, at times, brokering), in both its more obvious and its more subtle forms.⁷⁰ Friendship is both invited and promised, reciprocally, and Elizabeth, now Lady Wolley, is part of a community and a communications network that requires liaisons that must be constantly reaffirmed and renewed. This is true of any institution, of course, but it is particularly true here, since access to Elizabeth I’s private chambers was so limited by virtue of her gender and temperament as well as by her position and preferred *modus operandi*.⁷¹ Lady Wolley’s role, then, includes but goes well beyond the fact that, as an attendant in the queen’s Privy Chamber, she would have talked or played cards or chess with the queen, the queen’s councilors, and

⁶⁷See Stone, 5, 97–98; as he observes, friends could mean no more than “my advisors, associates, and backers,” and could include a person of “high status and influence with whom there was acquaintance and from whom there was hope of patronage,” 97. Cf. a recent attempt to distinguish friendship from patron-client relations, in Eric R. Wolf, “Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations,” *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. Michael Banton (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 1–22, especially 12–17.

⁶⁸Kempe, 320.

⁶⁹See Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 92–93, and Starkey’s “The Age of the Household.” Alsop, 113, points out that even the buildings customarily served dual business and residential functions at this time.

⁷⁰Sharon Kettering, “The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen,” *The Historical Journal* 32 (1989), discusses the role of a broker, who “brought together individuals with patronage and those seeking it, and arranged an exchange,” 818; see too 836–37. Her primary focus is on the highest social groups (women of royal or noble birth), but obviously women in waiting (like Lady Wolley) were especially well placed to function as brokers, especially in a court headed by a woman. Clearly Lady Wolley functioned as a broker for her father, her brother, her son, and her second and third husbands. Others also appealed to her for assistance; in this connection see a letter, signed by Lady Tresham (but originally composed by her husband, Sir Thomas), dated 12 January 1600, to the then Lady Egerton, asking for her help in a complicated legal case that had led to the imprisonment of Sir Thomas Tresham in the Fleet, and in which Egerton, as head of the court of Chancery, had become involved. See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1904), 3:105.

⁷¹See, among other studies, Frye’s and David Starkey, *The English Court*, 6–9, which discusses Elizabeth I as a “distant” monarch, one who granted access to the Privy Chamber very sparingly.

the privileged great having access there. As one of about twenty women of her class in a court of 1500 persons (by Neale's reckoning),⁷² she was highly visible, occupied a position of trust, knew the way the court functioned, counted an intimate group of influential women, including Lady Warwicke and Lady Edmonds, among her friends, and had more or less ready access to many of the most powerful persons—male and female—in England. Simon Adams has pointed out just how valuable her position was: "Central to the conduct of affairs was—as the more sophisticated students of the early modern Court have noted—the question of access. It was widely recognised—not the least by Elizabeth herself, who considered the privilege part of their reward—that those in immediate personal attendance...had the greatest opportunity to advance suits."⁷³

This means that Lady Wolley was particularly well placed to promote the political (and material) fortunes of self and family, translating trust into influence, if not power, at the same time that she served the queen. The queen needed her service for political reasons, too, although typically the language she uses is personal. In the letter I already cited, for instance, the queen speaks of becoming Lady Wolley's "mother-in-lawe" by way of a quasi proposal of marriage to Sir William. We could emphasize the veiled (or not so veiled) eroticism; more important, I think, is the maternal and familial relationship the queen imagines, one which includes Elizabeth and George More as her "children."⁷⁴ Such networking on the queen's part was important for both Elizabeths, for it was one of the queen's gifts as a ruler to retain her connections with the counties and the county gentry, like Sir William More and his son, George, who held so many local offices. Moreover, unlike her successor, James I, Elizabeth I was adept at balancing different interests and alliances, although this proved to be more difficult for her in the 1590s, as she acknowledges in her compliments to Sir William. For similar reasons, she valued and rewarded long service and loyalty on her behalf—and Sir William had long been one of her most faithful friends.

* * *

Waiting, then, is hardly the passive activity it is sometimes thought to be. Lady Wolley may take a defensive stance designed to protect herself and her family, or a reactive one, or a more assertive one, as when she describes herself approaching Buckhurst. But she isn't passive, although she is certainly cautious. Lawrence Stone was struck by the degree to which people

⁷²Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I*, 72.

⁷³Adams, 73. See also Williams, 270.

⁷⁴See Stone and Louis Adrian Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 2 (1983): 78–80.

in the sixteenth century expressed their wariness about life.⁷⁵ (In this connection, we could also think of John Skelton's portrait of court life in the early sixteenth century, "The Bouge of Court.") But Lady Wolley has additional reasons for caution here. For one thing, she has just begun "waiting," and needs to assess her place at court; for another, she is testing a particularly unstable situation vis-à-vis the lord admiral and Buckhurst (now among the most powerful men in England) and her father. So her own shrewd sense of the need for discretion and caution seems to lead her to her incisive conclusion: "I will lyve very warilie amongst them." She has no illusions about the pomp and circumstances of court life, and is a skillful and practiced interpreter of its modes of discourse.

Even as she passes on the queen's compliments, then, which are, after all, calculated to promote allegiance and support, and which her father carefully saved, she is evaluating them. They are finally less important for what the queen says than for the reciprocal relationships they signify and the mutual interests they fulfill. The Wolleys and the Mores need the queen's support (indeed, Lady Wolley seems more assured and comfortable with the queen than with either Howard or Buckhurst, which is wholly understandable if she is waiting after her father lost his vice-admiralty). But the queen also needs the support of people like the Wolleys and the Mores, so as to maintain her power base among such stable landowners and faithful servants of the crown.⁷⁶ In fact, Lady Wolley weighs everything, elsewhere in this letter to her father remarking that, "The Queene, as she sayeth, will dine wth my lady Edmonds on Tuesday nexte, and retorne again at night, w^{ch} I can hardlie believe; if she doe, I meane to wayte uppon her."⁷⁷ Both Lady Wolley and the queen seem to have had computerlike minds,⁷⁸ instantly assessing the interrelationships and the network of obligations and privilege symbolized by, but not limited to, the

⁷⁵Stone treats this as part of the mentalité of sixteenth-century England, observing that "Alienation and distrust of one's fellow man are the predominant features of the Elizabethan and early Stuart view of human character and conduct," and that "Wary suspicion was the only reliable guide for survival in the jungle of human society," 95, 96 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁶See Adams, among other studies of the court and court politics.

⁷⁷Kempe, 320. "My lady Edmonds" is Dorothy Edmonds (sometimes spelled Edmunds), the wife of Sir Christopher Edmonds, who was knighted in 1592; this then is the earliest possible date for the letter. Pam Wright points out (158) that "The queen's own longevity determined that [of the gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber] only Dorothy Edmunds . . . held office from the beginning of the reign to the end"; she began as an "extraordinary" member, became a feed gentlewoman on 15 November 1570, and was "still listed among the Privy Chamber at the queen's funeral." See also Roger Virgoe, *HOC*, 2:77.

⁷⁸The queen also seems to have kept a reckoning of who appeared when in court. In a letter to her brother, with the month but not the year indicated, Lady Wolley writes, "Her Majesty bad me welcome to the Court, and said I was absent a fortnight, she had kept a reconninge of the dayes; she verie carefully enquired how my father did," Nichols, 3:83.

omnipresent exchange of compliments and the gifts of partridges, does, and gowns that characterize so much of this society.⁷⁹

An urgent note to her father, dated 14 September 1595, shows just how complex maintaining this exchange could be, and what an engaging writer Lady Wolley is: compared to this letter, her husband's letters are pedestrian. She writes:

Yesternight in the evening her Ma'tie went abroad a hawkyinge, and S^r Robert Cycille's hawke killed three partriches, w^{ch} he presented the Queen wth, and myself being in place, her Ma'tie gave them me, wth expresse charge that I should send them to yo^u this daye against dyner, desyrynge you to eatte them for her sake. Since, S^r Rob^t Cycill begged them of me, w^{ch} I could not deny him of, I have sent this messenger of purpose to yo^u, praynge yo^u to take knowledge of the receypte of the partryches, and to certify yo^u of this her Ma'ties greate care of yo^u, to the end that yo^u maye, by yo^r l^re wrytten to me, take notice of this her highnes' good affec'on to yo^u, w^{ch} I would have wrytten somewhat breef, that I maye shewe yt to her Ma'tie.⁸⁰

As the partridges go full circle, it is they (and power) that seem to matter to Sir Robert Cecil, as he asks for his partridges back, disregarding the tacit rules of gift giving and wholly separating the affective from the instrumental. By contrast, the queen has honored the basis of gift giving, which, theorists explain, requires three persons; so here she both receives and gives.⁸¹ Lady Wolley similarly receives, and, in a manner of speaking, gives, unlike the churlish Sir Robert, who gives—and then takes back. So she maintains and promotes a social/political network and friendly exchange, partridges or no, by writing to ask her father for a letter, to be “wrytten somewhat breef” (a sign of just how well Lady Wolley knows both her father's habits and life at court), that she may show the queen.

From this point in time it is difficult to document the more concrete results of Lady Wolley's waiting. When Lord Buckhurst gave her father the office of master of the swans for Surrey, in the summer of 1593, however, he acknowledged Lady Wolley's intervention: “But to satisfy your desier for the swan, I did a good while sins, upon the motion of my Lady Woolley, stay the granting thereof, and received it for you.”⁸² And when the vice-admiralty of Sussex was given to Lord Buckhurst by the lord admiral

⁷⁹In this connection, see the interesting study by Patricia Fumerton, “Exchanging Gifts: The Elizabethan Currency of Children and Poetry,” *ELH* 53 (1986): 241–78.

⁸⁰Kempe, 317–18.

⁸¹See, in particular, Lewis Hyde, “Some Food We Could Not Eat: Gift Exchange and the Imagination,” *Kenyon Review*, n.s., 1, 4 (1979): 32–60; cf. Fumerton's treatment of the circle or ring of exchange.

⁸²See Kempe, 306.

in the early spring of 1594, she waited upon him again and again—albeit unsuccessfully.⁸³ She was a suitor on her own and her son's behalf, too. On 9 October 1598 she wrote from York House to Sir Robert Cecil, asking him to remind the queen of a suit she recently made to her. Specifically, she is hoping that the queen will “make an end of the suit she has vouchsafed to grant her for her son,” and tells Cecil that she longs for “a final end, for her debts so overwhelm her that her life is most wearisome.”⁸⁴ And in 1599 the queen did sell the manor and park of Witley to trustees for the then Lady Egerton, who (with her son and her brother) had held letters patent from the queen to farm the park since 1596.⁸⁵ It is simply not true, then, that, as one historian rather surprisingly claims, “The great ladies and maids of honor had to be content with such modest profits of office as the queen's cast-off gowns and perfumed shoes, and with what fees they could earn by selling information about Elizabeth's private life and habits to foreign ambassadors and their agents.”⁸⁶ The advantages of attending the queen—well used—clearly were much more tangible as well as rewarding in less material ways, given the honor and status such attendance was believed to confer.

Juxtaposed with Elizabeth Wolley's perceptive descriptions of life at court and her acute evaluations of it, conventional images of the court lady, whether positive or negative, seem largely irrelevant, except as indications of the attention showered upon the queen's attendants and the ambivalent responses they could arouse in would-be clients and anyone else who felt left out. The positive image can be summed up by William Harrison's talk of “vertuous beautie or beautifull vertues.”⁸⁷ Harrison amplifies his encomium with an interesting description of the gentlewomen's “amiable countenances and costlinesse of attire,” “the vse and skill [they have] of sundrie speaches, beside an excellent veine of writing before time not regarded,” their knowledge of foreign languages, and their love of needlework, spinning, reading, and music.⁸⁸ For good mea-

⁸³See the letters concerning her suit on her father's behalf in the spring of 1594: Loseley Manuscripts, 6729/box 4/117–20 and 124, Surrey History Centre, Woking, Surrey. See too the summaries included in Jeaffreson's survey of “The Manuscripts of William More Molyneux,” 652. The matter dragged on for more than a year. In March 1595, Sir John Wolley wrote Sir William More about the same matter; see Jeaffreson survey, 653.

⁸⁴See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, part 8 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1899), 386.

⁸⁵See *The Victoria History of the County of Surrey*, 3:64.

⁸⁶Carolyn Erickson, *The First Elizabeth* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), 350. For an excellent discussion of the profits of office that one waiting woman enjoyed, see Charles Angell Bradford, *Blanche Parry, Queen Elizabeth's Gentlewoman* (London: R. F. Hunger, 1935).

⁸⁷William Harrison, *Harrison's Description of England in Shakspeare's Youth*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: N. Trübner & Co. for the New Shakspeare Society, 1877), 271.

⁸⁸Harrison, 272.

sure, he claims that when at home they can prepare “delicat dishes of their owne deuising,” somewhat obliquely invoking the “good wife” ideal of domesticity for the Tudor woman.⁸⁹ It is hard to imagine these great ladies cooking much of anything, however, although Lady Wolley does ask her father to send her a few partridges for the lord treasurer (Burghley), “who lyes heere very ill of the goute, and cannot stir hand nor foote, nor feede himself, the goute is so in his hands.” She adds that she has already “minced one myself and sent him this last night, by the advise of my lord Chamberleyne, w^{ch} he made his supper of.”⁹⁰ In any case, Harrison’s initial chiasmus mirrors the diffuse Neoplatonism and Petrarchism that the queen, for whom virginity was a political tool, and her courtiers exploited in countless ways, and that Harrison here employs for strategic purposes—he is defending Queen Elizabeth’s court.

Pastoral variations of “vertuous beautie” proved particularly popular in England, and it is in this guise that Lady Wolley herself was celebrated. For she is one of many figures (male and female) to appear in a collection of sonnets that constitutes something like a social register, which Henry Lok added to special presentation copies of his *Ecclesiastes* in 1597. What surely was Lady Wolley’s copy (it contains her signature) is now part of the Bridgewater collection at the Huntington Library. Here Lok evokes all the “*Honorable Ladies and Gentlewomen, attendants in the Court,*” as

Ye worthy Nymphes of chast Dyanaes traine,
Who with our Soueraignes presence blessed bee,
Whereby ye perfect beauty shall attaine,
If ye affect the gifts in her you see.⁹¹

The negative image, which is “vertuous beautie’s” polar opposite, became increasingly voiced by the early seventeenth century. Now the court lady is caricatured and vilified as the painted wanton and the idle, vain mischief-maker and fool of Jacobean satire and drama. As cautious an historian as Notestein suggests that such criticism “was not lessened by the behaviour of the great ladies of the Court, who took advantage of their position and were seldom called to account.”⁹² But there is little point in satirizing or demonizing those who have no power or influence, and a writer like Ben Jonson will praise the individual while satirizing a group—or a Lady Would be. Likewise, several writers chose to dedicate books to the ladies and gentlewomen of the court, who obviously consti-

⁸⁹Harrison, 272.

⁹⁰Kempe, 320.

⁹¹Lok, sig. Yv verso. Call number at the Huntington Library is 62345.

⁹²Notestein, 76.

tuted a readily identifiable and influential group in the minds of would-be clients.⁹³

Despite their differences, however, both the positive and the negative stereotypes of the gentlewoman-in-waiting depend upon ethical and sexual attitudes that amount to clichés and only indirectly address the social, political, and economic realities that led Lok to write his sonnets to persons at court to begin with. In fact, the sonnet he writes for Lady Wolley says as much about him as it does about her, if not more, for it is a transparent plea for patronage. Addressing her as “*the vertuous Lady*,” he begs her to accept *his* gift, “fetched from a forraine land,” his language almost parodying the language of reward:

Farre fet, deare bought, doth fit a Lady best;
 Such you deserue, such would my will bestow:
 Good things are rare, rare things esteem’d you know;
 Rare should yours be, as you rare of the rest:

* * * * *

The price (I dare assure) is very deare,
 As puchas’d [sic] by your merit and my care,
 Whose trauell would a better gift prepare,
 If any better worthy might appeare:

Then this accept, as I the same intend,
 Which dutie to the dead would will me send.⁹⁴

In “‘For a King not to be bountiful were a fault’: Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England,” Linda Levy Peck has pointed out that, for royalty, “Virtue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries resided in the giving of favor and reward.”⁹⁵ Something similar seems to be true here, as Lok looks hopefully towards Lady Wolley for would-be patronage.

Lady Wolley had all the prerequisites of a gentlewoman in the Privy Chamber: family, status, wealth, connections. She appears to have been tactful, quick-witted, and charming, too—to use an overworked word that

⁹³Besides Lok, see the dedicatory addresses in T. Dannett’s translation of Philippe de Comines, *The History of France: The Fovre First Bookes* (London, 1595), and Anthony Gibson, *A Womans Woorth* (London, 1599). Also interesting are Sir John Harington’s translation of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (London, 1591), which was written in some sense for the entertainment of women at court, and the list, “Of the chief conditions and qualities in a waytyng gentylwoman,” that Thomas Hoby added to the end of his translation of Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* (London, 1561). While this predates the other works listed here, all published in the 1590s, it is already conscious of the special status of a “waytyng gentylwoman.”

⁹⁴Lok, sig. Yiiiij verso.

⁹⁵Linda Levy Peck, “‘For a King not to be bountiful were a fault’: Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England,” *Journal of British Studies* 25 (1986): 35–36.

the queen's pet name for her, her life, and her own letters justify. But Queen Elizabeth's "swete aple" also had a sharp social intelligence, the ambition, and political instincts that simultaneously worked to the advantage of the queen, herself, and her family by blood and by marriage. An acute observer of and participant in the conduits and functions of exchange, and adept at representing and promoting the interests of the Wolleys and the Mores, as well as those of Elizabeth I, Lady Wolley's position was not only privileged, but indispensable.

The Life and the Literary Reputation of Margaret Cavendish

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IT MIGHT BE SAID OF THE OEUVRE of Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673) and in loose, jocular paraphrase of Sigmund Freud that biography has been destiny.¹ Certainly a great many people who study British literature today pay as much attention to the various, often brief, assessments of the life of the woman as to what she wrote. For those scholars who concentrate on canonical male writers of the seventeenth century, she remains as she has for the last fifty years or so—a colorful eccentric who goes by the nickname “Mad Madge.”² She is, thus, sufficiently represented by the few poems, the snippet of autobiography, and the brief excerpt from a piece of speculative fiction called *The Blazing World* that are contained in the major teaching anthologies.³ Scholars whose interest in British women’s writing is rooted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are liable to believe that she conforms to Virginia Woolf’s notion of the isolated aristocratic woman writer: a sad creature locked away in a lonely country house and driven beyond rationality by an unremittingly patriarchal seventeenth-century society.⁴ For these scholars, she is summed up by a half dozen protofeminist extracts from her prefaces and by an equal number of other extracts that make light of the foibles of

¹The commonly used phrase “biology is destiny” is derived from and approximates Freud’s “anatomy is destiny.” See Peter Gay, *The Freud Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 661–65.

²There is reason to believe that the epithet “Mad Madge” did not originate in the seventeenth century and only began with the Lower edition of *The Life of William* in the late nineteenth. See Henry Ten Eyck Perry’s *The First Duchess of Newcastle* (Boston, 1918), 265. “Mad Madge” is used by Bridget MacCarthy in *The Female Pen: Women Writers: Their Contribution to the English Novel 1621–1818* (Cork: Cork University Press, repr. 1994), 66. It was repeated by and gained currency from Dale Spender’s *Mothers of the Novel* and Gilbert and Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic*. It has been suggested that there might be some connection between Cavendish and Mad Madge Murdockson from *Heart of Midlothian*, but the connection seems tenuous.

³The seventh edition of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* and *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*. The Longman anthology also reprints a page on microbiology from *Observations on Experimental Philosophy*.

⁴Margaret J. M. Ezell, “The Myth of Judith Shakespeare: Creating the Canon of Women’s Literature,” *New Literary History* 21 (1989–1990): 579–92, looks at the difficulties that arise when one accepts the views of Virginia Woolf uncritically.

women. The writing is, alas, a pitiful collection of opposites and inconsistencies. For the small but growing number of scholars who undertake serious study of early women writers and who have had occasion to read a substantial amount of what Cavendish wrote, accounts of the life of the woman might appear to be less important than the writing itself. Those from this group who specialize in the history of science, for instance, often occupy themselves in trying to determine the exact nature of her writing on such topics as vitalism, and therefore might not be expected to show much interest in her life. On the other hand, the work of scientists was sometimes trivialized in the same way as the work of women. The history of science in the seventeenth century is, in part, the history of a struggle for respectability and is the story of people as much as the story of ideas.⁵

While I do not believe that biography is destiny where the writing of Margaret Cavendish or anyone else is concerned, I do think that our consideration of various biographical views of Cavendish helps us to be more aware of the choices that we make as we try to understand and evaluate what she wrote. It is important, however, to remember that individual biographical views are often quite different from one another even when based on the same indisputable biographical facts. Dorothy Osborne's much quoted statement that there were "many soberer People in Bedlam"⁶ can help us to conclude, for instance, that Cavendish really was mad, that she was just a bit eccentric, or that, contrary to Osborne's understanding, Cavendish merely wished—as she reasonably might—for an expanded role for women in public affairs. These three views correspond, in a rough way, to literary judgments in which Cavendish's writing is largely nonsense (Virginia Woolf), delightfully quirky (Charles Lamb), or deeply political (Catherine Gallagher).⁷

It may appear that I will go on to argue that biographical approaches to Cavendish, however disparate, usually derive from a broad collection of biographical facts including Osborne's statement, but such is not the case. Frequently, the approaches in question, especially the early ones, derive

⁵Frances Harris describes the situation thus: "But the polemics which began to proliferate against the Royal Society in the early 1670s from both the advocates of scholastic learning and the court wits (including the king himself) also disparaged experimental science in the same way as housekeeping and kitchen physic: for being trivial, unsystematic, and lacking theoretical foundation. "Living in the Neighbourhood of Science: Mary Evelyn, Margaret Cavendish and the Greshamites," in *Women, Science and Medicine 1500–1700*, ed. Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Phoenix Mill: Sutton, 1997), 211.

⁶*Letters to Sir William Temple*, ed. Kenneth Parker (London: Penguin, 1987), 79.

⁷Gallagher begins by describing "Cavendish's willful eccentricity" with the stress, I think, on "willful" rather than on "eccentricity." Indeed, Cavendish's eccentricity for Gallagher is more a matter of style than an indication of mental defect. In a telling section, Gallagher writes that, if Cavendish claimed to be all-powerful in the empire of her own imagination, she was not much different from "Charles II [who] was himself the ruler of a kind of fantasy kingdom." "Embracing the Absolute: The Politics of the Female Subject in Seventeenth-Century England," *Genders* (1988): 26–29.

mostly from a single fountainhead—what Cavendish herself wrote. What she wrote is, of course, fact in that she wrote it, but using too heavily material taken from one person as a source of fact, most biographers agree, is quite dangerous. Various people adduce fact in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons and a biographer should mediate among materials from a number of sources in order to create his or her particular view. Further, a kind of circularity can develop from a situation in which literature begets biographical information, which in turn is used to explain the way in which we understand that literature. The circularity is not so very pernicious in the case of Cavendish, however, because some of what she wrote, her autobiography and her letters in particular, has been used to interpret other genres, especially her science and her drama. A more insidious situation arises in the case of the nineteenth-century editors of Cavendish's autobiography and biography, who sometimes asserted that the images of loyal military commander and loving wife found in these texts ought to be taken at face value and that readers ought to peruse the texts in order to admire the character of the author.⁸ Nobody, not even Virginia Woolf, seems to have bothered to note that Cavendish as autobiographer and biographer was her own main character witness. The critical or uncritical use of literary materials by biographers is only part of the subject of this essay, however. Equally important is the influence of the various biographical views. Biography need not be carefully or critically written to be destiny.⁹ Indeed, biography of dubious quality is sometimes more influential than its more reliable cousin.

Biography as distinct from biographical information begins in earnest with the publication of the widely read *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752) by George Ballard.¹⁰ The ladies were chosen, Ballard tells his reader on the title page, because they "have been celebrated for their

⁸C. H. Firth cites and then ignores Pepys's scathing view of the biography, deciding that "The special interest of this book lies rather in the picture of the exiled royalist, cheerfully sacrificing everything for the King's cause.... [Newcastle's] manners and his habits, his occupations and amusements, his maxims and his opinions... all are set down [by Cavendish] with the loving fidelity of a Boswell." *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, ed. C. H. Firth (London: George Routledge and Son, n.d.), x and ix.

⁹The present essay seeks to provide a historical overview of the thinking of those critics, scholars, popularizers, etc. who have published on the subject of Cavendish's life and writing. It does not cover the considerable wealth of biographical fact about her except as that fact has been taken to be significant and has been repeated, especially with accompanying repeated interpretation. On the other hand, I have not sought to record every minor repetition, especially among the myriad anthologies, literary histories, dictionaries, and encyclopedias that have given Cavendish a brief mention. Finally, because this essay is limited to historical overview or critical heritage, I have only touched upon the wealth of material that has appeared on the subject of Cavendish in the last fifteen years.

¹⁰"Ballard is the key source for information about women writers in the Renaissance and seventeenth century for almost all subsequent biographical dictionaries including women writers, from *Biographium Faemineum* published in 1766 to the *DNB*": Margaret

writings or skill in the learned languages, arts and sciences.” *Memoirs* is composed of about sixty biographical entries that vary in length from one to twenty pages. Most are short and Queen Elizabeth I’s is by far the longest. Ballard, as is often the case with biographers, is very careful to try to establish a sense of himself in his readers’ minds even as he appears to offer something like objective assessments of his subjects. Ballard makes a concerted effort to cast himself as a respecter of aristocratic traditions and as a gentleman who would never write an unkind word about a lady. It is no accident, then, that a queen would be assigned more space than a commoner or that a commoner of supposedly weak morals like Aphra Behn would be quietly left out of the volume. On the other hand, Ballard is careful not to whitewash the nobility, and goes so far as to say that Lady Eleanor Davies “printed (by stealth)” a pamphlet that later came into his possession.¹¹ Ballard in the same entry makes himself known as a gentleman when he writes that Davies’ two unhappy marriages were due to her “singular nature.” Although born into a humble family himself, Ballard knew that a well-bred man would not baldly suggest that a woman of noble lineage might be “mad.”¹² “Singular” was a far more polite term.

It is, of course, impossible to know just what was going through Ballard’s mind when he wrote his entry on Cavendish, but it is quite likely that he had to wrestle with two apparently conflicting threads of information. First there were the plays and the printed letters, both of which often contain indelicate language as well as witty and disparaging remarks about marriage. A second thread—composed of other printed letters, the autobiography, the biography of the husband, and odds and ends of biographical fact about Cavendish—indicated that she loved her husband and was his most fierce defender. While it might be clear to us living today that there is no inconsistency involved with a woman playwright attacking marriage in a witty comedy and at the same time acting as a completely devoted wife, it seems to have been hard for Ballard to reconcile such an apparent disparity. Indeed he hedges his bets in his general assessment of his biographical subject.

She [Cavendish’s mother] was herself a woman of excellent character, which this her daughter, when she came to employ herself in writing, endeavoured to do justice to.¹³

J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 78.

¹¹Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 57.

¹²Ballard was the son of a midwife. *DNB*, 1:1004. Davies, who liked to attack adversaries with anagrams of their names, was herself attacked in an anagram on her name: “Never so mad a lady.”

¹³Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, xxx.

Ballard is quite willing to give Cavendish specific credit for being “truly pious, charitable and generous” and for behaving as “a perfect pattern of conjugal love and duty.” He also praises her for her effort in trying to emulate her mother’s excellent character. He does not, however, say that she succeeded in this effort, and the reason for his reluctance may lie behind his assessment of the woman who employed “herself in writing” comedies.

Mr. Giles Jacob says that she was the most voluminous dramatic writer of our female poets and that she had a great deal of wit.... Mr. Langbain tells us that all the language and plots of her plays were her own, which is a commendation preferable to fame built on other people’s foundation, and will very well atone for some faults in her numerous productions.¹⁴

By saying that her “language” was her own, Langbaine probably meant that Cavendish did not borrow whole lines from other playwrights, as Aphra Behn had done for *The Rover* using Killigrew’s *Thomaso*. Likewise, Cavendish did not borrow plots, as Shakespeare often did. Langbaine does not use the word “faults” but he does say that some people had “but a mean Opinion of her Plays.”¹⁵ He points out that the dramatic version of *The Blazing World* is only a fragment and that *The Unnatural Tragedy* mistakenly criticizes “Mr. Cambden’s *Brittannia*.” Ballard and his successors, however, are less concerned with theatrical failings than with the failings of authorial character.

Indeed, Ballard seems to have had little knowledge of or interest in the way in which dramatists borrow from one another. He was, however, very interested in the relationship between the lives of his subjects and their work, often letting the life take precedence. For instance, he suggests praise for Elizabeth, countess of Bridgewater, based on her meditations on the Bible, which she never showed to anyone other than her husband.¹⁶ He quotes an inscription found on her monument which asserts that she is to be commended for her “piety in composing” and her “modesty in concealing” what she wrote. He had, presumably, never read anything she had ever written but, nevertheless, thought highly of her as an author. He never knew that she coauthored an amusing and worldly comedy with her sister, a play that was probably performed before a large family audience.¹⁷

¹⁴Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 278.

¹⁵*An Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, ed. John Loftis, 2 [1691] (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 391.

¹⁶The manuscript, composed of more than 600 pages, is at the Huntington Library: Egerton 8374. It has not been printed.

¹⁷The play is contained in *Renaissance Drama by Women*, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1996). Elizabeth, Countess of Bridgewater,

“Language” for Ballard meant “genteel or ungenteel language,” while faults probably meant “faults of character.” Ballard finds much that is admirable in Cavendish’s character (her devotion to her husband and her piety), but he is not quite willing to trivialize her perceived failings as does Jacob with “inconsiderable faults.”¹⁸ A quick look at a comedy in which “wit” and “language” play a part may help to illuminate what he found objectionable in her life. In the opening scene of “Love’s Adventures” (1662), Lord Fatherly tries to persuade his son, Lord Singularity, to marry a wealthy heiress. Lord Singularity knows nothing about the proposed mate and suggests that the father’s lack of interest in the personality of the prospective bride may endanger the family line with “Cuckoldry and Bastardy.” The father responds:

LORD FATHERLY. Let me tell you son, the wisest man that is, or ever was, may be deceived in the choosing a wife, for a woman is more obscure than nature her self, therefore you must trust to chance, for marriage is a Lottery, if you get a prize, you may live quietly and happily.

LORD SINGULARITY. But if I light of a blank, as a hundred to one, nay a thousand to one but I shall, which is a Fool or a Whore, her Follies or Adulteries, instead of praise, will sound out my disgrace.

LORD FATHERLY. Come, Come, she is Rich, she is Rich.¹⁹

The scene’s entertainment value is based on witty remarks offered by the cynical father, whose assessment of marriage is comparable to some of what Hellena from Aphra Behn’s *The Rover* has to say about the institution. At the same time, the son speaks not just for himself but also for Cavendish, who frequently lamented in her letters that people tend to marry without much understanding of the person to whom they tie themselves.²⁰ In an age when sentimental drama continued to dominate, such a tough-minded attitude easily could have been taken to be a fault, as much in the female author as in a character in the play. As regards language, Ballard was well aware that refined ladies did label others of their

was of course Cavendish’s daughter-in-law and the play includes a character intended to recall Cavendish. Elizabeth was Elizabeth Brackley at the time of the writing of the play.

¹⁸*The Poetical Register or the Lives and Characters of All the English Poets with an Account of Their Writing* (London, 1723), 2:191.

¹⁹*The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays*, ed. Anne Shaver (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 22.

²⁰See in particular her letter to her sister Ann in *Sociable Letters* (1664). “Indeed there is so much Danger in Marrying, as I wonder how any dare Venture, yet there is less Danger for Women than Men” (letter 201, p. 425).

sex, even fictional characters, “whores.” It is a word and a topic that Cavendish dwells on like a Restoration wit in *Sociable Letters*, letter 36.

You were pleased in your last Letter to express, how Mr. P. C. is persecuted by another man’s Whore, which is not usual, for though many men are Persecuted by their own Whores, both in Body, Mind, Course of Life, and Estate, Diseasing the One, Vexing the Other, Opposing the Third, and Spending the Fourth, yet not usually by any other man’s, but their own, at least believing them to be onely theirs.

Nevertheless, the otherwise virtuous life of the author, for Ballard, made up for her supposed faults.

That Cavendish had literary faults deriving from personal faults is taken up in a slightly different way by Sir Egerton Brydges in *The Select Poems of Margaret Cavendish* (1813). Brydges’s edition is replete with evaluative footnotes. That the character of the woman rather than the practice of the writer is the underlying focus of these notes is pointed up by his observation on Cavendish’s use of the word “sweat.”

In these days it seems a little wonderful that a lady of rank so high, and mind so cultivated, could use language so coarse and disgusting as is here seen.²¹

Brydges had his edition privately printed and limited the press run to twenty five, so one might imagine that his fastidiousness lacked influence. In point of fact, his sense of the sometimes delicate and sometimes indelicate lady finds its way into descriptions of her poetry throughout the nineteenth century. Virginia Woolf, who had little in common with Brydges, nevertheless uses his views in order to assert the loneliness and isolation of Cavendish.

[Sir Egerton Brydges] complained [that Cavendish used] “expressions and images of extraordinary coarseness as flowing from a female of high rank brought up in the courts.” He forgot [writes Woolf] that this particular female had long ceased to frequent the Court.²²

Ironically, no eighteenth- or nineteenth-century critic ever directly examined the cynical views of marriage contained in the plays or the plays’ and letters’ sometimes bawdy language. Presumably such an examination would have called the critic’s gentility into question.

²¹Brydges, *Selected Poems*, 5.

²²Reprinted in *Collected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967), 3:57.

In any event, Ballard footnotes his assessment of Cavendish's character, referring his readers to a page in her autobiography. He places the note itself at the end of the crucial phrase, "endeavoured to do justice to," and it is as if he is suggesting that evidence from Cavendish's writing supports his view of her life and even of her supposed faults. The footnote, however, indicates a great deal more debt than Ballard openly acknowledges, for the autobiography is the main, though not quite the only source that he used in directly describing her life.²³ Cavendish published the autobiography in *Nature's Pictures* (1656) when she was thirty-three but went on to live until she was fifty. Ballard's biographical entry contains almost nothing about the last seventeen years of her life, save that she and her husband returned to England after the Restoration. The entry omits, for instance, the visit that she made in grand style to the Royal Society and her much-noticed and some would say scandalous attendance at the theater in London, both of which took place in the spring of 1667.²⁴ He possibly knew something about the events of 1667, but, if so, chose not to look into them. On the other hand, he details, sometimes in rough paraphrase of her own words, the earlier and more ladylike portions of her life, although he does not choose to notice her often-repeated confession that she loved creating her own fashions in clothing. She writes in the autobiography:

From thence he [her husband] returned to Brabant, unto the city of Antwerp, which city we passed through when we went to Holland.²⁵

This shift in locations is rendered by Ballard thus:

From thence they returned to Brabant unto the city of Antwerp, where they settled and continued during the time of their exile.²⁶

More important, perhaps, than Ballard's heavy reliance on Cavendish's autobiography is the degree to which he simplifies and generalizes her views of herself as he condenses her twenty-five pages into the five of his entry. If Cavendish asserts that she has moments of shyness that occur when she is among large numbers of "the foolish and unworthy,"²⁷ then,

²³Ballard also uses the epitaph written by her husband and an account of the monuments in Westminster Abbey. In the account, composed by Dr. Crul, Cavendish is characterized as a woman of "wit, learning, and liberality."

²⁴Charles North wrote to his father that Cavendish displayed bare breasts with rouged nipples while at the theater. Bodley MS North c.4, fol. 146.

²⁵*The Life of William Cavendish*, 166.

²⁶Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 277. Isaac Reed, *Biographica Dramatica* (1812), 95, also follows this wording: "From thence they returned to Antwerp, where they settled and continued during their exile." Reed, following Ballard, stops his biographical entry with the beginning of the Restoration.

²⁷*The Life of William Cavendish*, 168.

according to Ballard, she was “graceful, her temper naturally reserved and shy.”²⁸ If Cavendish writes that she did not learn foreign or ancient languages, then that is an end to the question of her learning. Ballard even goes so far as to ignore a source that he quotes on the topic of what Cavendish knew. At the end of his entry, he reprints Dr. Crul’s assessment of Cavendish, taken from a history of monuments in Westminster Abbey.

She had deservedly acquired the reputation of a lady of uncommon wit, learning and liberality.²⁹

This, in spite of what Ballard had already written.

It is to be lamented she had not the advantage of an acquaintance with the learned languages, which would have extended her knowledge, refined her genius and have been of infinite service to her in the many compositions and productions of her pen.³⁰

There is ample evidence to suggest that Cavendish was familiar with the classics in translation, even as most scholars are today. In *Sociable Letters* (1664), for instance, she jokes about reading “Plutarch’s lives,” discussing in some detail and complexity the marriage of Pericles and Aspasia.³¹ The autobiography, however, often gives the impression that she was generally untutored. Ballard’s entry reinforces this impression and has been crucial in gaining it wide acceptance. Ballard, of course, does not specifically deny that Cavendish read the classics in translation. His entry merely sums up her learning as a lack thereof.

Ballard’s entry was followed by two pieces that appeared in 1755, both written by the combination of George Colman, the elder, and Bonnell Thornton. The first item was the introduction to and the selection of verse by Cavendish contained in *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.³² The second was a number from the popular magazine *The Connoisseur*.³³ Both contain biographical views that have proven to be important in the history of the reception of Cavendish’s oeuvre. Colman and Thornton dealt with Ballard’s problems—the negative attitude regarding marriage and ungentle language—by ignoring them. In the introduction to *Poems*, Colman and Thornton offer no adverse criticism of Cavendish or of her poetry. Rather they state that she “possessed a wild native genius, which, if duly cultivated might probably have shewn itself to advantage in the highest forms of poetry.” Colman and Thornton, who were familiar enough with

²⁸Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 281.

²⁹Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 282.

³⁰Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 277.

³¹Letter 30. She discusses the rape of Lucretia in letter 54 and takes on a variety of topics from the classics in *The World’s Olio* (1655).

³²Colman and Thornton, *Poems* (1755), 199–211.

³³Colman and Thornton, *Connoisseur*, number 69. Thursday, 22 May 1755.

Ballard's first sentence to include it verbatim in their introduction, adopt his view—that she was untutored and a “genius,” a “spirit” in this case rather than someone of great intellectual gifts. Colman and Thornton add to Ballard's assessment the notion that this spirit was both “wild” and “native.” “Wild,” for them, seems to mean that Cavendish was a woman characterized by purity and depth of feeling unaltered by the harsh realities of daily life. Again, an age which produced *The Man of Feeling* might be likely to admire a woman of such deep sensibility. The notion of purity in the word “wild” derives mostly from the contrast that Colman and Thornton make between Cavendish and Behn, whose erotic and even licentious associations are summed up in revealing dress.

[Behn was] a bold masculine figure...in a thin, airy, gay habit, which hung so loose about her, that she appeared to be half undrest.

Wit is not mentioned by Colman and Thornton, possibly because this skill was not much associated with the writing of virtuous women.³⁴

A more general difference between Colman and Thornton on the one hand and Ballard on the other is that he was a scholar, an antiquarian, and a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, while they were popularizers. Ballard respected or at least felt bound to cite the work of Jacob, Langbaine, and Crul; Colman and Thornton wanted to avoid appearing to be pedantic. Colman and Thornton do not even write biography, as such, in their number of *The Connoisseur*. Rather Mr. Town, a pseudonym for the two, archly reports a “dream” in which he saw various literary ladies of the past metaphorically demonstrate their writing styles by riding Pegasus.

[Cavendish] sprung into the saddle with surprising agility; and giving an entire loose to the reins, [the winged horse] directly set up a gallop, and run away with her quite out of our sight. However, it was acknowledged, that she kept firm set, even when the horse went at his deepest rate; and that she wanted nothing but to ride with a curb-bridle.

Mr. Town then saw Cavendish dismount and heard her recite “Melancholy,” as if to demonstrate what a “wild native genius” might compose. Milton stood nearby, and Mr. Town observed his behavior.

Milton seemed very much chagrined; and it was whispered by some, that he was obliged for many of the thoughts in his *L'Al-*

³⁴“Wit in women is apt to have bad consequences.... I am sorry to say the generality of women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity.” Elizabeth Montagu, 1750. Quoted in Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra* (New York: Dial Press, 1980), 143.

gro and Il Penseroso to this Lady's Dialogue between Mirth and Melancholy.

[Note] N.B. this Lady wrote before Milton

Cavendish is an untutored spirit, who gave the much-tutored John Milton something about which to write. For those readers of *The Connoisseur* who did not care for the learned regicide and who were as untutored as Cavendish claimed to be, the irony would have been delicious. Colman and Thornton undoubtedly had second thoughts about making such a bold attack on the respected poet, however, for, in the 1760 reprint of *The Connoisseur*, Mr. Town trims his sails and rewrites his note: "N.B. This Lady, it is supposed, wrote before Milton."

A brief look at "Melancholy" may help to explain the word "native," as Colman and Thornton applied it to Cavendish.

I dwell in groves that gilt are with the sun,
Sit on the banks by which clear waters run;
In summers hot down in a shade I lie,
My musick is the buzzing of a fly;
I walk in meadows, where grows fresh green grass,
In fields, where corn is high, I often pass;
Walk up the hills, where round I prospects see,
Some brushy woods, and some all champains be;
Returning back, I in fresh pastures go
To hear how sheep do bleat, and cows do lowe.

While other parts of the poem evoke melancholia in its more gloomy aspects, the segment quoted above seems to be mainly an appreciation of rural English landscape. Cavendish as the poem's author is, thus, a "native genius" in the sense that she is a local spirit, worthy of inclusion in a passage from Spenser.

Biographical views adduced by Ballard and the combination of Colman and Thornton were joined in the mid-eighteenth century by the opinions of Horace Walpole. Walpole in the first edition of *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England* (1759) asserts that Cavendish is no more than a "fertile pedant."³⁵ He has little to say about her in her own entry and rather discusses her more fully in the entry on her husband. There he deals with her publications on scientific topics, then called "natural philosophy," by saying, "But though She had written philosophy, it seems She had read none."³⁶ The 1806 edition, expanded by Thomas

³⁵Walpole, *Catalogue* (1759), 2:195.

³⁶Walpole, *Catalogue* (1759), 2:13.

Park, contains a new section that shifts the entry's emphasis in the direction of Cavendish as "wild native genius."

That she displayed poetical fancy, however, when it was not clouded by obscure conceits, or warped by a witless effort to engraft the massy trunk of philosophy on the slender wilding of poesy, will be seen by the following extract taken from "The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies."³⁷

If Cavendish is not explicitly a "wild native genius," her poetry is a "wilding," a wildflower or wild plant. Park goes on to devote two pages to an excerpt from "The Pastime," and in doing so simply borrows from Colman and Thornton's anthology, *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.

And when she [the Queen of Fairies] leaves her dancing ball,
She doth for her attendants call,
To wait upon her to a bower
Where she doth sit under a flower,
To shade her from the moonshine bright,
Where gnats do sing for her delight:
The whilst the bat doth fly about
To keep in order all the rout.
A dewy waving leaf's made fit
For the queen's bath where she doth sit.

Cavendish is no longer merely a bad natural philosopher, with no redeeming good qualities. In the 1806 edition of *Royal and Noble Authors*, she becomes a good poet who should have avoided writing bad natural philosophy. Her entry, unsurprisingly, is preceded in this later edition by a print that depicts her crowned with bays and sitting in a chair. The print makes her less an object of ridicule than of reverence. The print, itself, is a copy of a detail from an etching that appears as the frontispiece of *Nature's Pictures*, in which the autobiography is published. Although it was Park who printed the detail for the first time, the original etching was much admired by Walpole and his correspondent Thomas Gray.³⁸

³⁷Walpole, *Catalogue* (1806), 3:150.

³⁸Gray answers a query from Walpole about the etching thus: "I have searched where you directed me; which I could not do sooner as I was at London when I received your letter, and could not easily find her Grace's works. Here [Cambridge] they abound in every library. The print you ask after is the frontispiece to *Nature's pictures drawn by Fancy's pencil*.... It is a very pretty and curious print, and I thank you for the sight of it. If it ever was a picture, what a picture to have!" Horace Walpole, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 14:147–48. The Cambridge colleges (except possibly Magdalen) all had gift copies of Cavendish's books. *Nature's Pictures*, however, was only in the public library (now the University Library).

Along the way, Walpole and Park make their own contributions to the views developed by Ballard and the Colman/Thornton combination. Quoting from her preface to her husband found in the husband's biography, Walpole popularized the notion that Cavendish rarely revised what she wrote. For his part, Park gave currency to the thought that Cavendish was a harmless eccentric. The key sentence on revision comes from Walpole's entry on her husband in the 1759 edition.

But what gives one the best idea of her unbounded passion for scribbling, was her seldom revising the copies of her works, *lest it should disturb her following conceptions*.³⁹ [Walpole's emphasis]

This sentence seriously misrepresents the passage from which it is taken. Cavendish actually says that her biography of her husband is "full of errors" because she lacked what we would call a source checker and a copy editor (a "learned secretary"), and she was not much good at source checking and copy editing herself. As is natural in many authors, she enjoyed creating new text more than proofreading what she had already written. Nowhere in this passage does she say that she did not revise.

(I then being in banishment with your lordship, and not able to maintain learned secretaries), which hath been a great disadvantage to my poor works, and the cause that they have been printed so false and full of errors; for besides that I want also the skill of scholarship and true writing, I did many times not peruse the copies that were transcribed, lest they should disturb my following conceptions; by which neglect, as I said, many errors are slipt into my works.⁴⁰

Cavendish was more inclined to worry about the final printed product of her efforts than she admits, perhaps offering to the world an image of herself as a lady amateur while keeping these worries out of the public eye.⁴¹ In point of fact, she saw to it that major and minor errors were corrected by hand in the biography of the husband and in her other printed volumes.⁴² While she lamented that errors had crept into a number of her books, she did not let them stand out of laziness and the desire to get on

³⁹Walpole, *Catalogue* (1759), 2:13.

⁴⁰*The Life of William Cavendish*, xxxvii.

⁴¹An exception of sorts is a six-page section added to some copies of *Nature's Pictures*, in which Cavendish publicly berates her printers for "false Orthography, as *cup* for *cube*, and many the like," 402. The section was not reprinted in the second edition. On the other hand, she pushes nonchalance to its limits in a preface to *The World's Olio* (1655), sig. cr: "But I being of a lazie disposition, did chuse to let it [the book] go into the World with its Defects, rather than take the pains to revise it."

⁴²For details see James Fitzmaurice, "Margaret Cavendish on Her Own Writing: Evidence from Revision and Handmade Correction," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 85 (September, 1991): 297–307.

with other work. Why, then, does Cavendish open herself up to ridicule by using the phrase “lest they disturb my following conceptions,” which Walpole excerpts in order to suggest that she is too lazy to revise? The answer may well be that Cavendish had no way of knowing that these particular words would be lifted out of context and used against her.

In 1806, Thomas Park put forward the notion that, while Cavendish published too much, this excess was not culpable and no more than a harmless eccentricity. He quotes her thus.

I imagine all those that have read my [Cavendish's] former books, will say, that I have *writ enough*, unless they were better; but say what you will, *it pleaseth me*, and since my delights are harmless, *I will satisfy my humour*.⁴³

The view that Cavendish rarely revised is tightly interwoven with the notion that she was a harmless eccentric. Eccentrics are often taken to be too scattered to continue with a project to its conclusion. The paired views lurk behind the sense of selection used by those who compiled *The Longman Anthology of British Literature* (1998), and those who created the latest edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2000). In each anthology, “The Poetess’s Hasty Resolution” is chosen, presumably as a representative poem.

Reading my verses, I liked them so well,
Self-love did make my judgment to rebel,
....
Then all in hast I to the press it [the MS] sent,
Fearing persuasion might my book prevent.
But now 'tis done, repent with grief do I,
Hang down my head with shame, blush, sigh, and cry.⁴⁴

At the time that the poem was written, a “modest” woman would have allowed herself to be dissuaded from publishing poetry. Cavendish plays with this sense of modesty by writing that she, herself, intentionally rushed into print before anyone had a chance to remind her how shameful publication would be. An attentive reader would have known that shame and modesty constitute something of a game for Cavendish, because she published the poem in which she claims to feel shame in the very volume that it describes. If she really felt shame, why didn’t she simply recall the book? Further, “the author’s second thoughts about his poetry” constituted something of a literary topos at the time. Herrick begins *Hesperides* (1648) with a poem that disparages the book within which it is printed.

⁴³Walpole, *Catalogue* (1806), 3:154.

⁴⁴*Longman Anthology of British Literature*, 1:2059 and 2060.

When thou [*Hesperides*] didst keep thy Candor undefil'd,
Deerely I lov'd thee; as my first-borne child:
But when I saw thee wantonly to roame
From house to house, and never stay at home;
I brake my bonds of Love, and bad thee goe.⁴⁵

Herrick had at first circulated his book in manuscript among friends, where it was "undefiled," or private. The manuscript was copied and passed around so much that the book became public. Herrick, as an Anglican clergyman, might have been expected to feel shame similar to what was expected of Cavendish, particularly for the bedroom and bathroom humor in his volume, so he, in a little game, writes as if he denies his connection with its printed version. Again, if he really felt shame, why did he have the book printed? Cavendish's game playing, or even irony, does not receive any mention in the Norton and Longman anthologies. Rather the poem's inclusion in them is simply a part of the tradition that portrays her as an eccentric who sent her poems to the printer unrevised and before they were ready for publication.

Biographers and compilers of anthologies at the end of the eighteenth century and throughout most of the nineteenth generally accepted what they found in Ballard, Colman/Thornton, and Walpole/Park. The biographies and anthologies involved are full of borrowings and verbal echoes, but they often make small changes or demonstrate efforts to update language and thinking. The anonymous *Biographium Faemineum, the Female Worthies* (1766) rewrites Ballard's hedging sentence in the following manner.

She [Cavendish's mother] was herself a woman of an excellent character, which this her daughter did justice to in her [Cavendish] writings afterwards.⁴⁶

Cavendish's efforts to match her mother's character finally succeed. With the onset of the eighteenth century, the climate towards Cavendish becomes more hostile, though the basic views do not change. The great Victorian editor of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts Alexander Dyce in *Specimens of British Poetesses* (1827) reproduces Ballard's opening word for word. The wild ride of Mr. Town's Pegasus is summed up in the "power and activity" of a mentality in which there is much, possibly Romantic, imagination but not much else.

⁴⁵*The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. J. Max Patrick (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 12, 13.

⁴⁶Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies*, 149.

Her writings shew that she possessed a mind of considerable power and activity, with much imagination, but not one particle of judgment or taste.⁴⁷

It is perhaps a little hypocritical of Dyce to end his section on Cavendish by noticing the cruelty of Walpole, “who exerted all of his wit to make her and the Duke ... appear as ridiculous as possible.”⁴⁸ Thereafter anthologists vie with each other in describing the speed and sloppiness of Cavendish’s composition. Walpole’s “seldom revising” shifts in the direction of never revising. George Bethune’s entry from *The British Female Poets* (1848) is typical.

[Cavendish wrote] pouring forth through her pen whatever came into her head, never stopping to review her thoughts “lest it should disturb her following conceptions.”⁴⁹

So, too, Eric S. Robertson in *English Poetesses* (1883).

She possessed a perfect frenzy for writing. At twelve she was fond of scribbling on philosophical subjects; and in the deepest distress of her chequered life, as in its brightest moments, the sight of mere wet ink on the page seems to have solaced her beyond anything else. She never revised what she had thus once committed to paper, being of the opinion that the work of revision would have hindered her productive powers.⁵⁰

The “wild native genius” in the hands of an unsympathetic anthologist became a person totally lacking in discipline. The basic sense of riding without a “curb-bit” remains the same, however. Bethune and Robertson, as might be expected, both print cut-down versions of what is found in the Colman and Thornton anthology; that is, portions of “The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of Fairies” and segments of “Mirth and Melancholy.” The choices are the same for Frederick Rowton in *The Female Poets of Great Britain* (1853), a book that has continued to have considerable influence because it was reprinted and widely distributed in 1981.

The end of the nineteenth century saw a shift away from the views of Ballard, Colman/Thornton, and Walpole/Park, with the reissue of Cavendish’s autobiography and her biography of her husband. Oddly, a clear sign is to be found in the writing of the condescending Robertson, who at one point sums Cavendish up as “a kind of over-grown spoilt girl.”⁵¹ A

⁴⁷Alexander Dyce, *Specimens of British Poetesses* (1827), 88.

⁴⁸Dyce, *Specimens*, 89.

⁴⁹George Bethune, *The British Female Poets* (Philadelphia, 1848), 35.

⁵⁰Eric S. Robertson, *English Poetesses* (London, Paris, & New York: Cassell and Company, 1883), 14.

⁵¹Robertson, *English Poetesses*, 15.

few lines below he offers a quotation from Charles Lamb, who says of the biography of the husband that “no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honor and keep safe such a jewel.” Robertson goes on to cite a passage from the biography and then to write, “There are brighter, but more prolix passages in both the autobiography and the life of her husband, in which the Duchess’s strength and subtlety of pen are even more impressive.”

The autobiography and biography, in fact, soon became central texts for the study of Cavendish, thanks to two modern editions that brought together both pieces of life writing. The first such combination was published in 1872 in a volume edited by Mark Anthony Lower and frequently reprinted thereafter.⁵² Some fifteen years later, that book was joined by a similar edition put together by C. H. Firth.⁵³ Firth’s position as Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University is mentioned prominently on the title page of his book, and the mention seems to have been more than happenstance. It is easy to imagine that the two pieces had become widely known as a result of Lower’s edition and that Firth hoped to use his academic title to gain himself a share in an expanding market for Cavendish’s biography and autobiography. If such was his hope, Firth was not disappointed, and it is clear that there was plenty of room in the world of publishing for two very similar editions of the same material. The first full biography of Cavendish, Henry Ten Eyck Perry’s *The First Duchess of Newcastle* (1918), decisively marks the shift of interest away from the poetry and in the direction of the biography and autobiography:

If William and Margaret Cavendish, first Duke and Duchess of Newcastle, deserve any place in the history of literature, their first claim rests on the wife’s biography of her husband.⁵⁴

Perry devotes the whole of one of his four chapters to *The Life of William*. The poems and “pseudo-science” are lumped together as a subdivision of a chapter on “minor writings.”⁵⁵

Virginia Woolf, as might be expected, was not to be swayed by the credentials of Firth any more than she was impressed by the fact that a duchess, previously known only as a minor poet, had become a popular and

⁵²Mark Anthony Lower, ed., *The Lives of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle* (London: Cassell and Company, 1872).

⁵³C. H. Firth, *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle* (London and New York: Dutton, 1886).

⁵⁴Henry Ten Eyck Perry, *The First Duchess of Newcastle* (Boston and London: Ginn and Company, 1918), 5.

⁵⁵Richard Goulding, in a 1925 biography of Cavendish, makes the same point about the life of William: “[Cavendish] is famous as the writer of one [book], namely her *Life* of her husband, the *Loyal or Horsemanship* Duke of Newcastle. That book has given her a notable place among English biographers; and another of her works, namely her *True Relation, of my Birth, Breeding and Life*, has given her rank among our autobiographers”(1).

admired biographer/autobiographer. In a *TLS* review of an early twentieth-century printing of Firth's edition, Woolf ignored the text under consideration, choosing instead to use the opportunity to discuss how Cavendish actually lived and to pronounce on the nature of Cavendish's other writing. Although Woolf's review is generally lukewarm, it may have helped to expand Cavendish's audience, for a cool review in *TLS* was then, as it is now, far better than no review at all. In any event, the biography and autobiography combination continued to be reprinted and the poetry slipped into near oblivion. Woolf coincidentally may have raised reader awareness about another book by Cavendish, for the *TLS* review used the otherwise unknown *Sociable Letters* to demonstrate what Woolf took to be the unrefined nature of Cavendish's personality. While Woolf asserted that *Sociable Letters* represented no more than the uncritical recording of the commonalities that Cavendish heard and saw, others, perhaps reading the book because of Woolf's description of it, found *Sociable Letters* to be an interesting and important precursor to the epistolary novel of the eighteenth century.⁵⁶

In the fifty years between 1925 and 1975, very little was published on Cavendish beyond Douglas Grant's *Margaret the First* (1957). That biography asserts that its subject was a genuinely interesting person who neither should be sentimentalized in the manner of Charles Lamb nor attacked as is the case with Samuel Pepys.⁵⁷ Both are really straw men, for, while both continue to be quoted, neither has been taken very seriously in the twentieth century. In the last twenty years or so, Pepys's attack on Cavendish has been offered as something of a badge of honor for her—given Pepys's treatment of his wife and other women.

Stayed at home reading the ridiculous history of My Lord Newcastle wrote by his wife, which shows her to be a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an asse to suffer [her] to write what she writes to him and of him.⁵⁸

For Grant, Cavendish's successful assault on the bastion of the Royal Society in her 1667 visit, along with the way in which she captured the imagination (together with the wrath) of Pepys, showed her to be undervalued as a historical figure. Grant did not much care for what she and her hus-

⁵⁶B. G. MacCarthy says that "the Duchess of Newcastle made a most notable contribution to the kind of writing which aimed at character sketches and she even went further than the mere portrayal of character," *The Female Pen* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1946–47), 244. Walter Raleigh's *The English Novel* (New York, 1908), 113, anticipates MacCarthy, giving Cavendish grudging acknowledgment: "In her works are interesting contributions to the raw material of fiction."

⁵⁷Douglas Grant, *Margaret the First* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), 11.

⁵⁸*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 9 [18 March 1668] (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 123.

band wrote, but edited her letters and his poems in another volume, also for historical reasons. An article published by Samuel I. Minz in 1952 in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* on the subject of the visit to the Royal Society anticipates Grant in valuing Cavendish as a historical figure, though slides in the direction of evaluating her life as a writer by naively repeating the old chestnut: "She never corrected or revised her works."⁵⁹

Beginning in the 1980s, a new approach arose as if by general consensus. Cavendish was no longer merely an interesting minor historical figure, nor was she by any means to be valued mainly as the author of her husband's biography. Rather she was taken to be something like a modern-day activist—eccentric, yes, but devoted to an important cause. That cause was the reassessment of women's place in society. As Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson write in their introduction to *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader* (2000), "she probed, ridiculed or rejected the dominant assumptions that structured early modern beliefs and behavior."⁶⁰ Bowerbank and Mendelson are, of course, largely interested in women's issues, but they are careful not to confine themselves to a narrowly feminist agenda. So, too, Ann Shaver in her introduction to *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays* (1999):

What to a contemporary reader may seem to be vacillation about women's worth comes not just from a modesty topos but also from a sincere effort to claim for her sex access to the virtues of men without having to give up the special virtues of women. The effort, though it can lead to apparent incoherence, also produces a powerful challenge to clichés about gender.⁶¹

These recent views are, of course, biographically oriented. What Cavendish wrote is the production of an original thinker. Some of the older views have not quite been put to rest, however. Virginia Woolf wrote the following:

The vast bulk of the Duchess is leavened by a vein of authentic fire. One cannot help following the lure of her erratic and lovable personality as it meanders and twinkles through page after page.⁶²

Lest we feel that we, ourselves, are completely beyond Woolf's views, a look at the 1998 *Longman Anthology of British Literature* will show that

⁵⁹"The Duchess of Newcastle's Visit to the Royal Society," *JEGP* 51 (April, 1952): 169.

⁶⁰Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson, *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2000), 9.

⁶¹Ann Shaver, *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 7.

⁶²Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925), 57 and 68.

its editors characterized Cavendish as a woman possessed, if not by a “vein of authentic fire,” then of a strong “passion” for writing.⁶³

Biography is by no means destiny, but biographical interpretations always need to be examined, sometimes to be dismissed, sometimes to be accepted, and sometimes to be modified in this way or that. Certainly one of the graver errors that a literary scholar can make is to accept uncritically a biographical interpretation, even if its source is generally reliable. Caveats against the uncritical acceptance of literary interpretation are some of the first that are heard in graduate schools, and warnings against uncritically accepting biographical interpretations should be no exception. It is all too easy, however, to let someone else’s view of an author’s life become a part of one’s argument simply because that view supports one’s own particular literary interpretation. One’s own literary interpretation is liable to be carefully thought through, but a supporting biographical view may be unexamined and simply treated as if it were fact. Consensus, in particular, can be a culprit, for if very nearly everyone in the community of letters shares a particular biographical view, then that view is even more likely to assume the air of fact. Another quotation, which itself needs to be examined, may be instructive. Isaac Newton is often credited with the sentence “If I have seen farther it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.” A look at *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* will reveal that Newton borrowed the sentence, not quite word for word, from Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where the sentence reads, “A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant may see further than the giant himself.” Very few people attribute the quotation to Burton, however, probably because Newton is more widely famous and hence the humility implied by “shoulders of Giants” is all the more striking. Even fewer people are likely to remember Newton’s attacks on the reputation of his main rival, Gottfried Leibniz, which suggest that Newton was not always humble. The quotation, whether it comes from Newton or Burton, however, presents the occasion for an observation regarding biographical interpretation: It doesn’t hurt to consider the direction that your giant is looking, and, if it seems to be a good idea, to look another way.

⁶³*Longman Anthology of British Literature*, ed. David Damrosch et al. (New York: Longman, 1998), 1:2058.

“Murder not then the fruit within my womb”: Shakespeare’s Joan, Foxe’s Guernsey Martyr, and Women Pleading Pregnancy in Early Modern English History and Culture

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WHEN THE CHARACTER Joan La Pucelle has been captured and is brought before Warwick and York to be condemned at the end of Shakespeare’s *1 Henry VI*, she at first denies her shepherd father and proclaims both her noble birth and her virginity.¹ She claims that she is issue “from the progeny of kings; virtuous and holy,” and adds proudly, “Joan of Arc hath been a virgin from her tender infancy,/ Chaste and immaculate in very thought” (5.4.38–39, 50–51).² These assertions do not, however, impress York and Warwick, who order her to be taken away to her execution. At this point Joan, panicked at the thought of her imminent death, completely changes her demeanor and makes a very different claim. Arguing that it is “warrente[d] by law...[as a] privilege,” Joan admits, “I am with child, ye bloody homicides: Murder not then the fruit within my womb” (63–65). But York and Warwick refuse to listen, damning the child for each of its potential fathers as the desperate Joan names one man after another—the Dauphin, Alençon, Reignier. Joan is sent away to be burned, and her last words on stage are her curse to the English. It is important to be explicit that this is Shakespeare’s character Joan, not the historic fifteenth-century person, and Shakespeare has this

¹Versions of this paper were read at the Medieval and Renaissance Conference at the University of Nebraska, at the Shakespeare at Kalamazoo session at the Medieval Congress at Western Michigan University, and to the Early Modern Research Group at the University of Minnesota. I am grateful for all the helpful discussions. I would like to thank the University of Nebraska–Lincoln for funding part of this research and also express my debt of gratitude to the librarians at Love Library, University of Nebraska–Lincoln and at the Folger Shakespeare Library where much of the research was done. Debbie Barrett-Graves, Jo Carney, Jane Donawerth, Al Geritz, Gwynne Kennedy, Elaine Kruse, Amy Masciola, Michele Osherow, and Stephanie Witham all provided me with help and support on this project. I would especially like to express my appreciation to Karolyn Kinane, Linda Shenk, and John Watkins for the invitation to speak at Minnesota and the wonderful hospitality I received there.

²All citations are from William Shakespeare, *The First Part of Henry the Sixth*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. Lamar (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

character Joan place saving her life, an attempt that proves futile, above honor and historical glory.

The thought of a pregnant woman being executed is an unsettling one. But though York and Warwick mock Joan once she asserts that she is pregnant, stating “Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee” (5.4.84), what she demands would actually be hers by right of law in the sixteenth-century Britain where Shakespeare composed his history play. Many women convicted of capital crimes pleaded pregnancy, and this was one method that kept a number of sixteenth-century women who had been found guilty from being executed.

In this essay I examine the character Joan’s plea within the context of actual women pleading pregnancy to avoid execution in Elizabethan England and Scotland. Pleading pregnancy was a familiar part of the justice system in England in the medieval and early modern period.³ Many women convicted of felony in Elizabethan/Jacobean England pleaded that they were pregnant, and a number of them successfully maintained that claim, even if in some cases there is real doubt that the women were actually pregnant. Yet we also have several cases of pregnant women being burned as heretics in sixteenth-century England, the most notorious being the Guernsey martyr Perotine Massey. The accusations of harlotry like those cast at Joan appear in Massey’s case as well.

Though we may in the twenty-first century be appalled by the idea of the violent death of a pregnant woman, in early modern England such a death might be perceived as just punishment for a woman who so visibly stepped beyond the boundary of appropriate behavior. For Elizabethans, Joan, a French woman dressed in masculine attire who consorted with demons, was clearly an uncomfortable, transgressive character. Her very title, “La Pucelle,” could mean either virgin or slut.⁴ As Leah Marcus argues, “Joan’s crossing of the gender boundaries marking men off from women threatens a whole set of cultural polarities by which the categories

³James Oldham finds examples from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries. “On Pleading the Belly: A History of the Jury of Matrons,” *Criminal Justice History* 6 (1985): 1–64. See also Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550–1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 54. It continued to be in practice well into the twentieth century, until England’s abolishment of the death penalty made it superfluous. “A jury composed of matrons empanelled on a writ from Chancery to determine whether a woman was pregnant or not...where a woman was condemned to be executed and pleaded pregnancy as a grounds for delaying execution. From 1931, a pregnant woman would not be sentenced to death but only to imprisonment; she had, however, to satisfy a jury she was pregnant.” David M. Walker, *The Oxford Companion to Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 688. Panels of matrons were also used to determine pregnancy in cases of widows and property dispute where if the widow had a son by her late husband he would inherit. The Earl of Halsbury, *The Laws of England* (London: Butterworth and Co., 1910), 11:11n.

⁴*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 499.

were kept distinct.” Marcus sees Joan as a fractured image of Elizabeth, a point also made by Barbara Hodgdon: “Figured remarkably like Elizabeth in many attributes, Joan represents a subversive challenge to gender.... Joan, like the Queen whose ghostly image she echoes, functions as a spectacular, and intensely troubling, site of gender display.”⁵ And around Elizabeth, like the character Joan, there were rumors of sexual misconduct and pregnancy, and even of babies being burned alive. In the 1580s both Dionisia Deryck and Robert Gardner were placed in the pillory for claiming that Elizabeth had illegitimate children who were burned to death as newborn infants. These stories spread further as the reign neared its end.⁶ Richard Hardin also sees Joan as echoing a queen, but he posits the parallel with Mary Stuart: both were French, Catholic, violent, and sexually promiscuous. Mary was executed only five years before the production of *1 Henry VI*.⁷

Another figure that stands behind Joan la Pucelle is the other Joan, Pope Joan, now in the twentieth century recognized by most as a legendary character, though believed to have historicity in the sixteenth century. This medieval legend also contained religious overtones that used cross-dressing and suggested demonic relations. For sixteenth-century English Protestants such as John Foxe, Pope Joan was another example not only of the waywardness of women but also of the contemptible nature of Catholics, since they “to the perpetual shame of them...elected a whore indeed to minister sacraments, to say masses, to give orders.”⁸ According to the story, Joan, in some versions an English woman, in others Dutch, disguised herself as a young man so that she could travel with her tutor, a young monk who was also her lover. Unfortunately, in Athens Joan’s lover died. In an effort to forget her grief, Joan, whose knowledge of the various sciences was masterful, began to give public lectures. Her fame as a scholar grew, and eventually she was invited to lecture in Rome, where her intellectual gifts led her to being made a cardinal and eventually to be elected pope under the title of Pope John VIII.

All might have continued well for this remarkable woman if it had not been for her sexual appetite. One of the members of her papal retinue—a servant, a chamberlain, or even a cardinal, depending on the versions—

⁵Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 68. Barbara Hodgdon, *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare’s History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 55. See also Nina S. Levine, *Women’s Matters: Politics, Gender, and Nation in Shakespeare’s Early History Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 32.

⁶See Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 83–84.

⁷Richard F. Hardin, “Chronicles and Mythmaking in Shakespeare’s *Joan of Arc*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 42 (1989): 33.

⁸John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. Rev. George Townsend (New York: AMS Press, 1965; repr. ed.), 2:7.

reminded Joan of her dead lover. Soon Joan was all too consoled. Her papal robes hid her pregnancy until at the most dramatically inopportune moment, she gave birth in the midst of a formal procession in the streets of Rome. It was her pride that undid her. She insisted on leading this procession even though she knew she was near her time. In some versions, the Roman mob, furious at the deception, immediately tore her and her infant son to death. Other versions report the authorities had her and her child hung to demonstrate her shame. A sixteenth-century German play has Lucifer narrate the story of Pope Joan. At the beginning of the play he promises her intellect and fame, but at the end she is betrayed to the Roman mob by another devil, who spitefully announces: "The Pope is great with child. He is a woman and no man."⁹ Sixteenth-century versions of Pope Joan and Joan of Arc both use the issue of pride and illicit possible pregnancy as the way to bring the characters to destruction.

Just as the character of Pope Joan would have been well known to Elizabethans, so too would Joan of Arc. Both were portrayed in histories written in the sixteenth century and in the latter half of the century there was, argues D. R. Woolf, "an enormous expansion" of public interest in the past.¹⁰ Shakespeare's play about Joan of Arc was immensely popular; in 1592 Thomas Nashe stated that at least ten thousand spectators saw *I Henry VI*. Phyllis Rackin and Jean Howard argue that this is actually a low estimate, that Philip Henslowe's records of receipts for the play's initial run suggest a figure closer to twenty thousand, and only one other play Henslowe produced earned more than this Joan of Arc play.¹¹ Joan's plea, echoing the pleas of actual women in the courts, would have been heard by many playgoers.

In the world of the play of *Henry VI, Part I* one might wonder if Joan is indeed pregnant.¹² At the beginning of the play she cautions the Dauphin that she cannot think about love while it is her duty from the Virgin

⁹The information about the play comes from Lucy de Bruyn, *Woman and the Devil in Sixteenth-Century Literature* (Tisburg, U.K.: Compton Press, 1979), 153–54. This is her translation. I am deeply appreciative of the help offered to me by Barbara Krep over the lines of the play. For more information on the legend of Pope Joan, C. A. Patrides, "The Fable of Pope Joan," in *Premises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 152–81; Emily Hope, *The Legend of Pope Joan* (Carlton, South Vic: Sisters Publications, 1983); Rosemary Anne Pardoe, *The Female Pope: The Mystery of Pope Joan* (New York: Sterling, 1988); Peter Stanford, *The Legend of Pope Joan: In Search of the Truth* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999).

¹⁰D. R. Woolf, "Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth Century," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 331.

¹¹Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 22.

¹²A number of scholars are skeptical. For example, David Bevington refers to her "desperate and fallacious confession of pregnancy to avoid execution" in "The Domineering Female in *I Henry VI*," *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966): 51. Bevington has also, however, stated, "Joan's sexuality is not only demonic but also obsessive in its promiscuity and seeming insatiability," suggesting that the men she named were indeed her lovers. Bevington, ed., *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 499.

Mary to expel the English: "I must not yield to any rites of love,/For my profession's sacred from above:/When I have chased all thy foes from hence,/Then will I think upon a recompense" (1.2.113–16). Though the English later refer to her paramours, and Joan and Charles do enter together in act II, scene one, when they flee Rouen in the middle of the night, there is no explicit evidence that Joan has taken any lovers, much less that she is pregnant.

Her pregnancy has the same problematic quality as the child of Lady Macbeth (another Shakespearean character who also calls forth spirits). In a number of ways Joan is Lady Macbeth's "predecessor," as Catherine Belsey points out.¹³ Lady Macbeth may have "given suck" but has no child during the course of the play. Some scholars argue that we have no evidence that Lady Macbeth ever had a child. So, too, Joan's claim of pregnancy may have been specious, an attempt to avoid execution, just as actual women made this claim even if they were not actually pregnant in attempts to save their lives. Given Lady Macbeth's murderous behavior and call to spirits to "unsex" her, an echo of Joan's anguished offer to spirits, the thought of Lady Macbeth as a mother is troubling, especially when the reference to a child is her boast that if she had promised to do so, she would dash the child's brains out to keep the oath. So, too, the active Joan who fights the English, talks back to the Dauphin, negotiates with the Duke of Burgundy while showing her contempt for him only to the audience,¹⁴ the Joan who offers "body, soul, and all" (5.3.22) to fiends from hell if they will aid her in battles, is a highly problematic mother figure, certainly troubling to all those who watched from the audience.

The idea of a Joan claiming pregnancy was not new to Shakespeare. It seems to have first emerged in the 1460s in an anonymous English chronicle that stated: "And then she said that she was with childe, whereby she was respited A while; but in conclusion it was found that she was not with child, and then she was [burned]."¹⁵ In the 1460s, the decade after the Hundred Years' War finally ended, the French held the second trial that would rehabilitate Joan's character. Presenting Joan as lying about a

¹³Belsey notes: "Predictably, these creatures who speak with voices which are not their own are unfixed, inconstant, unable to personate masculine virtue through to the end. Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, compelled to utter what she may not speak by day, and so betrays the truth. La Pucelle, deserted by her familiars, frantically asserts her innocence and then her pregnancy to escape the death she deserves." *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 183–84.

¹⁴Her aside is "Done like a Frenchman: turn, and turn again!" (3.3.85).

¹⁵Cited in W. T. Waugh, "Joan of Arc in English Sources of the Fifteenth Century," in *Historical Essays in Honor of James Tait*, ed. J. G. Edwards and V. H. Galbraith (Manchester: 1933), 394. Caxton published this chronicle in 1483 as *The Chronicles of England with the Fruit of the Times*. See Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981), 107.

pregnancy and fearful of death would be another way for the English to destroy her reputation and credibility.

This presentation of the lying, fearful Joan was further developed in the sixteenth century. In his history of England written in the reign of Henry VIII, Polydore Vergil explained that after she was condemned for wearing men's clothing and witchcraft, "the unhappie Maide... fained herselfe to be with childe, to thende she might eyther move her enemies to compassion, eyther els cause them to appoynt some more milde punishment." When "her surmise [was] found false, she was burned not withstanding." Vergil did not celebrate Joan's fate, calling the sentence "the hardest that ever had been remembred," and questioning why this woman of "martiall manly prowess" who had been defending her country, could not receive mercy.¹⁶

This is a very different portrait from that presented by Edward Hall in his *Chronicle*, published in 1548. Hall described Joan as "a rampe of suche boldness" who would do things "that other yong maidens bothe abhorred & wer ashamed to do." Hall called Joan "a monster," though he does not mention her false claim of pregnancy.¹⁷ John Stow and the editors of *Holinshed Chronicle* continued Hall's characterization, and they also repeated the story of the pregnancy. *Holinshed's Chronicle* describes Joan as "shamefullie rejecting hir sex abominable in acts and apparell to have counterfeit mankind." The authors also described her as "a pernicious instrument to hostilitie and bloudshed in divelish witchcraft and sorcerie." Once she was sentenced to death, she claimed pregnancy to avoid execution and this claim won her a stay of nine months. The authors of *Holinshed's Chronicle* were convinced that this was pretense. They did not doubt her virginity but declared it shameful that she would pretend she was not in an attempt to save her life: "Yet seeking to eetch out life as long as she might... [she] confesse[d] herself a strumpet, and (unmarried as she was) to be with child... [but in this] found as false [and] wicked [as] the rest."¹⁸ In the *Annales of England* (1592) John Stow called Joan a "monstrous woman" who pretended pregnancy to try and save her life. He had no sympathy for her that this bid failed.¹⁹

In sixteenth-century England a number of women actually did plead pregnancy to avoid execution. The judges then ordered them to be exam-

¹⁶Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English history, comprising the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III from an early translation, preserved among the mss. Of the old royal library in the British museum*, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (London: Camden Society, 1844), 38.

¹⁷Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1809), 148.

¹⁸*Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: J. Johnson, 1807-1808), 3:170-71.

¹⁹John Stow, *Annales of England* (London: Ralfe Newbery, 1592), 597, 600.

ined by a board, or jury, of matrons. These were usually married women of good character, “discreet women,” whom the sheriff asked to serve. Quite possibly these women were already in the audience at the court and were thus impaneled. Married women were considered to have sufficient knowledge in matters of pregnancy and childbirth; midwives were not specifically put on this jury. James Oldham tells us that “the use of the jury of matrons was a settled practice throughout England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”²⁰ Those the board explicitly proclaimed were not pregnant were indeed executed. As we will see, however, there were a number of cases where the women may or may not have been pregnant but were reprieved. There is no such chance for the character Joan.

Men found guilty of capital crimes in the medieval/early modern period could claim benefit of clergy, the commonest method of avoiding execution. Benefit of clergy was available to the literate laymen in all cases of murder and felony. The convicted man, claiming benefit, was then asked to read a prescribed passage from a Psalter. Laymen could make this claim only once; to prevent them from attempting to use this a second time, a statute passed in 1490 had felonious “clerks,” as opposed to actual priests, branded on the left thumb with a T (for thief) or M (for manslayer).²¹

Women did not have this option in the sixteenth century. They were granted limited rights to benefit of clergy for minor crimes in 1623. If, however, they were found guilty in a capital offense, they could claim they were pregnant; indeed, if they could sustain this claim the sentence was supposed to be deferred until the child was born. A pregnancy plea was supposed to be accepted only if the woman was “quick” rather than “young” with child, but in fact this distinction was often not made. Theoretically, a woman would within a month of the child’s birth be executed, but in fact many were not.²² The 1559–1625 figures for the home circuit, which was the most populous judicial region in England, show that over 1,600 women were accused of felonies. Of the 44 percent of these women found guilty, one-third pleaded pregnancy. As with men and benefit of clergy, this was a plea that could only be made once. In *Pleas of the Crown*, it states: “If a Woman, convict of Treason or Felony, be quick with Child,

²⁰Oldham, “On Pleading the Belly,” 3, 15.

²¹J. S. Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records: Home Circuit Indictments, Elizabeth I and James I: Introduction* (London: HMSO, 1985), 114; J. H. Baker, “Criminal Courts and Procedure at Common Law, 1550–1800,” in *Crime in England, 1550–1800*, ed. J. S. Cockburn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 41–42. See also, Luke Owen Pike, *A History of Crime in England* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1873), 1:297–303.

²²Baker, “Criminal Justice at Newgate,” 314, cited in Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records... Introduction*, 121. J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550–1750* (London and New York: Longman, 1984), 147. C. L’Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* (London: Kegan Paul, 1929), 33.

she shall have one Reprieve, but not a second time.”²³ It was certainly a worthwhile claim to make. Records indicate that it is doubtful that many of these women were ever executed, though this varied in different courts at different times in the sixteenth century.

Some women were indeed executed after giving birth, particularly if they were found guilty of murder or infanticide. The servant Agnes Barns murdered her newborn child in August 1559 and was found guilty the following March but remanded because she was pregnant. This only delayed her execution until July 1561. In July 1576 Joan Bretton was found guilty of drowning her infant daughter but successfully pleaded pregnancy. She was, however, hanged a year later in July 1577. In 1562 Emily Pott, wife of Valentine Pott, attacked Edward Chapman with an axe and killed him. Her successful pregnancy plea delayed her execution for two years. In 1592, Eleanor Iden, a spinster, poisoned her relative Thomas with arsenic and was remanded because she was pregnant but was hung a year later.²⁴ An overwhelming majority of those reprieved on the grounds of pregnancy, however, were eventually released. For example, in 1550, Alice Cowland of Tottenham in Middlesex pleaded pregnancy after pleading guilty to the theft of goods worth £2, which made it a capital crime. The judge pardoned her.²⁵ But it could also be a lengthy wait. Women remanded to await pardon or for corroboration of a plea of pregnancy might stay in jail for a very long time, and some died there. Several women were detained for up to seven years, either before or after their pregnancy was verified.²⁶

A woman who claimed pregnancy was examined in private by the specially appointed panel of twelve matrons, who then reported her condition to the court. If the matrons found her pregnant, the judge was bound to stay the execution until after the child was born. But the verification of pregnancy is to our twentieth-century minds questionable, suggesting that often the judges used this ground as a way of commuting sentence or pardoning condemned women. James Oldham suggests that for the most part these juries of matrons were conscientious, a point also argued by Patricia Crawford, who states that in all the instances of village matrons’ being impaneled to judge the condition of other women, “society

²³Matthew Hale, *Pleas of the Crown*, 5th ed. (London: Printed for D. Brown, J. Walthoe, and M. Wotton, 1716), 272.

²⁴J. S. Cockburn, ed., *Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments, Elizabeth I* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1978), 882. J. S. Cockburn, ed., *Calendar of Assize Records: Kent Indictments, Elizabeth I* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1979), 53, 87, 174. J. S. Cockburn, ed., *Calendar of Assize Records: Sussex Indictments, Elizabeth I* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1975), 1361.

²⁵Anne Lawrence, *Women in England, 1500–1700* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994), 269.

²⁶Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records...Introduction*, 35.

expected that women's responsibility to tell the truth, according to their office and licence, would override any moral obligation to other women.²⁷ The fore Matron of the Jury had to take an oath when she was sworn in: "You as fore Matron of this Jury shall swear, That you shall search and try the Prisoner at the Bar, whether she be quick with Child, and thereof a true Verdict shall return: So help you God." After she was sworn in, the rest of the jury of matrons also had to take the same oath.²⁸ Yet it seems that at least some of the village matrons wished to give condemned women every opportunity. In a number of cases, judges either delayed the examination of the women for six to twelve months, or, if the matrons were not sure of the woman's condition, ordered that she be re-examined some months later. Early pregnancy was not always easy to confirm, so the plea in a childbearing-age woman might well have won her at least a measure of delay.²⁹

Though legally the execution was not to be postponed if the woman became pregnant while in custody, when a woman was remanded to await examination, often for months, this was a possibility. Monsieur Misson, a French visitor to England in the latter part of the seventeenth century, heard that every prison had a few men there just to "help out" women. Female arrivals were advised "that if they are not with child already, they must go to work immediately to be so, that in case they have the misfortune to be condemned they get time, and perhaps save their lives." He adds, perhaps a bit cynically, "Who would not hearken to such wholsom Advice?"³⁰ By the early eighteenth century, Captain Alexander Smith saw other abuses in the system, claiming that prisoners had their own matrons at hand to assert they were quick with child whether they were or no.³¹

Certainly there are problematic cases in the sixteenth century as well. Mary Osborne pleaded pregnancy in July 1581 but was not examined until March 1582 when she was said to be quick with child. Her son was not baptized, however, until September 1584, making one wonder exactly when he was conceived and when born. Osborne was in prison until at

²⁷Oldham, "Pleading the Belly," 19. Patricia Crawford, "Public Duty, Conscience, and Women in Early Modern England," in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 64.

²⁸[Richard Garnet], *The Book of Oaths and the Several Forms thereof, Both Ancient and Modern*, 2d ed. (London: H. Twyford, 1689), 250. My thanks to Valerie Wayne for bringing this reference to my attention.

²⁹Barbara Rosen, ed., *Witchcraft in England, 1558–1618* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 294 n. 55.

³⁰M. Misson, *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England with Some Account of Scotland and Ireland: Dispos'd in Alphabetical Order: Written originally in French translated by Mr. Ozell* (London: Printed for D. Browne, 1719), 329–30.

³¹Capt. Alexander Smith, *The History of the Lives of the Most Noted Highwaymen, Foot-pads, House-breakers, Shop-lifts and Cheats, of Both Sexes, etc.*, 2d ed. (London, 1714), 2:185, cited in Oldham, "Pleading the Belly," 17.

least July 1585. Elizabeth Munsloe was remanded on plea of pregnancy in March 1562, found to be pregnant in July 1563, and finally released in 1569. Margaret Judge was convicted of infanticide at the Maidstone assizes in July 1560 and remanded because of her plea of pregnancy. She was examined, but the decision was deferred until a second examination a year later in July 1561, when a jury of matrons then found her to be pregnant. The judge sent her back to jail; two years later in July 1563 she was again examined and again found to be pregnant. She remained in prison until the judge pardoned her in 1565. As J. S. Cockburn argues, this suggests a judicially controlled fiction—or else an amazingly long and convoluted pregnancy. He states, “Whether or not the women concerned in such cases actually gave birth—or indeed, whether or not they were ever pregnant—remains uncertain.”³² In at least some cases, such as that of Petronella Hayward, convicted March 1583 of poisoning her husband, found pregnant July 1583, pardoned 1587, Cockburn argues that the trial judge pardoned her because he was convinced of her innocence, and the pregnancy was a deliberate fiction used to save her.

J. A. Sharpe suggests that in a number of cases men whose literacy was doubtful were coached so that they could claim benefit of clergy; so too, some women were declared pregnant and those in control deliberately closed their eyes to biology. Certainly in sixteenth-century England many people were concerned with the severity of punishments prescribed for crimes. Even bringing a prosecution to law was selective. As Penry Williams points out, the decision to prosecute depended on a number of issues: the reputation of the offender, the attitude of the victim, local opinion, and communal pressure for conciliation or arbitration. Many who were finally arraigned had this happen because of their reputations for notorious bad character or persistent misconduct.³³ And once there was a prosecution, jurors regularly undervalued stolen goods so that the crime would not be a capital one.³⁴ Humanists debated the merits of capital punishment. Earlier in the century Thomas More pursued the question in his *Utopia*, which was translated into English in 1551. More argued against capital punishment for thieves, having Raphael state, “Surely, my lord, I think it not right nor justice, that the loss of money should cause the loss of man’s life: for mine opinion is, that all the goods in the world

³²Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records...Introduction*, 122–23.

³³Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England, 1547–1603* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 218–19.

³⁴Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records...Introduction*, 123; Cockburn, ed., *Calendar of Assize Records: Kent*, 202; Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England*, 67–68. Goods valued at less than 2£ meant it was not.

are not able to countervail man's life."³⁵ The plea of pregnancy allowed at least some judges some latitude about fulfilling the rigors of the law on convicted women.

Just as with Joan, some women actually found guilty of witchcraft in early modern England pleaded pregnancy, and in some cases managed to avoid execution while in other cases not. The matrons on the jury examining women who pleaded pregnancy were often the same women who looked for witchmarks.³⁶ In July 1564 Elizabeth Lowys, wife of John Lowys, a husbandman, was indicted for murder by witchcraft. The indictment stated that she had murdered an infant and two adult men. She was found guilty on all counts but was remanded because she claimed pregnancy. The next March a jury of matrons examined her along with three other women. One of the other women was found to be pregnant but not Lowys, who was executed.³⁷ The spinster Avis Cunny, convicted of using witchcraft to murder Richard Franck and to make Jeremiah Browne lame, successfully pleaded pregnancy in 1589 but was executed in 1590 after the child was born.³⁸ But Elizabeth Lightbone was found guilty of witchcraft in 1614, successfully pleaded pregnancy, and was pardoned two years later.³⁹

In 1593 an elderly mother, her husband, and daughter were put on trial for witchcraft and all found guilty.⁴⁰ The case had started four years

³⁵Thomas More, *A most pleasant, fruitful, and witty work, of the best state of a public weal, and of the new isle called Utopia*, trans. Ralphe Robinson, 1551, ed. Rev. T. F. Dibdin (London: The Shakespeare Press, 1808), 74.

³⁶Jim Sharpe, "Women, witchcraft and the legal process," in *Women, Crime, and the Courts in Early Modern England*, ed. Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 106–24; Oldham, "Pleading the Belly," 8.

³⁷Cockburn, *Calendar of Assize Records: Essex*, 31, 35. Anne Barstow, *Witchcraze* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 134, claims that she was indeed pregnant and executed anyway, but I cannot find any confirmation of that. Apparently Elizabeth Lowys exclaimed before her execution, "Christ, my Christ, if thou be a saviour come down and avenge me of my enemies, or else thou shall not be a saviour," cited in Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1971), 123. See also Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, 117, 118.

³⁸Rosen, *Witchcraft in England*, 182; Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 65. Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, 164, 166, 168. Cockburn's assize records, however, only state that she was found pregnant, not the later order for execution: *Calendar of the Assize Records: Essex*, 2006, 2008, 2029, 2039, 2096.

³⁹Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials*, 33.

⁴⁰*The Most strange and admirable discoverie of the three Witches of Warboys, arraigned, convicted, and executed at the last Assises at Huntington, for the bewitching of the five daughters of Robert Throckmorton, Esquire and divers others person, with sundrie Divelish and grievous torments: And also for the bewitching to death of the Lady Crummwell, the like hath not been heard of in this age* (London: Widdowe Orwin, 1593), no pages. All quotations are from this text. For more on the case, see Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, 62, 65–66, 105–7, 122–25; Rosen, *Witchcraft*, 239–97; R. Trevor Davies, *Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs* (London:

earlier when the daughters of Robert Throckmorton, the wealthiest man in the village of Warboys had begun to have strange fits. The doctors who were called in suspected witchcraft, and the afflicted girls named one of their neighbors, Alice Samuel, a poor older woman of the village. Alice was forced repeatedly to come to their house and eventually to live with them. At first she accused the girls of “wantonnesse”—of making it all up—but after years of being told she was a witch who caused these problems, she confessed to bewitching the children and causing the death of Lady Cromwell, the landlord’s wife, who had paid a sympathy visit to the Throckmortons. When Alice returned to her own home, her husband and daughter were appalled and at their urging she recanted her confession. This so outraged Throckmorton that he had not only the mother arrested but her daughter Agnes as well, and the girls then claimed that she was a far worse witch than her mother was. Though both women were indicted and jailed, Throckmorton bailed Agnes out and forced her to live in the family home where she was constantly questioned and harangued. The spirits the girls said possessed them also told the children to scratch and beat her. At the trial, Alice Samuel, her daughter Agnes, and her husband John, who had also been accused, were all found guilty. Alice Samuel pleaded pregnancy. Since Alice Samuel was quite elderly and clearly past the age of childbearing, the entire court burst out in laughter and the judge told her to give up that plea, but Alice insisted on being examined by a board of matrons. “A Jury of women were empaneled, and sworne to search her: who have up their verdict, that she was not with childe, unlesse (as some saide) it was with the divell.” Another prisoner suggested to Agnes that she also make this plea, which given her age would have been more believable. Just as she had always maintained her innocence to the charge, neither would she attempt to save her life by this means, stating, “It shall never be sayd, that I was both a Witch and a whore.”⁴¹ Mother, father, and daughter were all hanged.

There were a number of cases of witches in Scotland pleading pregnancy in this period as well. In 1624, a commission was established by the Privy Council of Scotland to search for, apprehend, and detain a number of witches, including Isabel Falconer, who was suspected of being a witch, and to have “used sindrie diviliishe practisais aganis /sindrie of our goode subjectis prejudiciall and hurtfull to thair lyves.” There had previously

Methuen and Co., Ltd. 1947), 32–39. Barstow, *Witchcraze*, 193, refers to this case as “another example of class prejudice.” Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy*, 188–90, discusses Alice Samuel’s testimony in terms of silence and language.

⁴¹Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, 66, points out that our source for this is the pamphlet: “This is a suspicious piece of noble eloquence perhaps, but it is not in the interests of the pamphleteer since it presents the witch sympathetically, and thus it may be true.”

been a commission granted against Isobel Falconer and everything had been prepared for her trial, when she “most subtilie and falslie alledgeit, and confidentlie and impudentlie affirmed, that sho wes with chyld, and upoun hat falce infformatioun procured any warrand frome our Counsaill for continewing of hir tryall till sho wer delyverit of hir birthe; quhilk as yitt now after mony yeiris is not donne,” and meanwhile “she continewis in hir divilishe practiises.”⁴²

At the very time that *1 Henry VI* was being performed in London, the English people were also learning about a massive witchcraft scare in Scotland. Large numbers of people were on trial for treason through sorcery in Scotland in 1590–91, and James VI himself was at the center of the trials. The English ambassador Robert Bowes’s letters to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, are filled with the various cases. At this point it is impossible to say exactly what happened. During the course of the trials it was alleged that over three hundred witches had gathered to try to destroy the king through raising storms while James and his bride Anne of Denmark were at sea and by melting his effigy in wax. The witches were accused of indulging in obscene rituals in the church. More than a hundred suspects were examined and a large number were executed.⁴³

James was intensely interested in the trials and in fact at various times took it upon himself to exhort the jurors to convict. By the spring of 1591 it was the king’s impetus that kept the trials continuing. The one where he showed the greatest interest and commitment was that of Barbara Napier, wife of Burgess Archibald Douglas, who was arrested for being part of the conspiracy to encompass James’s death and for the successful murder of Archibald, earl of Angus, through magic. She was known to be a friend of the earl of Bothwell, whom James perceived as a dangerous political enemy. Napier claimed to be with child, which caused James in April 1591 to write to one of his advisors, Sir William Maitland, “Trye by the medicinairis’ [oaths] gif Barbara Napair be with bairne or not. Tak na delaying ansour. Gif ye finde she be not, to the fyre with her presentlie.” But even if she were pregnant, James wanted the full punishment of the law. The jury, in part because of Napier’s pregnancy, was reluctant to convict her and acquitted her of attempting to destroy the king or of being implicated in Angus’s death. They were even reluctant to find her guilty of consulting with witches. Christina Larner suggests that the clause in the 1563 witchcraft act in Scotland that imposed death for merely consulting with witches had never before been enforced, so the jury may well have felt it difficult to find her guilty, which could then lead to her execution. It appears that Napier’s

⁴²*The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland: 1622–1625*, ed. and abr. David Masson (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1896), 13:460–61.

⁴³Christina Larner, “James VI and I and Witchcraft,” in *The Reign of James VI and I*, ed. Alan G. R. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), 79.

connection with Bothwell was what made James feel so vindictive towards her. James was appalled that the jury did not convict Napier and commanded them to return so that he could argue the verdict, stating, "God hath made me a King and judge." But his harangue had no effect: "He was deeply mortified by the presumption of this jury in acquitting a woman he believed to be guilty of treason."⁴⁴ The 1591 pamphlet *Newes from Scotland* said of Napier and another woman arrested with her that until the accusation they were "reputed ... as civill honest women as any that dwelled within the Citie of Edenbrough, before they were apprehended."⁴⁵

So, within a year of the presentation on stage in London of *I Henry VI*, a woman accused of witchcraft did escape conviction and thus execution because of her pregnancy. And in the England of that time many women convicted on a number of capital crimes were able to successfully plead pregnancy. Clearly Shakespeare's audience would have been well aware when Joan made her plea that she was right—she had the law on her side. But they would also have known about other women in sixteenth-century England who were pregnant and were burned to death. These cases appeared in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, commonly known as *The Book of Martyrs*, which was first published in 1563, and went through five more editions in the sixteenth century. Foxe's book was almost as influential as the Bible itself for much of the English population. Many churches had placed *Acts and Monuments* next to the Bible even before 1571, when the upper house of convocation at Canterbury ordered that a copy be installed in every cathedral church and that every member of the church hierarchy from archbishop to resident canon should have one at home available to all who came there. Though the parish churches were not named in this order, many of them also had copies of *Acts and Monuments* for their parishioners to study. Even if people could not read the text, it was copiously illustrated. New editions of Foxe's book were issued in the 1570s and 1580s and the material in it was even more readily available after 1589, when Dr. Timothy Bright published *An Abridgement... for such as through want of leysure, or abilitie, have not the use of so necessary an history*.

⁴⁴*Calendar of State Papers, relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots*, ed. William K. Boyd and Henry W. Meikle (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1936), 10:497, 506, 510, 514–15, 518, 520, 523–25; Lerner, "James VI and I and Witchcraft," 80–83. See also, Godfrey Watson, *Bothwell and the Witches* (London: Robert Hale, 1975), 130–43, and Edward J. Cowan, "Darker Visions of the Scottish Renaissance: the Devil and Francis Stewart," in *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland: Essays in Honour of Gordon Donaldson*, ed. Ian B. Cowan and Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983), 125–40.

⁴⁵*Newes from Scotland (1591)*, ed. G. B. Harrison (London: The Bodley Head, 1924), 11.

Many of the martyrs whose stories Foxe dealt with so movingly were women. Certainly one of the most horrific of all his stories was that of Perotine Massey. Foxe himself was certainly aware of the special nature of this particular example: "Amongst all and singular histories touched in this book before, as they be many pitiful, divers lamentable, some horrible and tragical; so is there none almost either in cruelty to be compared, or so far off from all compassion and sense of humanity, as this merciless fact of the papists, done on the Isle of Guernsey, upon three women and an infant."⁴⁶

The background to the story is the following. In May 1556 a woman named Vincent Gosset stole a goblet and attempted to pawn it with Perotine Massey. Massey lived with her sister, Guillemine Gilbert, and mother, Katherine Cawches, even though Foxe stated that she was married to a man named David Jores, who was known as a Protestant. D. M. Ogier names Jores as one of the Huguenot ministers who had fled to Guernsey during the reign of Edward VI. Once there he met and married Perotine but he had fled to Normandy earlier in Mary's reign, leaving his pregnant wife with her mother.⁴⁷ Massey recognized the goblet and suspected it was stolen; she took it to restore it to its rightful owners but in the subsequent investigation she, her sister, and her mother were all arrested for harboring stolen goods. At their trial their neighbors reported that the three women were neither thieves nor disposed toward evil, but rather lived truly and honestly, as became Christian women. But while on 1 July they were found "not guilty of that they were charged with," it was also discovered that they had not always been obedient to the holy church and had not been attending regularly. They were returned to prison for a new trial. In the trial for heresy on 17 July they were convicted and condemned to be burned to death the following day. At their execution Massey, "who was then great with child," from the shock of the fire gave birth. A man named William House rescued the baby boy and laid him safely on the grass, but the bailiff ordered that the baby be cast back into the fire, where he perished with his mother, grandmother, and aunt, "very pitifully to behold." Foxe admitted that the story is so horrifying that it "will be hardly believed by some," and explained how he had heard the story from witnesses who were there, including Perotine's uncle, Matthew Cawches.

⁴⁶Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 8:226. The entire story runs from 226 to 241. Also see J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 223–35, which is extremely useful and argues the veracity of the story. Another valuable discussion of the Massey case is by Steven Mullaney, "Reforming Resistance: Class, Gender, and Legitimacy in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*," in Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol, *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 235–51.

⁴⁷D. M. Ogier, *Reformation and Society in Guernsey* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1996), 53.



The Guernsey Martyrs, from John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1684 ed.). Reprinted by permission of Love Library, The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Archives/Special Collection.

As part of his evidence, Foxe included a letter of complaint from Cawches to Mary I's commissioners, a submission from those in charge, and Mary's pardon to those who ordered the deaths.⁴⁸

In 1567 Thomas Harding attacked Foxe's representation of the facts of the case. His first line of attack was to suggest that it never happened since Foxe "tolde us in his false martyrologue, a thousand mo lyes then this." But even if Foxe's story was true, the fault lay with Massey herself. Harding accused "prattling parrot Perotine" of heresy, theft, whoredom, and murder. He argued that Perotine, her sister, and her mother were willing accomplices to theft, even though Foxe had declared them vindicated on this charge. Harding goes on to say, besides, that Perotine was a whore, since "of the childe's Father, there is no woorde spoken." If she were not ashamed of being pregnant, she would have pleaded pregnancy to escape punishment. Not having done so, Harding argued, Perotine herself was the actual murderer of her child. Since she "claimed not the benefite of the Lawe, and so now not only like an harlot or Heretique, but like a Murderer went desperatly to the fier, and murdered bothe her selfe, and her childe conceived within her."⁴⁹ This argument is further expounded in 1587 by Cardinal William Allen in his *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*. Allen explains that since Perotine Massey hid her

⁴⁸*Acts and Monuments*, 8:227, 230.

⁴⁹Thomas Harding, *A Rejoindre to M. Jewels Replie against the Sacrifice of the Masse* (1567) (Menston, U.K.: Scolar Press, 1970), 184, 185. For a general discussion of contemporary Catholic response to Foxe, see Glyn Parry, "John Foxe, 'Father of Lyes,' and the Papists," in *John Foxe and the English Reformation*, ed. David Loades (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 295–305.

pregnancy, did not claim “the benefit of her belly,” she alone was responsible for her child’s death. Allen suggests piously, “Almighty God discovered her filth and shame, where she looked for the glory of a saint and of a virgin martyr.” In fact, we have no evidence whatsoever that this was the glory Perotine Massey hoped to attain. It was probably the last thing on her mind.⁵⁰

In his 1570 edition Foxe responded to Harding’s criticisms. Foxe assures his readers that they “have the true narrative of this history,” and continues “but...herein to wonder at master Harding who...seeking by all means to clear the clergy from the spot of cruelty, transferreth the whole blame only upon the women that suffered; but principally upon poor Perotine, whom he specially chargeth with...whoredom and murder.” Foxe assured his readers that Perotine was no whore—she was married. More importantly, how can one call her the murderer of her child, he asked? She did not put herself and the child at risk. She did not “purposely and wittingly thrust herself in jeopardy, to the destruction of her child when she needed not, as pope Joan, when she might have kept her bed, would needs adventure forth in procession, where both she herself, and her infant perished in the open street.” Foxe’s contrast of Massey with Pope Joan, while demonstrating their difference, also ties them together and gives us further evidence of the ease of linking together the charge of inappropriate sexuality and danger. As to the charge that she murdered her child because she did not plead pregnancy, Foxe suggested she did not know the law. Besides, argued Foxe, even if she were ashamed, would shame have kept her from saving her life? Foxe finally concluded, “whatsoever the woman was, she is now gone.” As for Harding, “charity would have judged the best. Humanity would have spared the dead. And if he could not afford her his good word, yet he might have left her cause unto the Lord, which shall judge both her and him.” Even if Massey had pleaded pregnancy we do not know if this might have saved her. As Foxe pointed out, “how is Master Harding sure of this?” Foxe remarked that Lady Jane Grey may well have been pregnant at the time of her execution in 1554 and it did not save her. While this statement has dubious historicity, it makes the execution of the innocent, heroic Jane even more horrific. A more accurate parallel to the Massey case is that of Elizabeth Pepper, also described in Foxe, who was eleven weeks pregnant when she was burned at Stratford. Pepper stated that she knew her judges were aware of her pregnancy but condemned her anyway.⁵¹ Foxe was not the only Protestant appalled by Massey’s fate—or who saw the anti-Catholic propaganda value of the case. William Cecil’s 1586 *The Execution of Justice in*

⁵⁰William Allen, *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 104.

⁵¹Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 8:233, 234, 236, 237, 726.

England related the atrocities committed during Mary's reign including "lamentably destroyed... women, some great with child, [and one] out of whose body the child by fire was expelled alive, and yet also cruelly burned."⁵²

English Protestants of the sixteenth century would have been aghast at the cases in Foxe. But as audience to Shakespeare's play would they have had the same sympathy to a French woman labeled as a witch and whore? Nina Levine finds the ending "complicated and troubling," particularly since an Elizabethan audience might regard York and Warwick as "aspiring noblemen whose interests are clearly against those of the nation at large." Donald Watson, however, argues that the audience's response to Joan "begins and ends with derisive laughter.... The derisive laughter at Joan's expense returns in the unmasking of her final scene... [the] virtuous saint is reduced to revealing her pregnant state to save herself." While Hardin suggests this final scene with Joan "would have greatly amused a mostly male audience," Gabrielle Jackson "wonders what an English audience would have made of... Warwick's call for plenty of faggots and extra barrels of pitch for Joan's stake." She adds, "It is altogether difficult to be sure how an Elizabethan audience might have reacted to Joan's punishment. Opinion on witches in 1591 was by no mean monolithic."⁵³ Nor do we know if it was a mostly male audience. Andrew Gurr suggests that women eagerly came to the theater almost as much as men.⁵⁴

There was a whole range of opinions on witches in 1591. While many were convinced of the reality of women who used supernatural power to harm others, only the decade before Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) had scoffed at those who held such beliefs. The fear of witches seems to have increased by the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the next. There were certainly more women who were put on trial. Still, as Sharpe points out, there was certainly popular skepticism, and "educated people in Elizabethan and early Stuart England were able to hold a number of intellectual positions on witchcraft."⁵⁵ And opinion on Joan of Arc in the sixteenth century, from Polydore Vergil to

⁵²William Cecil, *The Execution of Justice in England*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 20. For more both on Cecil's pamphlet and Allen's in response to it, see Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572–1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 136–39.

⁵³Levine, *Women's Matters*, 45; Donald G. Watson, *Shakespeare's Early History Plays: Politics at Play on the Elizabethan Stage* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 44, 45; Hardin, "Chronicles and Mythmaking in Shakespeare's Joan of Arc," 31; Gabrielle Bernhardt Jackson, "Topical Ideology: Witches, Amazons and Shakespeare's Joan of Arc," *ELR* 18 (1988): 62, 63.

⁵⁴Andrew Gurr, "The Theatre and Society," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor & Stuart Britain*, ed. John Morrill (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 168. See also Richard Levin, "Women in the Renaissance Theatre Audience," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40, 2 (1989): 165–74.

⁵⁵James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England, 1550–1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), 56, 165.

John Stow, was not uniform either. Many of those who argued that she claimed pregnancy were also convinced that it was a desperate ruse to save her life, an attempt the historical Joan never made. At the end of *Henry VI, Part I* the character Joan claims pregnancy and thus allows herself to also be called a harlot. Harding's and Allen's criticism of Perotine Massey echoes in our ears here, as does Alice Samuel's passionate declaration that they might label her a witch but not a whore. Pleading pregnancy saved the lives of many women in early modern England, but it seems, particularly in witchcraft and heresy cases, that the labeling of women as illicitly sexual could also be used to destroy them and their reputations.

Perhaps the greatest irony is that it is not impossible that the actual as opposed to the character Joan could have been pregnant at the time she was burned. As Anne Barstow and Marina Warner argue, she may well have been raped during her time in prison. In the trial to rehabilitate her character twenty-five years after her death, Guillaume Manchon testified that she had several times complained that "one of her guards had tried to rape her." Thomas Marie heard Joan state that "she would rather die than stay any longer in the company of these Englishmen."⁵⁶ If Joan indeed had been sexually assaulted, it could at least theoretically have led to a pregnancy. If we today are uncomfortable with a possibly pregnant character Joan being burned at the end of Shakespeare's play, how much more tragic to consider the experience of the historical nineteen-year-old Joan of Arc, burned to death in 1431, or, less well known but equally horrific, the burning death of Perotine Massey and her infant son in 1556. Massey never pleaded pregnancy. Shakespeare's Joan did, but it didn't save her.

⁵⁶Anne Barstow, *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 115. Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc*, 106; Regine Pernoud, *The Retrial of Joan of Arc: The Evidence at the Trial for Her Rehabilitation, 1450–1456*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1955), 186.

Learning to Be Looked At: The Portrait of [The Artist as a] Young Woman in Agnès Merlet's *Artemisia*

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AGNÈS MERLET'S 1997 FILM *Artemisia*¹ opens with a full-screen, tight close-up of an eye, under a sepia veiling effect that prevents its appearing overly clinical.² The image provides an effective introduction to issues this film about a seventeenth-century woman-artist explores.³ We might expect a film about a visual artist to concern that person's eye. We also expect film, itself a visual medium, to fascinate the eye of the spectator. But rather than simply confirm such expectations, this filmic eye unsettles. First, because of the extremity of the close-up, we see only part of the eye. Then, although it stares directly and fixedly forward, the eye blinks, and the pupil dilates and contracts, reacting to light. Finally, the camera itself is seldom still, adding to the nervousness the image and the somewhat frenzied sound track generate.

Are we then to read this eye (staring directly forward) as that of the surveying *looker*, by which I mean—in the sixteenth-century sense—the viewer, the active agent (the “one who looks”) choosing and controlling what is seen?⁴ Or are we rather to see it (blinking, moving, and agitated) as the eye of the *looker*, someone aware of being looked at or with the potential for being examined? While it flies in the face of conventional

¹I am neither a scholar of Artemisia Gentileschi nor of the cinema; thus I am particularly indebted for advice on this article and for the kindness of colleagues. I would like to thank in particular Peter Brunette, Elizabeth Cohen, Diane Dillon, Claire Farago, Ann ffolliott, Mary D. Garrard, Alison Landsberg, Peter Lukehart, Michele Strah, Ellen Todd, Georgianna Ziegler, and the editors of this gathering.

²After her cataract surgery (perhaps motivated by reasons of malpractice protection), my mother received a video of the procedure. It provides a graphic recording of the five-minute operation, a tight close-up of an eye staring directly forward.

³In one of the more thoughtful reviews of the film, John C. Tibbetts, “Artemisia,” *Film & History* (June 1998) and H-Net Reviews, also noticed the significance of the eye close-up, calling it “a perfect précis for the entire film.” We disagree, however, on how the eye emblemizes what goes on in the film.

⁴I suggest here a parallel with constructions like employer and employee. The usage of *looker* denoting viewer can be found in the *OED*, 1556, J. Heywood, *Spider & Flie* xcii, 181. The *OED* also provides a sixteenth-century meaning for *looker* as “onlooker,” “one who merely looks on, without taking part” (1539 Taverner, *Erasm. Prov.* [1552] 22).

notions of the artist's eye, such an eye serves, in fact, as an effective emblem for the story of a woman artist in early modern Europe. For all women, following the strictures of the honor culture that obtained, were under constant scrutiny: their behavior monitored and apt to be criticized.⁵ My use of the word *looker* to denote someone who looks will, in fact, seem archaic. By the end of the nineteenth century, "viewer" had replaced the earlier usage of *looker*, while "looker" now meant "A person, usually a woman, of particularly pleasing appearance."⁶ The active agent has become just the opposite: a beautiful woman worthy of being looked at. This film, despite the filmmaker's assertions that she articulated the "inner struggle of an artistic voice," in fact, does the same thing, ultimately relegating her artist protagonist (the *looker*) to the more usual female position as the object of someone else's gaze (the *looker*).

* * *

Over the past decade early modern culture has come to the silver screen with a spate of productions of Shakespearean plays,⁷ the Oscar-winning *Shakespeare in Love* (1998),⁸ and a recent efflorescence of films centering upon early modern women: *Queen Margot* (1994),⁹ *Dangerous Beauty* (1998),¹⁰ *Elizabeth* (1999),¹¹ and *Artemisia* (1997).¹² At the time of its 1998 United States premiere, this last film, ostensibly about seventeenth-century Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi, garnered a great deal of comment, not only in the press, but also in more informal venues. A hand-out, "Now that you've seen the film, meet the real Artemisia Gentileschi," prepared by art historian and Artemisia Gentileschi scholar Mary D. Garrard and feminist Gloria Steinem, was distributed at theaters and disseminated on listserves. Adrienne DeAngelis started (and maintains) a web site

⁵Paolo Berdini, "Women under the Gaze: A Renaissance Genealogy," *Art History* 21 (1998): 576, "To be under the gaze is for woman the consequence of the Fall, a form of punishment for that act of transgression."

⁶*OED*, 1893, S. Crane, *Maggie*, v. 41. The *OED* also quotes the *Washington Post*, 5 January 1973, "Sandra Archer, who plays the heroine from the Peace Corps, is such a *looker* that she can't help but make the Quest for Revolutionary Consciousness appear hopelessly glamorized." Such a statement further demonstrates the representational difficulties engendered by a beautiful woman in a position of authority.

⁷The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) lists 60 film and television productions of Shakespeare plays since 1990.

⁸Directed by John Madden, screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard.

⁹Directed by Patrice Chéreau, based upon the novel by Alexandre Dumas père.

¹⁰Directed by Marshall Herskovitz, freely adapted from Margaret Rosenthal's book *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, citizen and writer in sixteenth-century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹¹Directed by Shekhar Kapur, screenplay by Michael Hirst; nominated for Best Picture and other Academy Awards.

¹²*Artemisia* was nominated for four awards, the Golden Hugo, Best Film, Chicago International Film Festival; the César, Best Cinematography and Best Costume Design; Golden Globe: Best Foreign Language Film.

on the film, with links to reviews and related material (<http://dark-wing.uoregon.edu/~acd/site3/Artemisia.html>), as does Tika Yupanqui (http://www.ancientsites.com/~tika_yupanqui/artemisia/movie/htm). Reviews appeared in the film press, and Garrard published a further comment in *Art in America*.¹³ Additionally, the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) facilitated the popular democracy of the web, by providing a forum for self-generated reviews and comment and even a vote.¹⁴

Those commentators critical of the film have correctly pointed out serious problems in the trite, simplistic portrait of a female artist that *Artemisia* presents. Many focused on the historical inaccuracy of the portrayal, justifiably calling into question director and screenwriter Agnès Merlet's interpretation of Artemisia Gentileschi's life. Merlet, a 1982 graduate of the prestigious École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, said that she was inspired to make this film after seeing Artemisia Gentileschi's painting of *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (presumably the Florence, Uffizi version, ca. 1620, because it figures in the film) in class and, replicating an experience common to many students of art history, feeling stunned to learn that a woman had painted this forceful and accomplished work.¹⁵

In this essay I begin with a brief reference to the plot-based criticism of the film and then turn to comment on the cinematography, which, I argue—by drawing upon standard representations of women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works of art—contributes substantially to the problematic portrayal of this woman artist. On almost every occasion when Artemisia is shown making art, the camera work undermines her artistic authority and invariably relegates her to the more usual female position of the model.

* * *

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1652/53) was the first of four children born in Rome to Tuscan painter Orazio Gentileschi and Prudentia Montone.¹⁶ Her mother died when Artemisia was twelve, and Orazio did not remarry. In terms of early modern European society, this created a practical problem (irrespective of any culturally appropriate sense of loss that father or children may have felt, about which we can only speculate). In the honor

¹³Mary D. Garrard, "Artemisia's Trial by Cinema," *Art in America* 86 (1998): 65–69.

¹⁴The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) recorded a total of 158 votes, generating an average response of 7.2 out of 10 (or a C-).

¹⁵Merlet also has a diploma from the French film school IDHEC in 1986. She has received various awards for her earlier films.

¹⁶Biographical details about Artemisia's life can be found in Elizabeth Cropper, "Gentileschi, Artemisia" in *Dictionary of Women Artists*, ed. Delia Gaze (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 1:575–80; Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Baroque Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), and R. Ward Bissell, *Artemisia Gentileschi and the Authority of Art* (University Park, Penn.: Penn State University Press, 1999). Gentileschi had three younger brothers.

culture that obtained, an unprotected girl's chastity—the prime measure of a woman's virtue—was invariably suspect and, therefore, needed shielding. While her father, a painter in oils, worked in his studio at home, all was well. Artemisia was protected and, like other early modern women who showed artistic promise, learned about art from her father.¹⁷ When Artemisia was about 18, however, Orazio received a prestigious commission to undertake frescoes at the Quirinal palace (a papal residence). This medium required painting on location, which would, of necessity, take him away from the house. Orazio, therefore, needed to provide for Artemisia's "protection" so, in 1611, he seemingly arranged for a woman called Tuzia, who was their neighbor, to move in with the family and chaperone his daughter.¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, Agostino Tassi, her father's co-worker in the fresco project, raped the young painter in her house. Elizabeth Cohen, who has drawn from the archival evidence of trials before the papal magistrates to illuminate the world of women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome, has recently set this event into its historical context.¹⁹ As she demonstrates, seventeenth-century law did not consider rape a crime of violence against an individual, nor were its potentially traumatic effects on the victim understood in such terms.²⁰ Rather rape was a matter of honor: the rape of a virgin, in particular, compromising the woman and her family. Tassi was brought to trial and jailed, but only as the result of a suit put forward by Orazio about a year later. The trial transcripts record the sometimes conflicting testimony of Artemisia, Tassi, and several witnesses.²¹ Artemisia claimed that, scheming with Tuzia, Tassi took her by force and she fought back with a knife.

After the rape, however, Artemisia continued to have sex with Tassi because, she said, he promised to marry her, and that would have reinstated her honor in the public eye. Orazio too probably hoped for this "solution." But Tassi had not revealed that he was already married. At the trial he admitted no wrongdoing and, in fact—to diminish the effects of his action—claimed that Artemisia wasn't a virgin. Witnesses supported

¹⁷Young boys whose fathers were not artists received their training by being sent away from home as apprentices to established masters. Sofonisba Anguissola's father was not a painter but he arranged for her to receive instruction.

¹⁸Cropper, "Gentileschi, Artemisia," 576.

¹⁹I would like to thank Elizabeth Cohen for generously sharing with me her profound knowledge of the Roman court system. For a contextual analysis of rape in seventeenth-century Roman law, see her "The Trials of Artemisia Gentileschi: A Rape as History," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31 (2000): 47–76. She argues that there are only two occasions when cases of rape receive adjudication: *stupro* (forcible defloration of a virgin) and adultery. For more on Roman trials generally see Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

²⁰Cohen, "Trials," 59–60. The trial began in March 1612 and lasted for seven months.

²¹Cohen, "Trials," discusses the identities witnesses sought to create by such testimony in the arena of the court.

both positions. Instead of delving into this complexity, however, Merlet took the easy way out. Jurisprudence employed torture to test the veracity of testimony when “he said/she said” versions remained at odds. In Tassi’s trial Artemisia was tortured, not he, and she did not recant. In the film, however, Merlet contrived a scene in which Tassi watches Artemisia’s torture and then, because he can’t stand his “love object’s” suffering, confesses. Her torture enables him to play the hero, rather than—in conformity with Roman legal theory—confirm that she spoke the truth.²² Tassi was jailed and, thanks to new evidence unearthed and analyzed by Alexandra LaPierre and Patrizia Cavazzini, we now know that he was sentenced to five years’ exile, but evaded punishment, thanks to his powerful patrons.²³

Artemisia did eventually marry (not Tassi), had four children, then separated from her husband, and lived and worked in Florence, Rome, Naples, and in England.²⁴ She achieved professional recognition on a par with her male peers, having been appointed a member of the Florentine artistic academy, the *Accademia del Disegno*, in 1616, and having executed work for, among other patrons, the grand dukes of Tuscany (as did Pietro da Cortona), Queen Henrietta Maria of England (as did van Dyck), and Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina, Sicily (as did Rembrandt).²⁵ The number of works currently attributed to her hovers at around fifty.

Director Merlet, who also wrote the screenplay in collaboration with Christine Miller and Patrick Amos, chose to focus on the period around 1610–12, when Artemisia painted her earliest works and when she was raped.²⁶ This conforms to the pattern of the other recent films about early modern women. *Dangerous Beauty*, *Elizabeth*, *Queen Margot*, and *Artemisia* all focus on their protagonists’ youth and sexuality. As others have pointed out, what documentary evidence we have about the life of Artemisia Gentileschi relates overwhelmingly to the rape trial. It remains a matter of debate how much this experience, as it has been interpreted,

²²I’d like to thank Mary Garrard for her insights regarding this matter.

²³Alexandra LaPierre, *Artemisia: Un duel pour l’immortalité* (Paris, 1998), and Patrizia Cavazzini, *Palazzo Lancelotti ai Coronari* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1998), 175–76, cited by Elizabeth Cohen, “Trials,” 49.

²⁴A marriage was arranged for her to Pietro Antonio di Vincenzo Stiatatesi, 29 November 1612.

²⁵Bissell, *Artemisia Gentileschi*, further characterizes her career and patronage. Artemisia also worked for Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, she was promoted by Cassiano del Pozzo, and she sold work to the duke of Alcalá, to the “sister of the king of Spain (1630),” to Charles Lorraine, duke of Guise, to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, to Francesco I d’Este and for the king of Spain for the Buen Retiro.

²⁶The Miramax credits list provides the following, “Original screenplay by Agnès Merlet, with the collaboration of Christine Miller; Adaptation and Dialogue, Agnès Merlet and Patrick Amos.”

affected her artistic production at the time and for the rest of her life.²⁷ The film's plot, significantly, links her emergence as an artist to what Merlet recasts as her sexual awakening, calling it "A Double Initiation: The Art of Painting and the Art of Loving."²⁸ Merlet portrays Agostino unequivocally as her teacher/lover.²⁹

To provide a narrative framework to link the documented vestiges of the painter's life, Merlet, "in fleshing out [sic] Artemisia's character," looked rather to literary heroines.³⁰ "I saw from the beginning that she was a great romantic heroine," Merlet said. "She reminded me of a character that the Brontës might have created or Thomas Hardy. Her destiny is to learn about passion in a painful way."³¹ Merlet, thus, projected the plot of a nineteenth-century heroine of romantic novels—that is, willful girl escapes the clutches of her father to follow her creative destiny; tragic lover helps her gain her "freedom," but they cannot marry—onto that of a seventeenth-century woman/artist. The film, moreover, verges on the full-blown grand opera of the nineteenth century. Aided by the Verdian strings of the overture, the plot resembles an admixture of *Rigoletto* and *Tosca*.³² Such an anachronistic conceptualization begs all sorts of questions: primarily, why impose such fictional models when we have historical evidence about Artemisia herself and about the social milieu in which she lived and worked?

Merlet's acknowledged historical sources include Eva Menzio, who transcribed many of the trial documents, and Germaine Greer's study of women artists across time, *The Obstacle Race*.³³ Greer's characterization certainly contributes to the romantic narrative. On the set, moreover, Merlet must have engendered a climate of ignoring history for myth, for the actress who played Artemisia, Valentina Cervi, when interviewed, attested to having read about her character, but then having largely dismissed such research in favor of what she claims as a direct artist-to-artist

²⁷Cohen, "Trials," argues that too many presentist interpretations of rape have affected the interpretation of Artemisia's paintings.

²⁸"Production Notes" from publicity packet distributed by Miramax-Zoë, unpaginated.

²⁹Antonietta dell'Agli, "Tassi [Buonamici], Agostino," *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Shoaf Turner (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996), 30:355–56.

³⁰"Production Notes" from publicity packet distributed by Miramax-Zoë, in section "A Double Initiation," unpaginated.

³¹"Production Notes" from publicity packet distributed by Miramax-Zoë, in section "Artemisia Meets Modern Times," unpaginated.

³²*Rigoletto* in that it involves a widower concerned for his daughter Gilda's honor; *Tosca* in that Artemisia behaves like the character who would sing "Vissi d'Arte" more than the more modest Gilda. Krishna Levy composed the score for *Artemisia*.

³³Germaine Greer, "The Magnificent Exception," in *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979), 189–207. Eva Menzio, ed., *Artemisia Gentileschi/Agostino Tassi: Atti di un processo per stupro* (Milan: Edizioni delle Donne, 1981).

intuition (completely ignoring what mediates such experience for her): "Books merely tell us what others think of her [Artemisia], but in her paintings I could feel her emotions, how she would react in each moment."³⁴ Such naive essentialist claims have produced a film that clings to a decontextualized myth of the "artist" as someone [male] driven by a post-Romantic understanding of sex and passion.

Granted it is difficult to make a story about a woman-artist simply by grafting a female protagonist onto the male master plot of the artist's life.³⁵ The Italian artist and historian Giorgio Vasari perfected the story line of the Renaissance artist's life in his collection of biographies of individual artists published in 1550 and 1568. These *Lives* (biographies of heroized individuals) draw their plot structure from several literary genres, including epic.³⁶ Although there are variations, in this enduring master-narrative of art history it is the artist's singular genius that eventually propels him to surpass his master. This master plot/plot of mastery (adopted as well by those writers succeeding Vasari who wrote on seventeenth-century artists) is still alive and well and informing the practice of art history.³⁷ In fact the rivalry model was not limited to the master-pupil relationship; it was the governing metaphor of art in the early modern period, based upon the *paragone* (comparison), that was played out in several categories of relationship: between pupil and master, between artists, between art forms (for example painting and poetry), and ultimately between art and nature.

As Fredrika Jacobs makes clear, Vasari and his contemporaries employed different, distinctly female models to describe and evaluate women artists and art by women: models like the procreative one ("If women know so well how to make living men, what marvel is it that those

³⁴"Production Notes" from publicity packet distributed by Miramax-Zoë, in section "Casting Artemisia," unpaginated.

³⁵The *locus classicus* of this argument can be found in Linda Nochlin's pioneering, "Why have there been no great women artists?" *Art news* 69 (1970–71): 22–45 and 62–71. Ward Bissell in his otherwise admirable recent work on Artemisia stated that his approach to her was tempered from his desire not to engage in feminist work but rather to situate her simply as an artist. What he chooses to ignore with such a claim is the gendering of the very term artist. It is impossible to study Artemisia Gentileschi simply as an "artist," as if that term were ever gender neutral.

³⁶See Patricia Rubin, "What Men Saw: Vasari's Life of Leonardo da Vinci and the Image of the Renaissance Artist," *Art History* 13(1990): 34–46, and Corine Schleif, "The Roles of Women in Challenging the Canon of 'Great Master' Art History," in *Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Adele Seeff (Newark, Delaware: The University of Delaware Press, 1998), 74–92. For insights on Vasari, thanks also to Leonard Barkan and the 1993 Folger Institute seminar he directed, "The Language and History of the Arts: Vasari and his Tradition."

³⁷Most introductory art history survey books (e.g. Janson) retain a Vasarian structure. So does Frederick Hartt's *History of Italian Renaissance Art*. See also Sheila Follitt, "Putting Women into the Picture: Gender and Art History in the Classroom," in *Attending to Early Modern Women*, 278–96.

who wish are also so well able to make them in painting?”) that, ironically, keep women out of the male-only master-pupil genealogy.³⁸ Merlet’s plot situates Artemisia between two male artist-rivals, her father-teacher and her rapist-teacher. There are times in the film when the young Artemisia makes claims that she will surpass her teachers, but in terms of the action, she rather leaves the authority of one male teacher for that of another. Even when it is clear at the end of the film that she and Tassi cannot marry, and Artemisia tells her father that the rape experience has hardened her and prepared her for the realities of life, she still hears Tassi’s voice when she begins to try to paint.

Now I shall turn to an analysis of the way in which the cinema itself works to present this woman-artist as the subject of an artwork, rather than its maker. While others have concentrated their critiques on the script, I shall argue here that the camera work, by Benoît Delhomme, further plots Artemisia into stereotype. A publicity photograph distributed by Miramax and captioned “Director Agnès Merlet on location for *Artemisia*” shows her at work, looking out at and holding up her hands to place within a frame, the object of her gaze, in this case congruent with the viewer (fig. 1). On her right is, presumably, the [unidentified] cinematog-



Figure 1. Director Agnès Merlet on location for *Artemisia*.
Photo: Umberto Montiroli. Miramax-Zoë.

rapher Benoît Delhomme, looking out from behind his camera, in an arrangement reminiscent of self-portraits like that of Velázquez in *Las Meninas*, where he stands beside his easel and looks out at the viewer, who is simultaneously in the position of his subject.

³⁸Fredrika H. Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially chapter 3, “(Pro)creativity,” 27–63. In sixteenth-century thought, drawing from antiquity, in procreation men provided the form and women merely the matter. Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women’s Self-Portraits* (New York: Henry N. Abrahms, Inc., 1998), 28, refers to this same passage.

As the director/screenwriter confirms her having drawn inspiration from nineteenth-century literature, the cinematographer acknowledges as well his inspiration from works of art. Delhomme, primitivist painter and cinematographer as well of *The Winslow Boy* (1999) and other films, was quoted recently as saying that he looked at art to gain insight into the worlds he portrays.³⁹ The look of *The Winslow Boy* is informed, he says, from a study of works of John Singer Sargent. Other cinematographers have consciously or unconsciously, admittedly or not, done the same thing for films set in the early modern era. Scenes from *The Return of Martin Guerre*, for example, resonate with overtones from depictions of French peasants by the brothers LeNain and other images gleaned from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painters, and Eric Rohmer's *Marquise d'O* is filled with references to Greuze and other eighteenth-century painters.⁴⁰ Delhomme admits, in the case of *Artemisia*, to having been inspired by the work of Caravaggio, as was Artemisia Gentileschi herself. He must also have looked closely at portraits by artists like Dürer, who would create tiny highlights on the eyes of his subjects indicating the reflection of specific objects, like a window.⁴¹ In the eye scene at the beginning of *Artemisia*, in fact, we see candles reflected on that eye's surface.

While useful in creating an atmosphere suggestive of the early seventeenth century (because this is how it seems to us) what other effects does drawing inspiration from sixteenth- or seventeenth-century paintings have on this portrayal of the life of Artemisia Gentileschi? This is not the space to rehearse the entire history of debate about the theory of the "gaze," but I refer to it here in order to consider the problem of representing a woman artist when employing models from seventeenth-century painting, which embody the "male gaze."⁴² In a recent consideration of the implications of this notion for Renaissance art, Paolo Berdini argued that "As man is the subject of the look, woman is the object of the gaze, two complementary positions that constitute identity in the field of vision."⁴³ Such a formation has implications not just for gender, but also sets these up as opposing positions that one person cannot simultaneously occupy, even though, twenty-five years after the appearance of Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," highly influential in defining representa-

³⁹Laura Winters, "A Risk-Taking Perfectionist behind the Camera," *New York Times* (5 December 1999): 36. Delhomme's credits also include *The Scent of Green Papaya*, *Un Air de Famille*, *When the Cat's Away*, *The Loss of Sexual Innocence*, and the recent *Miss Julie*.

⁴⁰Another web site, Craig Eliason's "Art History Goes to the Movies," <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~eliason/ahgttm.htm>, chronicles such things.

⁴¹Dürer's *Self-Portrait as Christ* (Munich: Alte Pinakotek) and his portrait of *Hieronymus Holzschner* (Berlin: Staatliche Museum) both display this quality.

⁴²Paolo Berdini, "Women under the Gaze: A Renaissance Genealogy," *Art History* 21(1998): 565–90.

⁴³Berdini, "Women under the Gaze," 566.

tion in terms of the presumably male-gendered gaze, we acknowledge more fluid relationships with what we see.⁴⁴ Rather than assume an essential male gaze, postmodern notions of subjectivity present different opportunities for spectators to project and identify with what is seen. In other words, in a particular situation, spectators of either sex may assume male or female subject positions.

Whoever is responsible for the vision inherent in this film (and I do not want to speculate on intentionality or the respective gender expectations of a female director and a male cinematographer), there are moments in *Artemisia* in which the viewer sees and identifies with Artemisia Gentileschi as the owner of the artist's sovereign gaze, such as when we see her standing erect as she sizes up a young, awkwardly naked man, posing for her sketch (fig. 2). More often, however, at the very moment when she is shown practicing her art (when she generates the gaze), the film all too quickly moves to reposition Artemisia as the object of someone else's gaze. Gaze theory, as originally articulated, is, therefore, doubly germane to an analysis of this film with its acknowledged use of seventeenth-century paintings as inspiration for the look.⁴⁵ I shall consider two particular cases: both center on artistic practice.

Practically at the start of the film (before the main title), we see the young Artemisia drawing herself.⁴⁶ She does this in secret to escape the prying glances of the authorities in an invented convent school.⁴⁷ Such a setting for the young Artemisia Gentileschi is consistent with Merlet's vision of her as a Jane Eyre-like romantic heroine. Merlet stages Artemisia's self-study as a stolen moment (but, significantly, with the audience let in as voyeurs), a bit of private rebellion away from those who would discourage her incipient artistic interest, manifest in her (improper) interest in the body. The scene begins with her on her bed wearing (and partially removing) her chemise. She takes a small oval mirror and moves it and herself around to examine (and display to the viewer) various parts of her body—shoulder, chest, and leg—with the aid of a candle. She then sets the mirror against a pillow and draws herself.

The mirror, of course, is emblematic of the artist's mimetic practice, but it was also practical and many artists (e.g. Alberti and Leonardo) advo-

⁴⁴Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (originally in *Screen*, 1975) in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14–26.

⁴⁵Much of this discussion is informed by the excellent synthetic article by Margaret Olin, "Gaze" in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 208–19.

⁴⁶Miramax provided no still for this scene.

⁴⁷Cropper, "Gentileschi, Artemisia," 576, mentions Orazio's "proposal that she [Artemisia] become a nun." This would have obviated the problem of dealing with a motherless daughter.



Figure 2. Valentina Cervi in Agnès Merlet's *Artemisia*. Photo: Umberto Montiroli. Miramax-Zöe.

cated its use for a variety of purposes. The mirror served in particular for depicting oneself, whether for studies or finished self-portraits.⁴⁸ We have no evidence that Artemisia drew herself at all; but if she had, she would not have been the only artist to do so.⁴⁹ At its most basic, the practice of drawing oneself provided an economical and expedient way to study the body (knowledge of the male body was considered fundamental to artistic practice) and probably many artists did it. The sixteenth-century German artist Albrecht Dürer made several drawings of himself and acknowledged

⁴⁸Heinrich Schwarz, "Schiele, Dürer, and the Mirror," *The Art Quarterly* 30 (1967): 217.

⁴⁹Bellori, a seventeenth-century art critic, wrote of Caravaggio that he was too poor to hire models so that he drew himself. See also Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves*, 26, about artists' depicting themselves.

the use of a mirror.⁵⁰ He inscribed one portrait drawing: “This I fashioned after myself out of a mirror in the year 1484 when I was still a child.”⁵¹ Later, in 1513, as a more developed artist, he drew his own left hand, then analyzed its dimensions, and used the result in his systematic studies of proportions.⁵² In fact there are no extant drawings by Artemisia or her father.⁵³ Somewhat ironically, therefore, in 1625 another artist, Pierre Dumonstier le Neveu, portrayed Artemisia’s frilly-cuffed raised right hand (London, British Museum) wielding a paintbrush and inscribed the drawing with fulsome praise, not of the beauty of her hand itself, but rather of the beauty that it could render.⁵⁴

The more highly finished self-portrait often employed the fiction of the artist looking in the mirror. In *De Claris Mulieribus*, Boccaccio provided a biography of Marcia, an ancient woman artist who composed her self-portrait by looking in the mirror, and the episode was illustrated in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts of that text. Although a mirror does not appear in the portrait itself, sixteenth-century Italian painter Sofonisba Anguissola (like Dürer), inscribed the small portrait of her holding an anagram of her father’s name (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) with the claim that it had been “painted from a mirror with her own hand.”⁵⁵ Another sixteenth-century Italian woman painter, Lavinia Fontana, produced a self-portrait with a mirror.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most famous early modern self-portrait involving the looking glass is that by the young Parmigianino (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum), made to resemble a convex mirror; this work, however, is not a study, but a theorized tour-de-force intended to impress.⁵⁷

But while there is a tradition of the self-portrait using the device of the mirror, there is an important difference between those portraits and the

⁵⁰Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), passim, discusses these drawings in detail.

⁵¹Koerner, *Moment*, 47.

⁵²Koerner, *Moment*, 156–57, where he notes Dürer’s making his own hand exemplary of his ideal in these proportion studies.

⁵³Both of whom worked, presumably, in the Caravaggesque *alla prima* mode of painting directly on the canvas. Artemisia, however, was a member of the Florentine *Accademia del Disegno*, an institution premised on the fundamental quality of *Disegno* so that it is hard to believe that she didn’t draw. I want to thank Peter Lukehart for his insights on seventeenth-century artistic practice.

⁵⁴Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 195, and Mary D. Garrard, *Female Hero*, 64. This too is a topos. Koerner, *Moment*, 156, discusses Dürer’s hand as the creator of beauty.

⁵⁵Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 203, SOPHONISBA ANGUISSOLA VIR[GO] IPSIUS MANU EX [S]PECULO DEPICTAM CREMONAE.

⁵⁶The tradition continues to the twentieth century, the most famous such example being that of Norman Rockwell.

⁵⁷Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 133–37.

way in which Delhomme and Merlet present Artemisia's examination and drawing of herself in the film. Their portrayal presents us with a seminude Artemisia looking at herself in order to sketch. The drawings of hers that we are shown resulting from this study are not complete portraits, but studies of parts of her anatomy.⁵⁸ Here too their work fits right into Mulvey's gendered categorizations in that her body is presented in parts, both in the film itself and in the resulting sketches.

There is, in fact, one example of an early modern nude self-portrait, Dürer's of 1503 (Weimar: Staatliche Kunstsammlung).⁵⁹ Joseph Koerner has noted how the artist represents himself in three-quarter length, with his locks pulled back in a hairnet, and shifts attention away from the usual focus of self-portraiture—his face and hands—to what he calls “his naked and exposed private body.”⁶⁰ In these images, significantly, Dürer faces the viewer, and, even when nude, retains some authority—because he stands. Our glimpse into the filmic Artemisia's self-study, however, shows her unaware of our presence, as she intently poses, for herself and the viewer.

Not only is the experience of viewing her at work not similar to self-portraits; it also does not conform to contemporary depictions of the artist's studio, where clothed apprentices sit in chairs around a table sketching after casts. Now of course part of Merlet's staging underscores the fact that Artemisia, by virtue of her gender, was excluded from such places of organized study. But recall that, in fact, she learned her art in her father's studio. In the film, however, her gratuitous secret study provides views of her entire body, or its parts, on her bed, bathed in candlelight—and thus recalls another painting tradition, that of women simply looking at themselves. Some of these include a mirror, in subjects like “Venus at her Toilette” (the mirror also serves as an attribute of Venus), so Artemisia's staging reminds the knowledgeable viewer of depictions of nude or seminude women contemplating themselves in the mirror, like those by Bellini (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), Titian (Paris, Louvre or Washington, National Gallery), Rubens (Vaduz: Prince of Liechtenstein), Annibale Carracci (Washington, National Gallery), or Velázquez (London: National Gallery).⁶¹ Therefore, when confronted with an image of a woman looking into a mirror the viewer, prepared by the image tradition,

⁵⁸One of these sketches omits her head but depicts her shoulder with drapery pulled away from her breast. It resembles details from certain Venetian allegorical portraits of women.

⁵⁹Illustrated in Koerner, *Moment*, fig. 120. Women would do nude self-portraits only in the twentieth century. See Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves*, 139ff.

⁶⁰Koerner, *Moment*, 239, notes further that this drawing displays “the body with a frankness that is without antecedent or successor within the western tradition until this century.”

⁶¹See, for example, Rona Goffen, “Bellini's *Nude with Mirror*,” *Venezia Cinquecento: Studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 1 (1991): 185–99.

sees her activity not as that of an artist, but rather as someone concerned for her looks and preparing to receive a male visitor. In others of these images allegory often kicks in, the woman's mirror gazing alluding to the vice of vanity.⁶²

As the camera glances over Artemisia's body, it does not always show the mirror. Thus this scene engages at the same time yet another subject, one which features a nude female without a mirror, but looking at her own body bathed in candlelight, e.g. Caravaggesque works on the nocturnal "Flea Hunt" theme.⁶³ In fact, John F. Moffitt's description of Gerard Honthorst's *Merry Flea Hunt* (Basel, Kunstmuseum) and of Georges de la Tour's *La Femme à la Puce/The Flea Catcher* (Nancy, Musée Historique Lorrain) could, in fact, just as aptly apply to the Artemisia-drawing-herself scene in the Merlet film: "we voyeur-like, eavesdrop upon the boudoir of a voluptuous, solitary maiden seated upon a rumpled bed and barely clad in a clinging peignoir ... in which (Honthorst) a woman pulls back the bedclothes or (Georges de la Tour) sits by the light of the candle to inspect herself."⁶⁴ This subject has, in fact, been related to classical and French erotic poetry on the topic of the nocturnal flea, which has unimpeded access to the female body. Moffitt concludes his article on the literary meaning of the "amorous flea" by relating the artist's task to that of the flea: "the painter takes on the role of the ... flea. The color-daubed tip of the painter's brush becomes the microcosmic amorous adventurer, scaling the breathtaking scenes of the swelling hills and dales of his recumbent mistress's roseate body."⁶⁵ In neither of these prototypes is the woman's self-scrutiny connected with her own artistic endeavor, but rather with her being looked at by others. Because of the representational tradition, the combination of her being nude, in bed, using a mirror, and lit by a candle, robs Artemisia finally of whatever artistic authority she might possess.

⁶²Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 33, citing B. Goldberg, *The Mirror and Man* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985). There are other categories of pictures featuring women looking at mirrors, e.g. Paulus Moreelse, *Allegory of Vanity* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum) and images of Mary Magdalene, such as several versions by Georges de La Tour, e.g. (Washington: National Gallery of Art). Melancholy, an important feature of the artistic temperament generally denied to women, requires an introspective female figure for its iconography. See Fredrika Jacobs, "Melancholia: A Case Study," in *Renaissance Virtuosa*, 64–84, and Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholy: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

⁶³Other works on this theme include The Candlelight Master, *Girl Catching Fleas*, ca. 1630 (Rome: Galleria Doria Pamphili), and Paulus Bor, *Young Woman Searching for Fleas* (The Hague: Museum Bredius).

⁶⁴John F. Moffitt, "La Femme à la Puce: The Textual Background of Seventeenth-Century Painted 'Flea Hunts,'" *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser 6, 110 (1987): 99; Barry Wind, "Close Encounters of the Baroque Kind: Amatory Paintings by Terbrugghen, Baburen, and La Tour," *Studies in Iconography* 4 (1978): 115–24.

⁶⁵John F. Moffitt, "La Femme à la Puce," 102.

Later in the film *Artemisia* has begun lessons with Tassi. He introduces his young pupil to an optical device—a grid of strings suspended horizontally and vertically in a frame—used to translate what is viewed to what is depicted. This grid recurs at several subsequent moments in the film. The device, a lattice of strings called a *velo/a*, is mentioned by Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci.⁶⁶ While a mimetic imperative drove the practice of art in the early modern era, theories about how it might be achieved varied. In the fifteenth century, stemming from an attempt to be more scientific about their practice, artists sought to give their art a rational (ergo mathematical) basis. Tools were devised to facilitate artistic practice that regarded the painted surface/picture plane as a window to be looked through to see the world that artists created. A gridded frame permitted them to replicate more precisely what they saw in each square through transcription to similar squares drawn on the surface upon which they worked.

A well-known sixteenth-century woodcut illustration by Dürer (made for his how-to book on the mathematical practice of art) shows a male artist looking through such a grid at a seminude female model reclining before him (fig. 3). The text accompanying this illustration describes the



Figure 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Draughtsman Drawing a Nude*, 1538. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

practice, and includes the following: “Then place the object [in this case, of course, a female model] to be drawn a good distance away. Move it or bend it as you like ... so as to please you.”⁶⁷ If you try to put yourself into the position of the artist, you can imagine the view of the female model that you would have, as several art historians have noted, and as will be treated below.

⁶⁶Thanks to Clare Farago for clarifications on these points. Alberti described a similar concept, the *velo*, comprised of a more subtle textile. See Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 171, and Mary Pardo, “Veiling the *Venus of Urbino*,” in *Titian's The Venus of Urbino*, ed. Rona Goffen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 108–28.

⁶⁷Albrecht Dürer, *The Painter's Manual: A Manual of Measurement of Lines, Areas, and Solids by Means of Compass and Ruler* (1538), trans. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Abaris Books, Inc., 1977).

In the film, Tassi instructs Artemisia in the use of various optical instruments.⁶⁸ Then they go outdoors and, she, used to working indoors and close to her subject matter, claims she cannot see anything worthy of painting, while Tassi tells her that the “world is vast” and proceeds to try to teach her, we could say, to adopt a male gaze (the ability to identify with figures positioned outdoors in landscape and in action).⁶⁹ The grid is set up to frame a view of ocean and sky. At first we see both teacher and pupil on the land side (where the artist would normally stand), but then Tassi tells Artemisia to close her eyes, and he describes what she’ll see when she opens them (“the sea pushes at the horizon...”). At the conclusion of his narration, he has moved to the other side of the frame. We see her through the grid as she opens her eyes and “sees,” or at least articulates what he’s told her to see. His description becomes her vision. And he has assumed the position of the artist and she the model.

I was reminded here of the narrative created by the installation of the National Gallery of Art’s first ever one-woman exhibition in its fifty-year history; that, in 1987, devoted to nineteenth-century French painter Berthe Morisot. The first painting confronting the viewer entering the exhibition was Manet’s *Le Repos: Portrait of Berthe Morisot* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design), not a work by the artist herself. The initial impression, then, was that of another—more canonical—artist’s representation of the woman artist as model. Only after taking this in did one turn to examine Morisot’s own works. Having been duly “framed” by a superior masculine artist—Morisot’s own production was, even if unwittingly, prejudiced by a museum so committed to the canon that it could not see her otherwise.⁷⁰

To return to Merlet’s film, the gridded frame recurs at two other points in the film. First, during the rape trial, when Artemisia visits Tassi in jail. She inquires if his cell has a window and, if so, what he sees from it. He begins to describe the landscape (“two hills...”), using the sort of artistic-poetic language he had employed earlier, and she closes her eyes. The camera then moves to the view from the cell window, which is seen through a grid of iron bars. The artificial gridded frame appearing in Dürer’s “how-to” book has its window-based equivalent in a contemporary treatise on the practice

⁶⁸These conform to artistic practice as described by scholars like Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art*, and, lately, by artist David Hockney, as related by Lawrence Wechsler, “The Looking Glass,” *The New Yorker* (31 January 2000): 65–75.

⁶⁹Olin, “Gaze,” 211.

⁷⁰Shortly after the Morisot exhibition the National Gallery held a one-person exhibition of Georgia O’Keefe. Apparently there were discussions about mounting a simultaneous and “complementary” exhibition of Alfred Stieglitz’s portrait photographs of O’Keefe, many of which depicted the artist/model in the nude.

of perspective by Johann II von Pfalz-Simmeren.⁷¹ It contains an illustration of a young draftsman transcribing the landscape he sees through a reticulated window onto a gridded surface.⁷² However, in the film the gridded window serves to intensify the mythmaking rather than to illustrate artistic practice, for it replays a prototype from the life of the ur-Romantic artist Vincent van Gogh, whose expressionistic vision, *The Starry Night* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art), was painted from the barred window of his cell in the mental hospital at St. Rémy.

The gridded frame makes a final appearance at the end of the film. Artemisia breaks into Tassi's studio and takes it outdoors. She sets up the frame facing the sea, as Tassi had originally done. We are behind her, looking with her through the grid as she makes adjustments and ponders her potential subject matter. But then the camera switches position and we view her, like a model rather than an artist, through the squares of the frame. While on the "model" side, she bends over to reposition it and, as she does so, the camera catches a privileged perspective view of her cleavage (fig. 4). Then we return to a position behind her as she recites Tassi's description of his view from his jail cell ("two hills...") while we view the ocean.)



Figure 4. Valentina Cervi in Agnès Merlet's *Artemisia*. Photo: Umberto Montiroli. Miramax-Zöe.

⁷¹Johann II von Pfalz-Simmeren, *Eyn schön nützlich Büchlein under Underweisung der Kunst des Messens, mit dem Zirckel, Richtscheidt, oder Linial* ... Simmern, 1531. Facsimile edition, ed. Trude Aldrian. *Instrumentaria artium*, 4 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1970).

⁷²James Elkins, *The Poetics of Perspective* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 51.

Although we see her initially using the device to size up the world to produce an image, our view *with* her is quickly transformed to a view *of* her through the squares. Artemisia almost assumes the position of the female model in Dürer's famous woodcut. She is thereby returned to the more conventional location for a female as model in the picture seen/made by someone else rather than the originator of the image. Moreover, although Artemisia stands, unlike Dürer's recumbent model seen through the grid, nevertheless the cinematographer's gaze is directed right at her chemise-less cleavage as Dürer's artist's gaze had been directed at his model's sex. The final impression of Merlet's film is not of Artemisia as the "looker" but rather as the "lookee." Once again, her being on view—her body constantly scrutinized—undermines her being taken seriously as the image-maker.⁷³

Dürer's woodcut image of the female model under the methodical scrutiny of the new Renaissance artist has been employed frequently to serve as an uncomplicated illustration of scientifically based artistic practice in art history books, and it has even served as the cover for Joshua Taylor's influential primer *Learning to Look*, an introduction to visual analysis, first published in 1957 (fig. 5). That book was intended, as its author

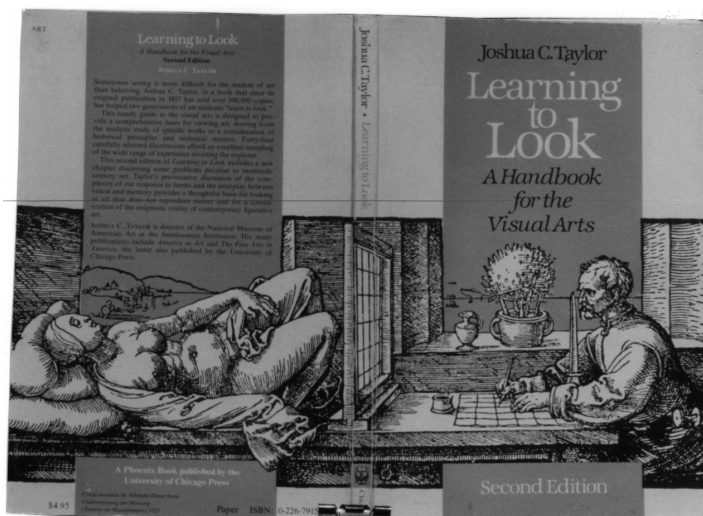


Figure 5. Cover design for Joshua C. Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*. By permission of the University of Chicago Press.

⁷³It may be tangential, but I cannot resist articulating an additional parallel. In this sequence we see Artemisia through the grid in a close-up in which she positions her hands to further define her frame of vision. This recalls Merlet's own position (fig. 1) in the publicity still. While Artemisia frames her view accompanied by Tassi's voice-over description, Merlet frames her view accompanied by Delhomme looking out from behind his camera.

states, to teach a basic appreciation of art. Employing that image for the cover, it also teaches about gender roles in artistic practice.

It was only in the 1970s that the Dürer began to be deconstructed and, just as it appeared uncomplicatedly before, it now appears as frequently to illustrate points about gender, power, and representation.⁷⁴ One example is the observation made by H. Diane Russell (1990) that "The reclining figure is a half-nude female who has her eyes closed. She is an object on a table, just as are a lute and a vase that are shown in two other perspective woodcuts in the treatise."⁷⁵ In his analysis of this image Joseph Koerner (1993) made the following observation: "Dürer has articulated the various zones of representation—artist, model, image, and viewer—classifying them through a system of antitheses: female and male, supine and upright, naked and clothed, rounded and square."⁷⁶ In this system you cannot be artist and model at the same time. Referring to Dürer's self-portraits, mentioned earlier, however, Koerner argued that his "self-portrait studies highlight the tension between looking and representing and unite maker and model."⁷⁷ But, because of gender ideologies and the representational tradition, this cannot be true for the filmed *Artemisia*: she must oscillate between the two positions. *Artemisia* may have power to attract looks, but in so doing she loses artistic authority. She remains an object rather than a subject or a maker of meaning.⁷⁸ Hence the title of this essay, for, I argue, Merlet's film does not show *Artemisia* learning to look so much as learning to be looked at.

⁷⁴Some examples: John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London and Harmondsworth: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972); Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); and others as cited below.

⁷⁵H. Diane Russell, *Eva/Ave: Woman in Renaissance and Baroque Prints* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, and New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1990), 23. She contrasts this image with one of a male artist similarly employing instruments to make a portrait of a man, "In the portrait illustration, by contrast, the subject is a man. He is fully dressed and sits upright in a chair, a posture that bespeaks inherent dignity. He, moreover, looks directly and alertly back at the artist."

⁷⁶Koerner, *Moment*, 446.

⁷⁷Koerner, *Moment*, 239, characterized the self-portrait in Erlangen, ca. 1491, as "an anatomy of the tensions that attend the double activity of looking and representing...." See also, in this context, Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 37.

⁷⁸Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves*, 43, interprets Sofonisba Anguissola's *Self-Portrait as a Portrait being created by Bernardo Campi*, an image she painted in which we see her as the subject of a portrait being painted by her teacher, as "defining the conflict inherent in the unnaturalness of being a female artist in the sixteenth century ... making herself as pretty as a picture—the object of the gaze and not the maker of the object." See also, in this regard, the comments of Woods-Marsden, *Self-Portraiture*, 208–9. To return to the film, however, Sheila Farr, in a review in *Film Comment* "Lusty for Life," summed it up thus: "Basically all *Artemisia* provides the film is a blank canvas on which to paint a melodramatic romance" [http://www.fil.com/reviews/index.jhtml/review_url=film=review/1998/10493/732/default-review.html].

ARTICLES

The Sincere Body: The Performance of Weeping and Emotion in Late Medieval Italian Sermons

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IN 1493 THE WELL-KNOWN and controversial Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Feltre gave a series of Lenten sermons to the people of Pavia. On March 11 he dedicated an entire sermon to the necessity of contrition—or perfect sorrow over sin—in the rite of confession. Speaking to a large audience of both men and women, rich and poor, and the local ecclesiastical and civic authorities, Bernardino discussed how one should behave when contrite: “If you cannot feel sorrow of the body, then at least [feel it] in [your] heart, and if you cannot weep with [your] bodily eyes, then at least [weep] in [your] heart.”¹

In this brief statement Bernardino instructs his audience on how he believed one should express sorrow over sin and weep during confession. According to him, sorrow and pain over sin must be located inside or outside the body and these emotions must come from the heart, that is, they must be sincere. Bernardino did not explain how one “feels sorrow...[or] weeps in [the] heart,” yet his reliance on the heart as a site for emotion and weeping suggests that he believed the heart was crucial in assuring that sorrow and tears in confession were true. In the same series of sermons, Bernardino recommended that confessors not absolve sinners unless assured of their sincere repentance.² His statement on contrition indicates that he believed weeping from the heart was physical and visible proof of sincere repentance, proof that confessors could use during confession. Bernardino does not reveal how a confessor could recognize sincere repentance and “true” weeping of the heart, yet his need for “truth” in the confessional seems to demand some guidelines.

Bernardino’s ideas about weeping were not unusual. In fact, he was adhering to commonly accepted constructions of weeping that had been in existence for centuries. Only a century before Bernardino’s sermon, the fourteenth-century Spaniard Juan Ruiz commented that “the Church

¹“Si non potes sentire dolorem corporis, saltem cordis, et si non potes lacrimari oculis corporis, saltem corde”; Bernardino of Feltre, *Sermoni del B. Bernardino da Feltre nella Redazione di Fr. Bernardino Bulgarino da Brescia, Min. Oss.: Il Quaresimale di Pavia del 1493*, ed. C. da Milano (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1940), 357.

²*Ibid.*, 407.

cannot judge such hidden things [sincere contrition of sin]; thus it is also necessary for him [the sinner] to make, either by gestures or by groans, some sign showing that he has repented.... [T]he best sign of repentance [is] weeping.”³

Bernardino’s views of the connection between weeping, the heart, and the necessity of proving sincere repentance were not unique. Many other preachers and theologians were concerned about how to prove a sinner’s “true” contrition during the ritual of confession. Although weeping served a practical need by “proving” repentance in confession—the most important function given to this behavior—weeping also served as a sign of various emotional states in other religious rituals such as the sermon, mystical exercises, sacred representations, processions, and prayer. To legitimize and incorporate weeping into these rituals that appear to require emotional as well as behavioral participation, medieval and early modern theologians and other writers used the authority of the Bible and other texts in order to define weeping as the “true” physical and visible manifestation of emotion.

On the surface, weeping appeared to be a behavior that could be “read” easily and correctly by anyone; tears could not help but reveal truth. Weeping was also known to be easily provoked or faked.⁴ Theologians and, as we shall see, preachers such as Bernardino of Siena understood that weeping could be forced or faked. As carefully as theologians, preachers, and others tried to define weeping and make it a physical and hence decipherable sign of sincerity, the possibility of “false tears” meant that this behavior was interpreted in various and often conflicting ways. Tears were not always accepted as “truthful” signs of emotion.

* * *

In order to understand how weeping functions both rhetorically and performatively, this article will examine how two late medieval writers define it as well as how two preachers incorporate it into their sermons. By examining how weeping worked in texts and in performances, we can begin to understand the crucial role that weeping was believed to have in providing bodily “proof” of sincere devotion and emotion in religious rituals of late medieval and early modern Italy. More generally, this kind of analysis may reveal crucial information about the apparent need for physical signs of truth in specific circumstances and the complexities this need generates.

³Juan Ruiz, *Libro de Buen Amor*, ed. G. Chiarini (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1964), 216.

⁴One example of provoked and/or faked weeping is the weeping of female mourners, paid to weep during funerals. In the western world, these mourners were common in ancient Greece and Rome as well as medieval Europe.

In the medieval and early modern periods, weeping was considered to be, and used frequently as, a reliable sign of sincerity, yet because of its supposed connection with deception, this behavior was often interpreted in a variety of ways. Examining weeping in specific circumstances may give us clues as to why appearing sincere and proving one's sincerity were necessary for certain rituals. Religious rituals were not the only situations in which weeping was seen as a necessity yet this behavior appears most often in religious rituals since they seem to have required "sincere" devotion and behavior from their participants in order for the rituals to be effective.⁵ However, the varied sexes, ages, classes, and political biases of the participants influenced the performance and interpretation of the devotion and behavior that was deemed so crucial to the rituals' efficacy. The theologians and others who attempted to define weeping precisely often failed to consider the diverse circumstances of the people who were supposed to weep and, as a result, the theoretical meanings of weeping often differed dramatically from the meanings that emerged during the rituals themselves. While a thorough discussion of these differences cannot be attempted here, some general conclusions can be drawn which may help in understanding the conditions that affect the interpretation of this behavior.

In the first part of this article, texts by a woman religious, the fourteenth-century Italian tertiary Catherine of Siena, and by a prominent political leader, the fifteenth-century Florentine Lorenzo de' Medici, show how two different writers used the body to define and legitimize weeping as a "true" sign of emotion. The works of Catherine and Lorenzo are only two examples in a long textual tradition that attempted to define weeping as a sincere sign of emotion. Like many other medieval and early modern writers, Catherine and Lorenzo incorporated commonly accepted definitions of weeping into their texts in order to fulfill their need for a behavior that could physically and truthfully reveal emotion. Although one was writing in the religious realm and the other in the secular, Catherine and Lorenzo had similar ideas about weeping and its "natural" connection to the heart, suggesting that there was a great need for this kind of behavior in both the religious and the secular worlds. While their ideas

⁵A good example of a ritual that had religious and nonreligious elements that required a show of "sincere" behavior from its participants was the ritual of execution. In medieval and early modern Florence, the guilty were required to weep before the confessor as a sign of repentance before execution; see the ritual practices of the Florentine confraternity of Santa Maria al Tempio that led people to their executions in *Libro di varie notizie e memorie della venerabile Compagnia di Santa Maria della Croce al Tempio*, Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, ms 2, 1:138. S. Edgerton discusses in detail the practices of this confraternity but does not fully address the role of weeping in the ritual of executions; see S. Edgerton, *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985). I intend to explore fully the role of ritualized weeping in executions in a separate paper.

do not form the primary focus of this article, they do help us to understand how people in this period thought about weeping and used it in a variety of circumstances.

The second section analyzes two fifteenth-century sermons, one by the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena and the other by the Dominican Girolamo Savonarola, and how weeping functioned performatively as bodily proof of their audiences' "true" emotional and devotional participation. Although I look at how weeping functions in both texts and rituals, I do not imply that texts provide the only definitions of weeping that are then applied to the rituals. In fact, constructions of weeping developed textually because this behavior proved to have a valuable and practical purpose in specific Christian rituals. Specific texts provided the necessary authority for weeping to be an acceptable and "genuine" sign of emotion; a sign that could be used in a variety of circumstances. However, its perceived connection with sincerity and deception made weeping such a complex behavior that some texts contradicted other texts in an attempt to solidify its definitions and uses.

CATHERINE, LORENZO, AND TEARS OF THE HEART

The fourteenth-century Italian Dominican tertiary Catherine of Siena created her own "theology of tears" in which the body—more specifically the heart—plays a crucial role in establishing the sincerity of tears. For Catherine, tears were not simply a sign of emotion but were physical and visible evidence of her spiritual status. Tears were defined to be a truthful intermediary between her hidden and mysterious spiritual self and her known and experienced body. As intermediaries, these tears had to inform Catherine of her spiritual progress and therefore had to be proven worthy of such a task. Catherine does so by creating a bodily system in which tears cannot help but tell the truth. She describes her unique system of weeping in her *Dialogo della divina provvidenza* or *Dialogue of Divine Providence*.

Catherine composed her *Dialogue* as an intimate conversation between herself and her God, allowing her to produce the "correct" answers through the words of her God. As Caroline Walker Bynum has described in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Catherine's spirituality was focused on the body and its functions.⁶ Catherine devoted a great portion of the *Dialogue* to her views of weeping and tears. She was fascinated by the body's functions and products—hunger, eating, bleeding, blood, and

⁶C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 165–80.

tears—and when speaking of weeping chose to focus on her tears as substances to be manipulated rather than the act of weeping.⁷

Catherine's mysticism and unique spirituality had a great impact on medieval spirituality and influenced a number of other mystics and writers. Although she is best known for her requests for church reform and many letters, particularly to two different popes and other religious officials, her *Dialogue* is a more personal view of her unique spiritual practices and beliefs. Her views on weeping, as described in her *Dialogue*, are particularly interesting because they reflect her knowledge and respect for the Desert Fathers, who she took for inspiration, as well as her own unique views of the physical connection between the heart and tears.⁸

Catherine believed that “every tear originates from the heart because there is no member of the body that wants so much to satisfy the heart as the eye.”⁹ Although she does not refer to the Bible specifically, some understanding of tears may originate there since three different books mention sorrow located in the heart (Gn 6:6, Ps 13:2, and Rom 9:2). In Catherine's view, the eyes respond and satisfy the emotion found in the heart, the physical source of all human emotion. Curiously, she does not acknowledge the possibility of “false tears,” thus allowing herself (and perhaps her readers as well) to believe that all of her tears are truthful.

Catherine complicates the link between tears, the eyes, and the heart by creating a physical process in which the eyes can sense the pain or sorrow in the heart, which then causes them to weep and provide satisfaction for this emotion. As she says, “and suddenly the eye that senses the sorrow and pain of the heart, begins to weep tender and compassionate tears.”¹⁰ Although the body is intimately involved in the production of tears, Catherine herself is divorced from the process. Her body produces tears, yet she, as an individual, does not weep. Her body acts on its own by producing proof of the emotions in her heart. For Catherine, emotion was not an abstract concept but a physical reality expressed visibly through the presence of tears. She assumed that emotion was the primary catalyst that stimulated the production of tears: emotion provoked and therefore legitimated them.

⁷Although tears—and tears as food—form a major part of Catherine's *Dialogue*, Bynum refers only occasionally to this aspect of Catherine's spirituality and does not mention her view of tears as food.

⁸Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 167.

⁹“ogni lagrima procede dal cuore, perchè neuno membro è nel corpo che voglia tanto soddisfare al cuore quanto l'occhio”; Catherine of Siena, *Libro della Divina Dottrina volgarmente detto Dialogo della Divina Provvidenza*, ed. M. Fiorilli (Bari: Laterza, 1928), 170. *Satisfare*, to satisfy, can mean to fulfill as well as to do penance. Catherine probably meant both.

¹⁰“e subito l'occhio, che sente il dolore e la pena del cuore, comincia a piangere d'uno pianto tenero e compassionevole a se medesimo”; Catherine of Siena, *Dialogo*, 171.

* * *

Catherine is not alone in her vivid interpretation of the production of tears. Lorenzo de' Medici, the fifteenth-century *de facto* leader of Florence, also speaks of the "natural" connection between the heart and the eyes in creating tears in one of his many sonnets. His view takes on a more scientific tone yet is quite similar to Catherine's, demonstrating that spiritual and scientific views about weeping were similar.

In his *Commentary on My Sonnets*, Lorenzo refers to a sonnet in which he describes how he wept for a love he could not have. Lorenzo begins, "and therefore it [the sonnet] says that, even if the eyes weep, this does not happen because of their pain, but because of the sorrow and desire of the heart, which, through the tears, vents a part of its sorrow."¹¹ Relying on Aristotle, Lorenzo explains how "the heart is the cause of tears...[and] how the tears *naturally* proceed from the heart rather than from the eyes."¹² Lorenzo's use of the term "natural" implies that he believes the *true* emotional source of tears is the heart and therefore these tears cannot help but tell the truth. Lorenzo, like Catherine, does not recognize "false tears" in his definition. Both writers do not wish to acknowledge a phenomenon that they believe has no place in their views; moreover, it could potentially invalidate their claims. In his sonnet Lorenzo states that,

[a]ccording to the physicians [Aristotle], in
the heart all disturbances are born: of joy,
of sorrow, of anger, of hope and of fear, and
every other passion; all of these, thus being
born in the heart, through a certain link and
conformity that is between the heart and the
brain, are immediately communicated to the brain.
Thus it happens that when sorrow or joy are
communicated to it, the brain, oppressed, or
truly, compressed by some of these passions,
is almost squeezed into itself; and being by
nature moist and squeezable like a sponge full

¹¹"e però dice che, se pure gli occhi piangono, questo non procede per cagione d'alcuna pena loro, ma dal dolore e desiderio del cuore, il quale per la via delle lacrime sfoga una parte del suo dolore"; Lorenzo de' Medici, *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent: A Commentary on My Sonnets*, ed. and trans. J. Wyatt Cook (Binghamton: MRTS, 1995), 100. This is an English translation with the original Italian on the facing page. I have chosen to use my own translation of the original text.

¹²"che il cuore sia cagione delle lacrime, narrare come naturalmente le lacrime procedino più tosto dal cuore che dagli occhi"; *ibid.* [my emphasis]. Wyatt Cook claims that de' Medici's definition of tears comes from Aristotle's *Problematum ineditorum*; *ibid.*, 103 n. 63.

of water, it distills through the eyes a part
of that moisture, and thus tears are generated....¹³

Lorenzo visualized a complex circuit between the heart, the brain, and the eyes that enabled the human body to produce tears. Following Aristotle, Lorenzo sees weeping not as an emotional behavior subject to human interpretation but rather as a physical occurrence that can have certain specific meanings and therefore is a reliable gauge of the presence of emotion. Like Catherine of Siena, Lorenzo sees the heart as the source of emotion, and thus tears. However, unlike Catherine, he believes that the brain must read and respond to the heart's emotions before tears can be produced. Despite this difference, both Catherine and Lorenzo see the production of tears as a physical and natural process of the body, a body that is incapable of deceiving its owner.

Lorenzo provides a unique counterpoint to Catherine since his lachrymose sonnet represents his desire for a sexual love while Catherine's *Dialogue* has a religious tone. Although Lorenzo's ideas about weeping may have come from Aristotle, perhaps reflecting his erudition more than his unique imagination, the similarity between his views and Catherine's suggests that secular and religious ideas about weeping came from similar, if not the same, sources. Both Catherine and Lorenzo rely upon their acceptance of weeping as physical proof of sincerity so that their readers can accept their words as true but also, and more importantly, so that they themselves can know that their emotions and their bodily gestures are not deceptive. In these personal and emotionally charged works, they alone must judge the authenticity of their emotions. In order to do so, they believe that they need to recognize the specific bodily signs that their culture accepts as "true" windows into the mysterious world of human emotion.

Both authors are examples in a long textual tradition that attempted to define weeping as a sincere sign of emotion. Although they wrote for different purposes, their belief in this behavior's ability to show truth is similar since both writers accept that this behavior has a crucial quality that makes their works credible to their readers. The emphasis on the natural connection between the heart and tears in both works shows that both Catherine and Lorenzo believe that weeping cannot help but tell the truth since it proceeds from a bodily part that does not have the ability to deceive.

¹³"Secondo i fisici, nel cuore nascono tutte le perturbazioni, d'allegrezza, di dolore, d'ira, di speranza e di timore, e qualunque altra passione; le quali tutte, così nate nel cuore, per una certa conleganza che è tra il cuore e il cervello, subito al cervello sono comunicate. Onde adviene che quando si comunica con lui o dolore o letizia, el cervello, oppresso o vero compresso da alcuna di queste passione, quasi in se medesimo si restringe; et essendo per natura umido e restringendosi in guisa d'una spugna piena d'acqua, distilla per li occhio una parte di quella umidità, e così genera lacrime"; *ibid.*, 100–102.

* * *

The fifteenth-century preachers Bernardino of Siena and Girolamo Savonarola also emphasized the necessity of the heart in weeping. Just as Catherine and Lorenzo believed that the physical phenomenon of weeping must be preceded—and therefore be legitimized—by the heart’s emotion, so too, did Bernardino and Savonarola. Unlike Catherine and Lorenzo, however, who wrote about their individual experiences with weeping and emotion, these preachers were faced with collective, public weeping of their audiences who came to the sermons with diverse concerns and problems. Although Bernardino and Savonarola accepted the same definitions of weeping as Catherine and Lorenzo did, they attempted to apply these definitions to the collective weeping of their sermon audiences, desiring that their audiences’ tears reflected their emotional involvement. Catherine and Lorenzo may have appeared convinced of the sincerity of their own tears but Bernardino and Savonarola had a more difficult task: to determine the sincerity of their audiences’ tears. As we shall see, frequently they assumed that the tears they witnessed were true since they believed that tears of the heart could not lie, but, on occasion, they worried that their audiences did not have the requisite emotion in order to make their weeping sincere.

BERNARDINO, SAVONAROLA, AND THE POLITICS OF WEeping

In both Bernardino’s and Savonarola’s sermons weeping is discussed and performed, with both the rhetorical and the performative aspects working together to form a cohesive whole. In these episodes we can see weeping in action, how it fulfills the duty it has been given: to represent visibly, accurately, and legitimately the emotions of the participants who weep. According to the preachers and their recorders who witnessed and chronicled the audience’s weeping, tears appeared to flow from a heart that could not lie; the heart itself guaranteed the sincerity of the tears and what they represented. Thus the audiences’ tears guaranteed the efficacy of the ritual and confirmed the rhetorical and performative skills of the preacher. Other observers of these sermons saw the audiences’ tears quite differently, however, indicating that the meanings of weeping in these rituals were highly contested. Despite the various opinions of what weeping meant in a particular sermon, the presence of this behavior was not unusual since the relationship between weeping and preaching, or public speaking in general, was well established by the time Bernardino and Savonarola were preaching.

Both Bernardino and Savonarola belonged to orders that had long and successful preaching traditions. These traditions developed from a variety of sources including the medieval *ars praedicandi* or “art of

preaching” manuals that instructed preachers on how to compose and deliver sermons. In addition, the friars created their own techniques, which accommodated the unique needs of their lay and primarily urban preaching.

The *ars praedicandi* developed, in part, from ancient Greek and Roman oratory in which the main function of the speaker was the provocation of emotions and behaviors like weeping from audiences. Ancient orators learned specific speaking techniques from manuals like those of Cicero and Quintilian in order to excite their audiences.¹⁴ In turn, some of these ancient techniques were incorporated into Christian oratorical manuals such as those by Augustine and Alan of Lille (d. 1203) and later included in the “art of preaching” manuals that instructed preachers on proper delivery of a sermon as well as appropriate subjects for specific sermons.¹⁵ Some of these popular manuals, like Alan of Lille’s *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria*, contain valuable information on how and when preachers should excite specific emotions and behaviors during sermons.¹⁶ This kind of information was then passed on to other preachers wishing to improve their speaking techniques.

When the Franciscan and the Dominican orders began in the thirteenth century, the “art of preaching” and other sermon manuals were being used to teach preachers composition and delivery of sermons. These orders incorporated some of the “art of preaching” techniques to speak to the laity but they also expanded upon these with other techniques such as preaching in the vernacular and using *exempla* or stories from real life to emphasize their messages.¹⁷ Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans used these practices in order to provoke reform in their audiences and encourage them to “take to heart” the preachers’ messages.

The Franciscans and Dominicans emphasized preaching in order to promote reform and provoke emotional and behavioral reactions from their audiences. As with earlier forms of preaching, the friars wished to excite specific emotions and behaviors in their audiences as signs of under-

¹⁴Cicero, *De Oratore* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1994), and Quintilian, *Institutionis Oratoriae*, ed. H. E. Butler (London: W. Heinemann, 1921).

¹⁵Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), book 4; Alan of Lille, *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria* in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus...Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 210 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1861–1866); M.G. Briscoe, *Artes Praedicandi* (Turnholt: Brepols, 1992).

¹⁶Alan of Lille, *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria*, 111–70.

¹⁷There is not enough space to include all the excellent studies of Franciscan and Dominican preaching techniques. For some see D. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); L. Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); A. Zawart, *The History of Franciscan Preaching and of Franciscan Preachers (1209–1927)* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1927); D. L. d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

standing and acceptance of the sermons. The Franciscans, in particular, were well known for the emotional appeal of their sermons since they often described in vivid detail images such as the Passion of Jesus in order to provoke emotions like empathy, compassion, and fear in audiences.¹⁸ Preachers also used graphic images like those of the Passion to arouse specific behavioral responses like weeping and wailing that they believed mimicked the pain of Jesus and the reactions of people who witnessed the crucifixion.¹⁹ These behaviors also signified their audiences' "true" emotional involvement in the sermons.

Early Dominican preachers generally appealed to their audiences' intellect in their sermons unlike the Franciscans who appealed more to the emotions. By the fifteenth century, however, both Franciscan and Dominican preachers were delivering highly dramatic and emotional sermons that drew large crowds of people wishing to be dazzled and delighted.²⁰ A new style of preaching to the laity had emerged, bringing with it many new problems and criticisms. Bernardino and Savonarola were only two of the many fifteenth-century preachers whose spectacular preaching styles were well known and in high demand, yet their achievements are particularly noteworthy.²¹

* * *

For the well-known early-fifteenth-century Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Siena, like his successor Bernardino of Feltre, weeping was inextricably linked with the heart. Heartfelt contrition, or sadness over sin, must accompany the rite of confession; weeping was that visible and physical sign that contrition was present. As he once preached: "tears...are heartfelt prayers that cry out confession!"²²

Bernardino wanted his listeners to understand and practice what he believed to be heartfelt weeping, that is, to represent their repentance. Speaking to the Florentines on 16 March 1424, he declared: "Therefore internally throw the water in [your] heart's vase for contrition!"²³ The fol-

¹⁸Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, 152–54, 164.

¹⁹Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 46–47 and S. Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 26–29.

²⁰See Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 46–47, where she discusses the preaching and popularity of Vincent Ferrier, the famous fifteenth-century preacher.

²¹Other preachers known for their highly theatrical styles include Bernardino of Feltre, Roberto Caracciolo, Vincent Ferrier, and John Capestrano.

²²"Le lagrime sono orazioni cordiali che gridano alla confessione"; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari: Firenze 1424*, ed. C. Cannarozzi (Pistoia: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1934), 1:53.

²³"Adunque getta l'acqua del vaso del cuore interamente per contrizione"; *ibid.*, 134. Note that he uses the informal, singular you form, as if he were speaking to each individual in the crowd, perhaps as he would in confession.

lowing year, speaking again to the Florentines about Mary Magdalene—the best-known image of a repentant weeper in the New Testament—Bernardino cried out to his audience: “Oh, how the tears of the heart are so pleasing to God! She [Mary Magdalene] learned that the tear of the eye, without that of the heart, can be corrupt and misleading!”²⁴ In Bernardino’s view, the heart provides legitimation for tears and makes them “true.” He acknowledged that tears could be “corrupt and misleading,” a concession to the possibility of deceiving with tears, yet does not explain how to recognize those tears “of the heart” that are presumed to be true. He assumes that he *can* recognize these “truthful” tears in his listeners, yet as the preacher who desires a contrite audience, he sees only what he wishes to see.

For Bernardino, the heart and weeping were intimately connected. The heart and its emotions gave meaning and legitimation to weeping, for without the heart’s emotions tears would become corrupt. These were not mere words but were intended to be absorbed and then practiced by his listeners. Bernardino hoped that his words could provoke “true” tears and reform in the Florentines, curing them of their evil ways and bringing peace to the city.²⁵ That is what he intended to do on Palm Sunday, 1424.

On the morning of Palm Sunday in 1424, Bernardino preached before a large crowd assembled in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce. The church was filled with many Florentines, some religious officials, as well as the Florentine republic’s civic leaders who had probably asked Bernardino to preach.²⁶ As was quite common for these large, public sermons, the “church and piazza of Santa Croce [were] full of citizens and farmers, women and men,” as the anonymous recorder of Bernardino’s sermons remarked about one of his sermons given the week prior to Palm Sunday.²⁷ In addition to adults from all social classes, young people were

²⁴“O, ella piace molto a Dio [la] lacrima del cuore! Imperò che quella dell’occhio, senza quella del cuore, può essere viciosa e fallace”; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari: Firenze 1425*, 3:189.

²⁵Bernardino was famous as a peacemaker, preaching all over northern Italy in the attempt to end quarrels between various factions; I. Origo, *The World of San Bernardino* (London: Reprint Society, 1963), 131–57, and P. G. da Cittadella, “La Predicazione di S. Bernardino da Siena a Belluno nell’anno 1423,” *Collectanea Franciscana* 7, no. 11 (1941): 423–37.

²⁶Although I have not yet found Florence’s request for Bernardino to preach in 1424, sometime after 1425 Leonardo Bruni, as chancellor of the Florentine Republic, wrote to Bernardino, asking him to preach another series of Lenten sermons; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari: Firenze 1424*, 1:xxxviii–xli. Bernardino preached in Florence a decade before the Medici came to power in 1434.

²⁷“El tumulto è grande, el popolo fremisce. Era la chiesa e la piazza di santa Croce tutta piena di cittadini e di contadini, di donne e d’uomini ch’erano parecchie migliaia”; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari Firenze 1424*, 2:87. This mixture of people at a public sermon was common; see R. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980; repr. Cornell University Press, 1991), 117–18.

present; the recorder heard the cry of children and young men that was “so great that Bernardino had to leave the sermon and come from the church into the piazza with many friars....”²⁸

The great variety of people that came for the sermon and presented themselves before Bernardino were decorously divided by a screen into two groups: men on the right side of the church and women on the left.²⁹ The separation of the sexes during a sermon had two main purposes: to keep women and men from having contact with each other and to divide the families which were considered the building blocks and “sources of honor” for the city.³⁰ Behind the preacher’s raised pulpit, the representatives of the government as well as certain religious leaders sat on a platform, observing and being observed. Thus, both the religious and secular worlds were visible before the people, who carefully watched their superiors as these men watched the city below them. As was common for sermons throughout the fifteenth century, this community appeared united spiritually and spatially, but the strict divisions between men and women, civic leaders and the “masses” made this “community” a highly circumscribed one where power and sexual relations were clearly marked and understood.

For this 1424 Palm Sunday sermon in Florence, Bernardino chose to speak about the “virtue of the name of Jesus,” one of his favorite, yet highly controversial, topics.³¹ At the end of this sermon, Bernardino cried out the last words of Paul the Apostle before his death, “Jesus my love, Jesus my love!” and then showed the Florentines a small stone tablet with the name of Jesus on it.³² At that moment, the people who filled the church got onto their knees, took off their caps, and began weeping for the “love of Jesus and for great devotion, adoring and revering him.”³³ The great weeping that occurred in the church that Sunday morning

²⁸“El grido de’ fanciugli, garzoni era grande che convenne che frate Bernardino lasciasse la predica e venne di chiesa in sulla piazza con molti frati”; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari: Firenze 1424*, 1:87.

²⁹R. Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze* (Florence: Sansoni, 1972), 1:1065–66, and Trexler, *Public Life*, 117.

³⁰Trexler, *Public Life*, 117.

³¹In 1419 Bernardino was attacked by a Dominican for his devotion to the “name of Jesus” and for his use of a stone tablet that had the “name of Jesus” inscribed on it. In 1427 Pope Martin V asked Bernardino to Rome to answer the charge of heresy. The charges were later dropped; see A. G. Ferrers Howell, *S. Bernardino of Siena* (London: Methuen and Company, 1913), 114, 146–49.

³²“Santo Paolo, apostolo a Roma, non diceva altro se non Gesù, amor mio... Ora, Gesù, amor mio, Gesù, amor mio!” and [in the words of the anonymous recorder] “Detto questo frate Bernardino, ardente d’amore di Spirito Santo e dell’amore di Gesù,... cavò fuori una tavoletta... e in essa figurato el nome di Gesù”; Bernardino of Siena, *Le Prediche Volgari: Firenze 1424*, 2:213.

³³“Tutto el popolo, che era piena la chiesa, inginocchione, senza nulla in capo, tutti piangendo di tenerezza dell’amore di Gesù, e per grande divozione adorandolo e reverendolo”; *ibid.*, 213–14.

apparently was not a singular event, since the recorder of Bernardino's Lenten sermons noted an incident only the week before, when he reports that "the cries that happened I cannot say, but they appeared to be like roars, and [oh] the tears for love; there was a great devotion. Amen."³⁴ These "tears for love and devotion" must have been a wonderful sight for Bernardino to behold. For the tears he watched appeared to be a sign to him that he had accomplished what he had set out to do: provoke the "heartfelt" repentance and conversion of his listeners. He had successfully brought the theoretical definition of weeping to fruition. For this preacher, his words and the audience's actions worked together to provide meaning for the sermon. Bernardino wished to present an image of an audience that wept together and therefore seemed spiritually, emotionally, and behaviorally connected under a common goal, if only momentarily.

Using a variety of words, gestures, *exempla*, and his famous wooden tablet, Bernardino had a unique preaching style which influenced preachers of various religious orders. As this sermon shows, he shouted directly at his audience, and sometimes at individuals, to catch their attention and make them listen. Unlike other preachers at that time, Bernardino spoke directly to his audiences about their concerns, problems, and vices and frequently told stories about the lives of specific people in order to reform them.

* * *

Sermons like those of Bernardino were a public and highly visible event in which the city's social, sexual, and political values and tensions were often played out. Although preachers frequently wished to bring peace and unity to a city with their sermons, this did not always occur. In fact, some preachers did the exact opposite by drawing out specific civic tensions and exacerbating an already tense situation.³⁵ As the scholar Geoffrey Koziol has observed, rituals like sermons must draw out and amplify certain social and political tensions in order to provoke the participants' emotions.³⁶ Behaviors that were believed to represent these emotions, such as weeping, were also provoked by the preachers' sermons and added another dimension to the ritual's already complex and tense dynamic.

³⁴"Le grida che v'erano non dico, che pareva che fossono tuoni; e i pianti per tenerezza ch'era una gran divozione. Amen"; *ibid.*, 88. This was the famous "bonfire of the vanities" that happened on 9 April 1424.

³⁵Bernardino of Feltre was well known for his anti-Semitic sermons and was accused of inciting a riot against the Florentine Jews in 1488 with one of his sermons on the Monte di Pietà or public bank; L. Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino (dal 1450 al 1516)*, ed. I. del Badia (Florence: Sansoni, 1883), 53, and see also V. Meneghin, *Bernardino da Feltre e i Monti di Pietà* (Vicenza: LIEF Edizioni, 1974).

³⁶G. Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 316.

In Florence, as in many cities, public sermons also played a great role in establishing and preserving the civic, social, and religious values its Christian citizens were supposed to share with each other. The preachers themselves were involved in preserving these values as well as upholding the strict hierarchical divisions that were perceived to maintain civic order and honor, since they were often asked to preach by the city's leaders.³⁷ Bernardino, for example, often gave sermons in Florence denouncing sodomy and other vices that he believed were causing the ruin of the city. His sermons were welcomed wholeheartedly by the Florentines and their civic leaders who desired to see the charismatic preacher speak and give advice about improving the city's image. This kind of speaking was supposed to affect all the Florentines and bring them together under a common goal of improving their city and its image. Given the strict divisions in classes, sexes, and political factions, however, this kind of unity was not always possible or desirable for the preacher or the city. The tears that Bernardino witnessed were supposed to represent that fleeting and limited unity, and what remained important to the preacher, and to the civic leaders who hired him, was that the city gave the appearance of unity to itself, to outsiders, and to its God. If unity was not possible, then at least the Florentines could *appear* unified, if only briefly, for the sake of the city's spiritual, political, and economic reputation.

Since weeping was believed to represent physically and visibly certain emotions like repentance, it seemed to be the perfect vehicle for Florence's people to give their city the appearance of strength and honor. This behavior worked well with Bernardino since he was a respected and well-trained preacher who had good relations with the ruling classes of the city. His dynamic and innovative preaching style and ability to draw an audience into his sermon's message made him a highly desired preacher in many northern Italian cities.³⁸ Since Bernardino was trusted, he preached what he and the civic leaders thought would be the most beneficial to his listeners and their city. With his sermon audiences, he developed powerful and potentially explosive emotional and behavioral dynamics that he believed helped to reform and strengthen the city. Thanks in part to Bernardino's unique and influential preaching style, sermons had become

³⁷For example, in 1423 representatives of Belluno asked Bernardino to preach and bring peace to their city, torn apart by its warring citizens; P. G. da Cittadella, "La Predicazione di S. Bernardino da Siena a Belluno nell'anno 1423," 423–37. See also C. L. Polecchiti, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

³⁸Bernardino was famous for his use of gestures, his use of props such as the "name of Jesus" tablet, and an eloquent command of words and anecdotes; Z. Zafarana, "Bernardino nella Storia della Predicazione Popolare" in *Bernardino Predicatore nella Società del Suo Tempo* (Todi: L'Accademia Tudertina, 1976), 41–70.

more dramatic and emotionally stimulating by the time Savonarola was preaching almost seventy years later.³⁹

* * *

Like Bernardino, the charismatic and controversial Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola was a master preacher who wished to rid Florence of its supposed sins—particularly those of sodomy and luxury—and to revive the image of a productive, respected, and religious city. His preaching style was powerful, frightening, and emotional so that he could provoke the Florentines to repent of the many sins that he believed were causing the ruin of the city. His spiritual and political mission led him to guide the city during and after the political crisis of 1494. In this year the French king Charles VIII invaded with his army, provoking the city's *de facto* leader, Piero de' Medici, to flee with his family, an event that Savonarola claimed to be a sign from God indicating that Florence would finally be rid of its oppressive leaders. From 1494 to his execution in 1498, Savonarola preached frequently, sometimes daily, to crowds of people who flocked to the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore to hear him speak and reveal his prophecies. Unlike Bernardino, however, Savonarola did not always have the full support of the city and its citizens and, towards the end of his life, faced harsh criticism for his beliefs and prophecies.

Savonarola often gave sermons to the entire community of Florence, just as Bernardino had done, desiring that the people should take his words and actions to heart and repent of their evil ways. His intention was not simply to reform these Florentines, but to make them over in the same emotional and behavioral image that he perceived the early Christians to have embodied: a spiritually strong community where their actions and words were united to reflect their inner "true" Christian beliefs.⁴⁰ As this goal implies, Savonarola feared that some of his listeners were reacting behaviorally to his words without the requisite emotion and devotion to legitimize those actions. Whether or not Savonarola accomplished his goal depended upon who was asked and when.

Like Bernardino, Savonarola believed that exterior acts should be a "true" reflection of interior acts, that is, emotions like charity and devotion that he believed to be contained in the heart. In a sermon given on 4 June 1495 he instructed his audience to prepare themselves "first inside

³⁹Bernardino influenced the Franciscan Roberto Caracciolo of Lecce who was a popular preacher around the 1450s. In Perugia in 1448 Caracciolo gave a highly theatrical sermon in which the Passion of Jesus was re-created by actors at the end of the sermon; "Cronaca della Città di Perugia dal 1309 al 1491, nota col nome di Diario del Graziani," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, t. 16, pt. 1 (1850): 598–99.

⁴⁰Savonarola's sermons are filled with references to the "true" church when, for example, "erano li cristiani tutti d'uno cuore e d'una anima"; G. Savonarola, *Prediche sopra L'Esodo*, ed. P. G. Ricci (Rome: Angelo Belardetti, 1956), 2:51.

[the body] and then outside” for the next day’s procession.⁴¹ When one receives illumination from God, he told his listeners during the same sermon, “you will feel totally content in your heart with tears.”⁴² Savonarola instructed his audience on how they should feel and behave if they receive God but also on where that “true” emotion lies. Tears were not only a rhetorical part of his sermons but also occupied a place as a performative tool that “told” him he had accomplished his task as a preacher. Just as Bernardino had watched his audience weep before him after a sermon, so too, Savonarola witnessed his listeners’ tears and believed that they had been transformed by his words.

By the time Savonarola defiantly preached his Lenten sermons in 1498, only a couple of months before his death, he had already been excommunicated by the Church for his attacks on its luxury and corruption.⁴³ Fearful of the possible censure of the city due to Savonarola’s excommunication, some Florentines refused to attend his sermons, castigated him, and continued scornfully to call his followers the “piagnoni,” or “weepers,” because of their intense reactions to his sermons.⁴⁴ Some Florentines believed that these “piagnoni” were simply faking their devotional behavior in order to make Savonarola look good and to show their defiant support for him.⁴⁵ Savonarola and his followers, of course, saw these tears differently and believed that they were signs of sincere repentance and religious devotion.

Preaching in the Dominican church of San Marco on 9 March 1498 on the book of Exodus, Savonarola finished his sermon by asking his audience to kneel and pray with him before taking their leave.⁴⁶ Lorenzo Violi, the notary and recorder of Savonarola’s sermons, comments on this moment of communal prayer: “Note, you who read [this], that here the people kneeled and the friars [his companions] in chorus began to chant:

⁴¹“e però abbiamo fatto ordinare questa processione per domani e dirotti come ti bisogna disporre prima dentro e poi di fuori”; Savonarola, *Prediche sopra i Salmi*, ed. V. Romano (Rome: Angelo Belardetti, 1969), 1:296.

⁴²“idest ti manderà el lume da cielo, che ti sentirai tutto contento nel cuore tuo con lacrime, e sentirai tutto in divozione e Iddio ti darà la sua grazia”; *ibid.*, 299.

⁴³For information on Savonarola’s excommunication see P. Villari, *La Storia di Girolamo Savonarola e de’ Suoi Tempi* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1930), 2:25–28.

⁴⁴According to Villari, the use of the term “piagnoni” to mock the followers of Savonarola began around 1495; Villari, *La Storia di Savonarola*, 1:347.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 1:365–66; 2:95, 159–60. Other preachers such as the Franciscan Francesco of Puglia preached against Savonarola and called him a heretic; *ibid.*, 2:137–38. Some of Savonarola’s harshest critics were called “arrabbiati” or “the angry ones” in response to the name “piagnoni”; *ibid.*, 1:347.

⁴⁶Savonarola began these sermons in the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore but was asked to leave on 2 March and therefore moved to San Marco; R. Ridolfi, *Bibliografia delle Opere del Savonarola* (Florence: Fondazione Ginori Conti, 1939), 1:75.

Benefac, Domine, bonis et rectis corde."⁴⁷ As if on cue, or so Violi tells us, "all of the people responded with one voice, chanting to the same verse with very loud voices and with tears...."⁴⁸ Seeing this reaction, the friars chanted another psalm "*Qui confidunt in Domino sicut mons Sions...*" to which the audience responded in kind with the words "*Benefac, Domine, bonis et rectis corde.*"⁴⁹ The friars and the people acted and reacted to each other with the appropriate verses as well as with their visible and decorous tears, as if in a scripted drama. According to Violi, Savonarola had accomplished his task as a preacher: to unite and move the Florentine people to "truthful" tears that publicly announced their "heartfelt" repentance and desire to heed the preacher's words.

Although Violi's description may be embellished, his attempt to report what he witnessed does reflect a need to represent this group of Florentines as fervent supporters of Savonarola. Violi saw the rhythmic and synchronized chanting and weeping as "true" signs of Christian devotion but also as legitimation and support for the preacher who faced great criticism for his beliefs. This support was particularly important at this time: only two months before the preacher and his two companions were hanged and burned in the Piazza della Signoria.

* * *

Besides a firm belief in the ability of weeping physically to show emotion and devotion, both Bernardino and Savonarola sought to provoke this response from their audiences as signs of their sincere emotional participation in the sermons. Their listeners were perceived to be wearing their "hearts on their sleeves" by weeping profusely before these two preachers. Witnessing their listeners' tears meant that Bernardino and Savonarola had accomplished their goals of reform and repentance; they had used their eloquence to persuade their listeners. Although the collective weepings provoked by both preachers appear to be similar in description and meaning, these massive weepings had other meanings that were embedded in the social and political context of two vastly different periods of Florentine history.

Preaching early in the fifteenth century, Bernardino had the support of the republican government of Florence, was highly respected, and asked to preach in many Italian cities. His intent, and the city's as well, was to reform the Florentines' bad habits and to uphold the civic and religious

⁴⁷"Nota, tu che leggi, che qui si inginocchiò tutto il popolo, e li frati in coro cominciarono a cantare: Benefac, Domine, bonis et rectis corde"; Savonarola, *Prediche sopra L'Esodo*, 2:51–52.

⁴⁸"E così il popolo tutto ad una voce rispondeva, cantando con voce altissime e con lacrime el medesimo versetto"; *ibid.*, 2:52.

⁴⁹"Di poi li frati cominciarono el salmo Qui confidunt in Domino sicut mons Sion, etc. e il popolo sempre rispondeva: Benefac, Domine, bonis et rectis corde"; *ibid.*

values that the city held dear. He encouraged civic reform in cities all over northern Italy, especially his hometown of Siena, but, unlike Savonarola, did not focus all of his energies on one city.⁵⁰

Also, unlike Bernardino, Savonarola had governmental support only in the beginning of his preaching career. Initially, Florence desired Savonarola's presence and advice since the city was threatened with political turmoil. As the political situation in Florence became more complex and Savonarola's desire for control over the city increased, however, some people lost confidence in the preacher's ability to bring peace and stability. Savonarola's increasing tendency to criticize the Church and its leaders and his eventual excommunication made some worry that a papal interdict would shortly follow and cause economic collapse.⁵¹ As his desire to reform the city increased, some people began to disapprove of him and question his beliefs. His "weeping" supporters were harassed and scorned because of their behavior. Violi's desire to describe "truthfully" the weeping of Savonarola's listeners was a way to legitimize the preacher and his views. Savonarola, and Violi as well, saw these "heartfelt" tears as truthful signs of the preacher's righteousness in the face of severe criticism and, in their view, an illegitimate excommunication.⁵² Like Bernardino and the many other preachers who came to Florence after him, Savonarola did acquire support from the Florentines; Savonarola heard and saw that support in his listeners' tears. Unlike Bernardino, however, Savonarola's "weepers" did not always represent the entire city.

* * *

The differences between the reactions to Bernardino's sermons and Savonarola's are due to many factors, the most significant being the popularity of the preachers at the time of their sermons as well as the social and political climate in which they were preaching. In the seventy years spanning the preaching of these two influential friars, Florence changed drastically, especially with the return of the Medici family in 1434. The Medici made their presence known in every aspect of civic life, particularly in the city's rich public life, and, as a result, the Florence that Bernardino faced in 1424 was not the Florence that Savonarola encountered.

In addition to Florence's political transformation during the fifteenth century, the sermon itself experienced some noticeable changes. Although space prohibits a lengthy discussion of these changes, it is enough to mention that the popular sermon in northern Italy became much more theatrical in the fifteenth century. By midcentury, some wandering preachers

⁵⁰Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 33, 131–41.

⁵¹Villari, *La Storia di Girolamo Savonarola*, 2:111–16.

⁵²R. Ridolfi, *The Life of Girolamo Savonarola*, trans. C. Grayson (New York: Knopf, 1959), 201–2.

were traveling constantly, stopping in any city that would welcome them and giving spectacular public sermons in which they used vivid stories, grand gestures, and a myriad of props like crucifixes and graphic paintings to delight and frighten audiences.⁵³ As a result of these dramatic sermons, audiences wept, moaned, and screamed, enhancing these preachers' reputations in some circles and destroying them in others. As the popularity of these sermons increased, so too did the criticisms as various people began to see these events as "mere" theater and as a means of procuring money. By the time Savonarola was preaching, these kinds of sermons were popular and the behavioral reactions these sermons aroused in audiences were well known but not always well accepted.

Despite the large time gap between Bernardino and Savonarola, the descriptions of their audiences' collective weeping remained the same; however, the different political and social circumstances of these two time periods, as well as the change in preaching, meant that weeping did not actually work the same way. As much as preachers, theologians, and other writers wished to make this behavior an easily read, "true," and accurate sign of emotion, it was not possible when weeping was performed. In performance, weeping did not always function as the preachers believed it would, as is evident when we witness the weeping of Bernardino's and Savonarola's audiences and the reactions they received. Although both preachers had the same theoretical goals for the behavioral responses of their listeners and seemed to achieve them, one preacher was praised wholeheartedly for his actions and the other frequently criticized.

While certain political circumstances have been the primary focus in this article, other political, social, and religious factors also contributed to the change in the perception of weeping. These other considerations impinge upon the interpretations of weeping and make it much more complex than it might appear. In order to understand weeping, including its supposed connection with sincerity and deception, we must focus on issues such as gender, class, age, and political status, as well as the emotions, expectations, and conflicts that all people brought with them to public rituals. In addition to focusing on the political, analyzing weeping in these other ways can expand our understanding of the emotional and behavioral worlds of the past.

⁵³ As mentioned earlier, Roberto Caracciolo was famous for his theatrical sermons and his use of props, particularly in Perugia in 1448; Graziani, *Cronaca della Città di Perugia*, 598–99.

“There is nothing more divine than these, except Man”: Thomas Moffett and Insect Sociality

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WHEN THOMAS MOFFETT¹ WROTE in the *Theater of Insects* that “there is nothing more divine than these, except Man,” he asked his readers some pointed questions about insects, and made some blunt statements:

where is Nature more to be seen than in the smallest matters, where she is entirely all? for in great bodies the workmanship is easie, the matter being ductile; but in these that are so small and despicable, and almost nothing, what care? how great is the effect of it? how unspeakable is the perfection? ... Do you require Prudence? regard the Ant; Do you desire Justice? regard the Bee; Do you commend Temperance? take advice of them both. Do you praise Valour? See the whole generation of Grasshoppers.

and so on. As for God, “truly, if the fabrick of Insects were worthy of so great and divine [an] Artificer, how can the contemplation of them be unworthy of the understandings of poor contemptible men?”² Thomas Moffett believed that insects were insufficiently appreciated both as moral and social examples, and as illustrations of God’s active presence in the world, and both of his famous works on insects were attempts to address this problem.

This essay uses Moffett’s discussion of insects’ social behavior in his works *Silkwormes and Their Flies* (1599) and *Theater of Insects* (1634) to explore the ways in which his work is a bridge between Renaissance encyclopedias of nature, and early modern mechanism. Examining Moffett’s use of language and religious imagery, and his statements about how nature should be studied to explore the complexity of his ideas, I suggest that Moffett’s writing reflects more than the social and political issues of

¹I have chosen to use the spelling of the name used in the *Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to 1900*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921–1922), 548–50. Moffett’s name is variously spelled as Moffett, Mouffet, Moufët, or Muffet.

²Moffett, *Theater of Insects* (1658; reprint facsimile ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), preface, n.p. All further citations are to this edition.

his time. Moffett's work effectively bridges medieval and Renaissance natural history and early modern mechanism because it weaves together elements of these approaches to the natural world. *Theater of Insects* contains strands of ancient thought as exemplified by Aristotle and Pliny (that is, gathering as much data as possible, including hearsay, and emphasizing either the moral lessons or the practical uses of the animals studied), and medieval bestiaries (presenting nature as Christian moral instructor). At the same time, Moffett combines these elements with a close interest in the economic lessons and uses of insects which clearly emerges from a sixteenth-century English sensibility. *Silkewormes and Their Flies*, for example, arose in part from a concern with the increasing numbers of the poor, and promoted sericulture as both a solution to the problem of poverty and a boost for the English economy: it is the perfect household industry, it encourages proper work habits (which might reduce the number of relief applicants), and it promotes moral improvement. Similarly, in *Theater of Insects*, Moffett devotes chapters to the economic value of bees and to the many uses of honey, including its medicinal properties.

As a Cambridge- and Basel-trained physician, Moffett certainly possessed the appropriate credentials as a scientist and social commentator. He had published several medical works, including a digest of the works of Hippocrates, by the time he began writing about insects.³ *Silkewormes and Their Flies*, the second of his two books on insects and the first to be published, emerged from Moffett's travel in Europe between 1578 and 1582; he traveled to Italy and Spain in 1579 to study silk culture there. He also may have acquired much of his knowledge of the new chemical medicines which he would later defend so vigorously. By the time Moffett wrote *Silkewormes and Their Flies* in the 1590s, he had established a successful practice in Ipswich and later in London, been admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and become one of England's foremost advocates of Paracelsian medicine. Moffett was to prepare the section on chemical medicines of the proposed official Pharmacopeia planned by the Royal College of Physicians. He was acquainted with several of the great scientists of the day, including Tycho Brahe and Peter Severinus.

Moffett regarded the natural world as providing valuable metaphors for human behavior; in this respect he participated in what William Ashworth has called the "emblematic tradition" of late Renaissance and early modern natural history. Ashworth asserts that:

³For more detail on Moffett's life, see F. D. and J. F. M. Hoeniger, *The Growth of Natural History in Stuart England from Gerard to the Royal Society* (published for the Folger Shakespeare Library by the University Press of Virginia, 1969). For details on his medical career see Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), 1:182–83, and *The English Paracelsians* (London: Oldbourne, 1965).

the essence of this view is the belief that every kind of thing in the cosmos has myriad hidden meanings and that knowledge consists of an attempt to comprehend as many of these as possible.... Anatomy, physiology, and classification may be the heart of modern zoology, but in the sixteenth century they were only several strands of a much more complex web.⁴

Late Renaissance writers like Conrad Gesner, Moffett's contemporary Ulisse Aldrovandi, and Gesner's popularizer Edward Topsell, incorporated poetry and stories from classical authors, discussed religious symbolism, and included the medical uses of individual animals in their descriptions of the animals' life histories and habits.⁵ These works included some moral content, but their primary purpose was to gather information, not to teach particular lessons. Ashworth argues that it is a mistake to dismiss these works as medieval in outlook, because their symbolism is much more complex than the medieval bestiaries, which focused on natural history as a vehicle for specifically Christian lessons about piety and proper conduct. In addition, encyclopedias like Gesner's and Aldrovandi's drew on classical sources for inspiration and for information, and on "many contemporary traditions that were unknown to the Middle Ages."⁶

While Ashworth's notion of a blossoming of emblematic literature in the last years of the sixteenth century is useful in connecting these works to their earlier relations, it does not go far enough to explain the complexity of works like Moffett's. Moffett's writing on social insects exemplifies the intricacy of his ideas, and places him on a continuum of ideas about the social, political, and moral relevance of the natural world to human society. Spelling aside, Moffett's discussion of ants as political beings is much like eighteenth-century employment of the beehive as a political model.⁷ Moffett's works also include extensive discussions of the economic importance of insects such as the bee and the silkworm, and foreshadow what would become the "argument from design" and seventeenth-century Baconian emphasis on the importance of collecting accurate observation as the basis

⁴William B. Ashworth, Jr., "Natural History and the Emblematic World View," in *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, ed. David L. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 312.

⁵Gesner's best-known work was his *Historia Animalium*, the first volume of which was published in Zurich in 1551. Four more volumes appeared between 1554 and 1587. New editions of all of the volumes appeared in 1604–1605 and 1620–1621. Writers borrowed heavily from Gesner through the seventeenth century. Edward Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* (London, 1607) and *History of Serpents* (London[?], 1608) are composed of extracts from Gesner's work. Topsell's version of Gesner was published in English in 1658; see also the facsimile edition of the two books, with Thomas Moffett's *Theater of Insects* as a third volume (New York: De Capo Press, 1967). Ulisse Aldrovandi was best known for his *Ornithologia* (Bologna, 1599–1603). For a lively discussion of all of these works see Willy Ley, *Dawn of Zoology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).

⁶Ashworth, "Natural History and the Emblematic World View," 313.

⁷See for example William Smellie, *The Philosophy of Natural History* (Edinburgh, 1790).

for true knowledge. In his medical writing, just as in his natural history writing, Moffett argued for the importance of observational evidence in establishing the value of scientific principles.⁸ In Moffett's natural history writing, observation serves a dual purpose: first, to gather information, and second, to encourage observers to "furnish their mindes with variety of examples of vertues, whereby they may instruct their souls, and teach them, that would otherwise be very wicked."⁹

To read Moffett only in the context of his contribution to the emergence of a "modern" scientific dialogue about the world is to ignore much of what makes his work so fascinating; but this approach also ignores Moffett's own probable intent for the work. *Theater of Insects* was written at the end of the sixteenth century and published early in the seventeenth, in a period when the metaphor of a "theater" was commonly invoked in books about a wide variety of subjects including nature. These works, as Ann Blair has indicated, rested the metaphor of the work as a theater on two themes: a moral theme, and a "formal" theme, which aimed, "regardless of its actual success, to provide global treatment of a large subject in the form of a 'tabula,' a concise, clear, and structured if not graphically tabular presentation."¹⁰ *Theater of Insects* is just such a work, and as such, both partook of traditional ideas about the natural world and participated in the development of new ones. To the extent that Moffett occupied himself with the larger meanings of the insects he studied, and regarded the natural world as providing valuable metaphors for human behavior, he participated in the "emblematic tradition" of late Renaissance and early modern natural history. But he was also part of the dismantling of this worldview: the connections Moffett makes between God and nature are not simply indications of God's presence in the world; they are also reflections of God's design for a carefully constructed world, and an important part of the advancement of learning and the purification of existing knowledge.

If we are to understand properly the context from which emerged the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, it is important to follow Blair's lead in further developing our understanding of the broader literature on natural philosophy within which specialist works like Moffett's appeared. Old ideas have always coexisted with new, and books like Moffett's *Theater of Insects* and *Silkewormes and Their Flies* provide a marvelous opportunity to examine their combination, in both literal and figurative terms.

⁸See Allen G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy*, 183.

⁹Moffett, preface to *Theater of Insects*.

¹⁰Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 167.

MOFFETT AS TEXT

The text of Moffett's *Theater of Insects* is somewhat problematic, in that it raises questions about voice, if not authorship. The work began as the notes of Thomas Penny, a botanist and student of famed encyclopedist Conrad Gesner; Penny collected material on insects from classical Greek and Roman writers, from naturalists including Gesner and Wotton, and included his own observations. The manuscript was saved after Penny's death by Moffett, who compiled and edited Penny's notes, added to them from his own observations and materials, completed the work in 1589–1590, and died in 1604 before the book could be published.¹¹ The book was not brought out until some thirty years after Moffett's death, and then appeared with an introduction by physician Sir Theodore Mayerne, whose effect on the text itself is unclear, but who purchased the manuscript from Moffett's apothecary.

Moffett's precise contribution to the text cannot be established, but because much of the work reads as though Moffett is interacting with his sources, it is possible to "hear" him more directly at numerous points in the text. The book is structured in a relatively informal, almost narrative way; it flows around Moffett's commentary on his sources (particularly Penny), evaluations of some of the information in these sources, and anecdotes of his own experiences. These anecdotes often relate interactions he had with insects, but they also tell of his observations of patients with gallstones, of the medicinal uses of earthworms, and the results of his use of cantharides to cure impotence in "many Noble men."¹²

One of Moffett's most frequently repeated arguments is that all insects are useful in either practical or moral terms; all insects have something to offer. Even flies, "these little creatures so hateful to all men, are not yet to be contemned," for they were "created by Almighty God for diverse and sundry uses." They warn of coming storms, says Moffett, they serve as food for other creatures, and they provide medicines for sick humans; most important, however, "They shew and set forth the Omnipotency of God, and execute his justice; they improve the diligence, and providential wisdom of men."¹³ Flies (and other insects as well) perform these services for man in part by providing models for moral behavior. Butterflies warn against excessive vanity and urge piety, as Moffett asks:

¹¹For information on Thomas Penny's life see F. D. and J. F. M. Hoeniger, *The Development of Natural History in Tudor England* (published for the Folger Shakespeare Library by the University Press of Virginia, 1969), 46–48. For sketches of the lives of Moffett and Mayerne see their companion volume, *The Growth of Natural History in Stuart England*.

¹²Moffett, *Theater of Insects*, 1106, 1107, 1005.

¹³*Ibid.*, 944.

He that beholdeth the forms, clothing, elegancy, and rich habits of the Butterflies, how can he choose but admire the bountiful God, who is the Author and giver of so rich treasure? Wherefore art thou proud in decking thy self, and takest so much delight in thy own beauty?¹⁴

Lice are another admonition for humility, a reminder that “when God commands, the least and most contemptible Creature hath force enough to destroy sinners,” even kings.¹⁵

Moffett included a wide array of information in his descriptions of insects: physical descriptions and life histories, discussions of the various names for each insect in ancient and medieval authorities, poetry, stories, and discussions of their medical uses. Like Gesner, he cites classical authors as authorities for much of his material, and includes myths as explanations for the origins of insects such as the spider. At the same time, he makes use of some of the new material available on new world insects, and attempts to evaluate the validity of classical and other accounts of insect behavior. For Moffett, important lessons are to be learned from close observation of the insect world: in this he includes not just observation of the insects’ behavior, but also consideration of their external structure and their interior structure as revealed by dissection.

MOFFETT’S SOCIAL INSECTS AND INSECT SOCIALITY

Moffett’s work provides a window into sixteenth-century ideas about the proper shape for human society, and about what constitutes social behavior, couched in descriptions of insects’ lives and habits, and in discussions of their practical uses for humans. Moffett’s advocacy of sericulture, for example, reflects both his awareness of the growing problem of the swelling population of transient poor and the need to find new ways to employ displaced agricultural laborers, and a broader English concern with the importance of labor in developing and maintaining good character. In *Theater of Insects*, Moffett’s accounts of insects’ behavior directly reflect contemporary assumptions about what human society should look like: he is lavish in his praise of social virtues like offering obedience to authority, understanding one’s place in the social structure, and laboring for the good of others as well as for individual advancement. Moffett’s discussion of insects is not heavily gendered, in part because Moffett’s primary concern is not prescribing for the household, but it does contain clear prescriptions for female character. Grasshoppers “teach us manners,” such as humility and patience, and remind women “what ornament silence brings

¹⁴Ibid., 974.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1090.

to the female sex.”¹⁶ By definition, social insects live in orderly communities with clear social and reproductive roles for each member. In the late sixteenth century, in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the creation of the Anglican church, dramatic population growth, and general economic instability, the appeal of social insects as models for social structure and behavior must have been strong indeed.

Moffett’s writing on social insects epitomizes the ways his work bridges Renaissance and early modern natural history, in part because bees and other social insects are given the lengthiest treatment. Insects that lived singly offered lessons about character and moral behavior, but the social insects also provided political lessons and models for appropriate social behaviors.

What, then, constitutes social behavior for insects? Living collectively is the most important feature defining social insects such as bees, ants, wasps, and termites. Equally important for commentators is that social insects labor collectively, presumably for the common good.¹⁷ These two aspects of insect societies have been singled out for comment and reflection by writers at least as far back as Aristotle; Aristotle was extensively quoted on bees until well into the eighteenth century. Bees are easily the most popular social insect in natural history writing from Aristotle onward, because their complex community life provides irresistible temptation to compare the insects’ ways of working, fighting, procreating, and caring for their young, with human society.¹⁸ In addition, bees as producers of honey have a special relationship with humans, as Moffett explains:

Of all Insects, Bees are the principal and chiefly to be admired, being the only creature of that kinde, framed for the nourishment of Man: but the rest are procreated either to be useful in physick, or for delight of the eyes, the pleasure of the ears, or the compleating and ornament of the body; the Bee doth exceed them all in every one of these.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., 990, 992.

¹⁷For discussion of bees in the early modern period see Charles Butler, *Feminine Monarchie: On a Treatise concerning Bees, and the Due Ordering of them, Wherein the Truth, Found out by Experience and Diligent Observation, Discovereth the Idle and Fond Concepts, Which Many Have Written Anent this Subject* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1609; facsimile ed., Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; New York, Da Capo Press, 1969). In the eighteenth century, William Smellie made collective and altruistic labor a primary criterion for ranking animal societies as “proper” or “improper,” in his *Philosophy of Natural History* (Edinburgh, 1790).

¹⁸Little has been written by historians about the social insects in general; for the most comprehensive historical overview of the literature on bees see Frederick Prete, “Can Females Rule the Hive? The Controversy over Honey Bee Gender in British Beekeeping Texts of the Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 24, no. 1 (1991).

¹⁹Ibid., 889.

Moffett devotes the first seven chapters of the *Theater of Insects* to bees. These chapters reflect bees' political, social, and economic importance, and exemplify Moffett's approach to natural history. Moffett combines the historical, the practical, and the fanciful in his discussion of the types of bees, their life histories, and their "politick, ethick, and oeconomick" uses. Moffett notes, for instance, that

whereas the most high God did create all other creatures for our use; so especially the Bees; not only that as mistresses they might hold forth to us a pattern of Politick and Oeconomick vertues, and inform our understanding; but that they might be able as extraordinary foretellers, to foreshew the success and event of things to come.²⁰

Moffett's discussion complements contemporary works on beekeeping such as Thomas Hyll's *Profitable Instruction of the Perfite Ordering of Bees* (1574), in which Hyll declared that "Nature hath not only committed her laws to bookes, the which men learn by, but hath especially set forth conditions & properties, as for an example of the like by Bees."²¹ But Moffett does not include some of contemporaries' insights (for example, the fact that the ruler of the beehive is female rather than male, as most previous accounts had assumed), and generally assumes that the ruler is male, that the most important citizens are male, and that the hierarchical structure and social relationships within the hive reflect the social and political assumptions of the humans observing and writing about the bees. Moffett's contemporaries such as Edmund Southerne had just begun to discuss the true gender of the queen, and had begun to illuminate bees' social structure, so Moffett's account reflects both traditional assumptions about bee society and contemporary lack of consensus about it.²²

Although Britons had been keeping bees since at least as far back as the fifth century, and writers as early as the fourteenth century had suggested that the worker bees are female, the appeal of the image of the hive as an orderly patriarchal society (and thus a good model for humans) persisted well into the seventeenth century. In 1634, John Levett's *Ordering of Bees* indicated that the debate over bee gender had by no means been settled, and only with the appearance of a growing number of practical treatises on beekeeping, in which much of the advice was based on experience and detailed observation, did the mechanics of the hive begin to emerge clearly.²³ Though bee society was increasingly better known in the

²⁰Ibid., 905.

²¹Hyll, quoted in Prete, "Can Females Rule the Hive?" 125.

²²See for example Southerne, *Treatise Concerning the Right Use and Ordering of Bees* (London, 1593). It is, of course, not possible to establish with certainty how many of these works Moffett might have read.

seventeenth century, the image of the hive as a small and perfect republic changed little with the replacement of the king with a queen; perhaps the long reign of Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century helped to make the notion of a female ruler more acceptable. The beehive's example of a smoothly run and productive society was its most important feature, whether the hive was ruled by a king or a queen. Indeed, the beehive continued in the eighteenth century to be valuable as a broadly defined social and political model in the American colonies and new republic, with beehives used in advertisements, on signs, and elsewhere as visual representations of industry.²⁴

Moffett's parallels of bees and humans are clearest in descriptions of those most collective of social behaviors: war and work. In his discussion of bee warfare, Moffett outlines their devotion to their King, whom they surround and protect; the warriors do not begin fighting without his signal. In Moffett's account, the bees do not fight unless provoked, but when they do, they display valor and courage. In work matters, the bees labor peacefully under the direction of a "Master" bee, who instructs them about when to leave the hive, when to return, and when to rest from their labors.²⁵

The communities of social insects provided social and political models for Moffett, in some ways that would differ little from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers. In others, his view is more typically sixteenth century. In ants, for example, that other favorite insect of popular texts from classical Greece to the present, outer appearance is intimately related to inner character. Ants are highly praised in Moffett's book because, like the spider, they are physically attractive (visually balanced) and hardworking; unlike the spider, ants also work collectively for the common good in a "democraticall state." Moffett holds ants up as a universal example of physical and moral perfection:

To begin with the commendations of the Pismires, I know not whether I shall first speak of their body or mind, since Ants are not only to be preferred before many Insects, but also before many Men; for they are not one-ey'd, nor horrid skew-ey'd, nor do they walk with crammed guts... nor yet are they misshapen, crook-leg'd any way, gorbellied, over close kneed, blub-cheek'd, great mouthed, lean chopt, rude foreheads, or barren, as many

²³John Levett, *The Ordering of Bees* (London, 1634; facsimile ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1971). Levett also provided a progress report on the state of the debate over whether bees reproduce by copulation or by some other means.

²⁴See for example Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "The Beehive as a Model for Colonial Design," in *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

²⁵See for example Moffett, *Theater of Insects*, 894–95.

great Ladies, and Noble Women are, who have lost the faculty of generation; but the beauty of their body follows the goodness of their minde, and nature hath given them for their degree and order, a constant and absolute perfection.²⁶

The ants' social organization stirred Moffett to pages of praise, for their virtues included "piety, prudence, justice, valour, temperance, modesty, charity, friendship, frugality, perseverance, industry, and art."²⁷ Moffett describes with enthusiasm ants' cooperation in building the anthill, harvesting and storing food, and in battling enemies. He is equally taken by their cooperative spirit, in which "Without Yet any Commander," each ant "knows what is needfull to be done, and willingly does his best to help the Common-wealth."²⁸ Most striking of all is the ants' collective and individual commitment to industry, which is so strong that any ant detected in laziness is both driven out of the community, "pinched with famine," and tried by a "Councill" before its front doors. The guilty are put to death, "that their young ones may take example, that they may not hereafter addict their mindes to sloth and idlenesse."²⁹ For the well-regulated ants, every activity, including procreation, has an appropriate time.

The anthill has as much to offer the attentive citizen as the beehive, according to Moffett; while ants do not have the special economic relationship to humans that bees have, their leaderless government reflects God's goodwill and his intention that humans should learn from their tiny neighbors. Moffett relates that, as in even the "best ordered Monarchies," the anthill runs smoothly in times of plenty, but in times of scarcity there is conflict; ants will fight for food, for self-preservation, and "the lesser of them will rebell against the greater." In all but the scarcest of times, however, the ants are peaceful and need no ruler, "for each of them can regulate his own passions." If they have a king at all, he notes, "it is that Supreme Jupiter, that governs all, who is deservedly thought to be the Fountain and Author of all virtue both in Men and Pismires, and all other creatures."³⁰ Moffett admonishes the reader, in what may stand as a policy statement for all of his writing, that "God has commanded [us] to learn of Ants" that "by his good guiding of them, and he instructing us, we may perform our duty. It is a small creature, and contemptible for its magnitude, yet we must know that goodness is not in greatness, but what is good is to be accounted great."³¹

²⁶Ibid., 1074.

²⁷Ibid., 1078.

²⁸Ibid., 1075.

²⁹Ibid., 1077.

³⁰Ibid., 1077–78.

³¹Ibid., 1080.

But Moffett's descriptions of insects like the woolly bear caterpillar also reveal assumptions about the nature of antisocial behavior. These caterpillars

have no certain houses or food; wherefore they do something superstitiously wander like pilgrims, and like to Mice, they alwaies feed on others meat, wherefore the English do call them Palmer-worms, namely for their wandering life, for they dwell no where, though by reason of their hair they are called Bear-worms. They will not be tied to any kinde of flowers or leaves, but they pass on boldly, and taste of all plants and trees, and feed where they please.³²

These caterpillars are antisocial because they do not live in one place, because they do not feed on a particular or predictable food and, by implication, because they do not respect the boundaries of convention and property. In this case the language is fairly explicitly disapproving of these caterpillars' habits: like household pests, they feed on "others' meat" which they have not earned through their own labor; and they pass both "boldly" and "superstitiously" through the world, refusing to live in an orderly society. The description of these caterpillars' behavior also reflects the tension over the relative importance of behavior and appearance in naming or describing animals: they are "Palmer worms" because they wander like religious pilgrims and take food from others, and "Bear worms" because they are covered with rough hairs.³³ Both appearance and behavior were important in explicating an animal's value as a moral example.

It was not necessary for an insect to be social in order for it to provide useful models for desirable behavior or character traits, however. The house spider, a long-standing example of individual domestic industry, Moffett praises for its household government, asking "what is there more

³²Ibid., 1035. Topsell appears to have had access to Moffett's manuscript in the British Museum, and may have borrowed from it for his *History of Serpents* (1608). See Hoeniger and Hoeniger, *The Growth of Natural History in Stuart England*, 12. Topsell's description of these caterpillars remarked that they "have no certiane place of abode, nor yet cannot tell where te find theyre foode but, like unto superstitious Pilgrims, doo wander and stray hither and thither (and like Mise) consume and eat up that which is none of their owne; and these have purchased a very apt name among us Englishmen, to be called Palmer-worms, by reason of their wandering and rogish life (for they never stay in one place, but are ever wandering), although by reason of their roughness and ruggedness some call them Beare-worms. They can by no means endure to be dyeted, and to feed upon some certaine herbes and flowers, but boldly and disorderly creep over all, and tast of all plants and flowers indifferently, and live as they list." See Topsell, *History of Serpents* (1658; reprint facsimile ed., New York: De Capo Press, 1967), 667. The similarity in the two quotes suggests that this passage was borrowed from Moffett rather than from Gesner.

³³These same caterpillars, the larvae of Tiger moths, are even now popularly known as "woolly bears."

frugal, more laborious, or more cleanly to be seen in the whole world?"³⁴ Moffett also praises them for their fidelity to a single mate, and for their good relations among themselves, for never "doth any one of them attempt to offer violence to the female of another, or to assault her chastity." Moffett's poem *Silkewormes and Their Flies* celebrated the silkworm, which lives collectively but not cooperatively, for an array of virtues Christian, "politick," and "oeconomick." First, Moffett praised the silkworm's chastity and fidelity:

In briefe, within, without, they are al white,
Wearing alone the badge of chastity:
Because they onely keep themselves to one,
Who being dead, another chuse they none.³⁵

In connecting their appearance to their character, Moffett also emphasized the connection of Divine design and observable nature: white, Moffett remarked, "was for creatures pure, a colour thought most meete." While Moffett's poem does connect the silkworm's behavior and ideal behavior, the connection is implicit rather than explicit, and based on a general and long-standing view of nature as revealing divine plan rather than divine prescription—that is, nature's design rather than a design for living.

Silkewormes and Their Flies is both commentary and manual, connected to sixteenth-century court/pastoral poetry and to an emerging public dialogue about the state of English agriculture, as well as to Moffett's interest in natural history.³⁶ The poem has variously been interpreted by scholars as a technical manual for women employed in rearing silkworms,³⁷ as a "light-hearted parody" of *Theater of Insects*,³⁸ and as a flawed work of natural history.³⁹

Moffett's poem is also part of a body of late-sixteenth-century "insect poetry" which drew parallels between human society and insect life. John Heywood's *The Spider and the Flie, a Parable*, presented political com-

³⁴Moffett, *Theater of Insects*, 1068.

³⁵*Silkewormes and Their Flies* (1599; facsimile ed., Binghamton, N.Y.: SUNY Binghamton Press, 1989), 28. The fidelity to one mate described by Moffett refers to the fact that after the silkmoths mate, the male dies; the female does not mate again, but dies somewhat later, after laying eggs.

³⁶On agrarian improvement see Andrew McRae, "Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1992).

³⁷Elizabeth Tebeaux, "Women and Technical Writing, 1475–1700: Technology, Literacy, and Development of a Genre," in *Women, Science and Medicine 1500–1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society*, ed. Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1997).

³⁸Margaret Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 113.

³⁹Hoeniger and Hoeniger, *Growth of Natural History in Stuart England*, 16–17.

mentary in the guise of natural history. Edmund Spenser wrote several poems utilizing natural history themes in addition to his more famous allegory *The Faerie Queene*.⁴⁰ In the “insect poetry” of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the silkworm appeared in the larger context of Christian morality as an object lesson, while the workings of the beehive presented models for appropriate social hierarchy in the contemporary beekeeping literature.⁴¹ In Moffett’s work the silkworm provides these metaphors (that is, of economic and religious transformation), and the opportunity for discussion about social-political issues like luxurious apparel, but it is also the occasion for a fairly specific economic program.

Moffett’s poem was one of a number of works printed around the turn of the century which were aimed at promoting sericulture in England, and it was possibly written for the occasion of a visit by Queen Elizabeth to Wilton, the home of Mary Sidney, countess of Pembroke, to whom Moffett was personal physician.⁴² Moffett recommended sericulture on the grounds that it was easy and enjoyable, encouraged pleasant and appropriate interaction between the sexes, and was profitable to both individuals and country:

No man so poore but he may Mulb’ries plant,
 No plant so smal but wil a silke–worm feede,
 No worme so little (unless care do want)
 But from it selfe will make a clew of threede [cocoon].
 Divine we hence, or rather reckon right,
 What usury and proffit doth arise,
 By keeping these little creatures white,
 Worthy the care of every nation wise,
 That in their owne or publique wealth delight.
 And rashly wil not things so rare despise;
 Yea sure in time they well such profit bring,
 As shall enrich both people, priest, and king.⁴³

⁴⁰Heywood’s poem appeared in 1556. Spenser’s *Muiopotmos*, in which the butterfly appears warmly clothed in metaphor, was written in 1590. See Spenser, “Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly,” in *The Shepherd’s Calendar and Other Poems*, ed. Philip Henderson (London and New York: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1932), 204–16.

⁴¹Earlier silkworm poems included Ludovicus Lazarellus, *Bombyx* (ca. 1495), and Marcus Hieronymus Vida, *De Bombyce* (1527). Victor Houlston has described Moffett’s poem as the first published attempt to promote sericulture in England, and “the only full-length poem on the subject.” On the contemporary significance of bees see Charles Butler, *Feminine Monarchie*.

⁴²For a useful discussion of the relationship between Mary Sidney and Thomas Moffett see Margaret P. Hannay, “‘How I these Studies Prize’: The Countess of Pembroke and Elizabethan Science,” in Hunter and Hutton, *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500–1700*.

⁴³Moffett, *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, 71.

In the recommendations of Moffett and his fellow promoters under Queen Elizabeth and her successor, King James, the tenant farmer, the cottager, and the estate owner alike could engage in sericulture. In addition to promoting the overall economic health of the nation, sericulture could enhance the financial well-being of cottagers and farmers who could produce needed income on the side; that income might make the difference between self-sufficiency and the parish poorhouse. For those of small means, sericulture presented an opportunity for additional income with little in the way of investment or equipment: those who could not afford to rear their worms in a shed or in lodgings, could rear them outside on hedges.

Authors like Nicholas Geffe combined glowing descriptions of the economic advantages of sericulture with claims about its value in promoting moral improvement in all classes of society.⁴⁴ Sericulture contributed to the moral improvement of all classes on two levels: first, by providing the well-off with an effective way to extend charity to the working poor, and second, by encouraging industry among the poor and the marginal both because it held out the prospect of profit and because the silkworm encouraged industry by its personal example. Reminding readers that God was in the details, Moffett praised silkworms as uncommonly diligent spinners:

None cease to worke: yea rather all contend
Both night and day who shall obtaine the prize
Of working much, and with most speede to end
...Striving (a strife not easie here to find)
In working well, who may exceed their kind.⁴⁵

Moffett's poem is one of several texts published around 1600 promoting sericulture as beneficial especially for the poor. The other works, such as Olivier de Serres's *Perfect Use of Silkworms*, do not, however, include the material that Moffett as natural historian does (mythology and metaphor); rather, they are practical treatises intended for use in the household. *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, for all its poetry, is as complex as any Renaissance natural history encyclopedia: it contains practical hints on rearing silkworms, an account of their life cycle, a fanciful account of the silkworm's origins and the adoption of silk for clothing, and musings on the nature of Nature, as well as the moral models and economic program outlined

⁴⁴Nicholas Geffe, trans., *The Perfect Use of Silk-Wormes, and Their Benefit: With the Exact Planting, and Artificiall Handling of Mulberrie Trees Whereby to Nourish Them, and the Figures to Know how to Feede the Wormes, and to Wind off the Silke*, by Olivier de Serres (London: Felix Kyngston, 1607). Geffe also attached an essay of his own promoting sericulture in England "for the Generall use and universall benefit of all those his Countrey men which embrace them" (placed at the end of the volume and numbered separately, 1–14).

⁴⁵Moffett, *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, 61.

above. In short, the work is composed of many of the same ingredients as the *Theater of Insects*.

OBSERVATION AND THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

Moffett's *Theater of Insects*, while concerned with some of the same issues as *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, is clearly a work of natural philosophy, a "tabula" intended to provide a broad and comprehensive overview of the insect world and man's relations with it. The work was to be as factual as possible, which necessarily meant comparing traditional wisdoms and evaluating new information about insects.

The key for Moffett in evaluating accounts of insects' life histories is usually observation. He repeatedly stresses the importance of observation of animals in the acquisition of knowledge about them. In assessing the veracity of a particular fact or observation, he weighs it against his own knowledge and against other existing accounts, many of them second-hand, and appears at least occasionally to have felt it was a thankless task. "I have mended the method and language, and I have put out above a thousand tautologies, trivial matters, and things unseasonably spoken...it had been better to have written a new History than to have mended this which was so tattered and confused," he complained.⁴⁶ Moffett did not verify everything, of course: in the case of information about American species, such as a type of firefly described by John White during his trip to Virginia, Moffett merely notes the account of the insects and makes use of White's drawings.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, he generally admits when he is reporting someone else's observation, and indicates whether or not he finds that source credible.

In cases where his own observation differed from that of a classical or a contemporary source, Moffett was not afraid to pronounce the other source incorrect. He laments, for example, the absence of reliable accounts concerning "Indian flying Ants," about which he complains that "I have nothing that I write for certain...for Authors themselves are uncertain, and many late writers, having travelled over almost all India on foot, have yet found none of those gold-hoarders and devourers of flesh."⁴⁸ Moffett flatly accuses Pliny of lying and recording nonsense about ants in his *Natural History*. In addition, as Moffett waxed eloquent over the exactness of the parallels between the orderly workings of the beehive and English society's notions of proper domestic government, he set himself against classical authority in the matter of bee reproduction. He argued against Pliny

⁴⁶Moffett, preface to *Theater of Insects*.

⁴⁷F. D. and J. F. M. Hoeniger state that Moffett borrowed drawings of the firefly and a gaddy from White in *The Development of Natural History in Tudor England*, 49.

⁴⁸Moffett, *Theater of Insects*, 1024.

and Aristotle in favor of reproduction through copulation, rather than through spontaneous generation from honey or the putrefying bodies of dead animals.

F. D. and J. F. M. Hoeniger point to an instance when Moffett weighed an observation of Thomas Penny's against an observation of Aristotle's (to Penny's discredit), to illustrate Moffett's "backwardness."⁴⁹ It might also be seen as a reflection of Moffett's unwillingness to unseat long-standing authority without compelling evidence. This difference also stems from a difference of opinion between the two naturalists about what kinds of information it is important to provide about the animals under study. Penny's descriptions of insects, to the extent that they can be distinguished in the manuscript at all, are exactly that: descriptions of insects' appearance, including some information about reproductive habits, but there is little discussion of their behavior. For Moffett, as I have already observed, understanding insects' behavior was a vital part of understanding their moral and economic importance for humans. In order to understand insects' behavior, it was necessary to observe them extensively and to make the most use possible of the observations of others.

It was upon observation that Moffett based some of his claims about the larger social and metaphorical value of the study of insects in particular. In *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, some of these claims rest on the silkworm's appearance; Moffett compares them as objects of wonder to Regiomontanus' famous mechanical fleas, arguing that as

greatest hearts make ever smallest bragges,
And little caskets hold our richest goods:
So both in Art and Nature is most cleere,
That greatest worths in smallest things appeare.⁵⁰

But it is not simply the insects' outer appearance, and in particular their small size, which makes them of such interest to Moffett; it is also their structure, their "fabrick" in a broad sense. In praising house spiders in *Theater of Insects*, Moffett marvels at the balanced proportions of their body parts; he compares the shape of the spider's abdomen favorably to the sphere, that most perfect of shapes, and declares that the skin of the spider's abdomen "is so soft, smooth, polished and neat, that she precedes the softest skin'd Mayds, and the daintiest and most beautifull Strumpets."⁵¹ This appreciation of the insect's structure is by no means a matter of simple observation and admiration, however. In clarifying the origins of

⁴⁹Hoeniger and Hoeniger, *The Development of Natural History in Stuart England*, 14–15.

⁵⁰Moffett, *Silkwormes and Their Flies*, 34.

⁵¹Moffett, *Theater of Insects*, 1065–66. The spider's body, he writes, is "wholly round and orbicular, or at least Ovall, that is next to it" (1064).

the Latin name for the house fly, for example, Moffett remarks that in examining the housefly, “in taking off his wings you shall see that his head is full of sinewes, his body soft, his tail tendinous.”⁵² Moreover, the insect’s function—its “workings”—its behavior, and its appearance were intertwined in the lessons each was supposed to teach. In the tiniest details of structure, in even the most irritating of insects, Moffett finds the design of God. Moffett noted that

the Nature of Spiders is worthy to be admired in chief, and is apparent by their curious working, as any reasonable man will judge.... Nature hath used no less elegancy and bounty in the Spider, than she hath done in the Butter-fly, and flie, and it is no light disease of the mind to disdain so beautiful a work, and to be afraid of a creature that weaves so curiously.⁵³

Even gnats presented an opportunity to marvel at the relationship between an animal’s structure and its behavior, both the result of divine design. Presenting the gnat as an example of “God’s ordinary hand,” Moffett asked

where hath he planted so many Senses in a Gnat? ...with what great curiosity hath he fastned the wings? with what great art hath he extended the small legs? and disposed the hungry hollow belly, and hath made it thirsty after mans blood? and as the small Beak it hath cannot be seen, he hath so made it double by a reciprocal art, that it should be sharp pointed to enter, and hollow to draw it forth.⁵⁴

The examination of insects’ bodies had two purposes: first, to advance humans’ knowledge of these creatures, and second, to focus the naturalist’s attention on God’s design for the world and his active intervention in humans’ lives through the natural world. Moffett’s view thus connects the moral world of the sixteenth century to the mechanism of the seventeenth.

CONCLUSION

The work of Moffett (called “the ever-famous Thomas Moffett” on the title page of one of his medical works) has been slighted by historians of science for too long. In early- and mid-twentieth-century histories of science, such as Louis Miall’s *Early Naturalists* and Marie Boas’s *Scientific Renaissance*, Moffett appeared primarily as an editor of the work of others, a misguided encyclopedist of importance only as part of the transition to a

⁵²Ibid., 931.

⁵³Ibid., 1065.

⁵⁴Ibid., preface.

more scientific view of knowing and writing about nature.⁵⁵ Most recently, Moffett is mentioned only briefly in Catherine Wilson's *Invisible World* championing the study of insects, defending a nascent discipline (entomology) from the vantage point of an anachronistic concern with the balance of Creation and nature as a reflection of God's will.⁵⁶ Often, he is not mentioned at all.

The connections between human society and the natural world that Moffett himself seems to have found the most compelling, were by no means left behind in the adoption of a "modern" worldview based on systematic observation and scientific experiments. Instead these connections would become the province of books about nature intended for popular and/or religious audiences, and especially for children. The fact that *Theater of Insects* was published in English in 1658, and remained an influential book on insects in the later seventeenth century, is both a reflection of Moffett's continued popularity (the first edition was in Latin), and evidence of the continuing importance of his ideas.

I would like to offer up my observations as a contribution to the ongoing discussion among historians and philosophers of science who are engaged in reevaluating the utility of the concept of the Scientific Revolution, and who are asking, as Lorraine Daston did recently, "What was modern about the early Modern?"⁵⁷ Sixteenth-century natural history has been too often portrayed as a prelude to seventeenth-century upheavals in the sciences. Insects, except where they are economically significant, are too often ignored altogether. I'd like to suggest that we follow Steven Shapin's contextualization of the Scientific Revolution farther backward,⁵⁸ so that we see the work of writers like Moffett as part of a tradition that still wished to examine the natural world in the broadest way, and as part of a dialogue about nature that stretches forward to the present and back as far as we can see.

⁵⁵Louis Compton Miall, *The Early Naturalists: Their Lives and Work (1530–1789)* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912); Marie Boas, *The Scientific Renaissance, 1450–1630* (London: Collins, 1962). Miall was particularly critical of Moffett, describing him as unable to "distinguish between a true and a false narrative," and *Theater of Insects* as a work which "possesses little value" and which "ill repay[s] the reader's exertions" (85–86). In these works Moffett fails as both a natural historian and as a scientist by poorly representing an outdated worldview.

⁵⁶Catherine Wilson, *The Invisible World: Early Modern Philosophy and the Invention of the Microscope* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁵⁷Lorraine Daston, "The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe," *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 149.

⁵⁸See for example Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), and *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Milan and the Development and Dissemination of *Il ballo nobile*: Lombardy as the Terpsichorean Treasury for Early Modern European Courts

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LE MOSCHE D'ITALIA IN UNA POPPA, *Volando in Francia, per veder i ragni...*¹ In these lines, titled "Di Pompeo Diabone," the Milanese artist and poet Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo celebrated the Italian dancing masters who, lured like flies to the web of the spider, served in the courts of France.² In the sixteenth century there were many Italians in France, including a large number of influential and prosperous dancing masters.³ In spite of obvious connections with Florence via Catherine de' Medici, the majority came from Lombardy, an area long considered the center of *il ballo nobile*, the formalized social dance that emphasized courtesy, courtliness, memory, and expertise. The preeminence of Lombard dancing masters and the reputation of Milan as a lead-

¹I would like to thank the members of the University of North Carolina Renaissance Workshop for their helpful comments and suggestions. I am especially grateful to Professors Melissa M. Bullard, James Haar, and John M. Headley, and to Barbara Sparti and Janet Sorrentino for their careful reading of drafts of this paper. The opinions and interpretations, and the errors, are my own.

²Gio. Paolo Lomazzo, RIME/ DI GIO. PAOLO LOMAZZI/ MILANESE PITTORE,/ diuise/ In sette Libri./ Nelle quali ad imitatione de i Grotteschi vsati da' pittori, ha canato / le lodi di Dio, & de le cose sacre, di Prencipi, di Signori,/ & huomini letterati, di pittori, scoltori, & architetti,/ ET POI/ Studiosamente senza alcun certo ordine, e legge accoppiato insieme/ vari & diuersi concetti tolti da Filosofi, Historici, Poeti,/ & da altri Scrittori./ DOVE SI VIENE A DIMOSTRARE/ la diuersita de gli studi, inclinationi, costumi, & capricci de/ gli huomini di qualunque stato, & professione;/ Et però intitolate Grotteschi, non solo diletteuoli per la varietà de le/ inuentioni, mà vtili ancora per la moralità che vi si contiene./ CON LA VITA DEL AVTTORE/ descritta da lui stesso in rime sciolte./ IN MILANO,/ Per Paolo Gottardo Pontio, l'anno 1587./ Con licenza de Superiori. See, esp., "Di Pompeo Diabone" in "Libro terzo dei grottesche, 167. Lomazzo was a Milanese painter (1538–1600) who, after becoming blind at the age of thirty-three, wrote these poems in addition to two books on painting, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura, scoltura, et architettura* (1584) and *Idea del tempio della pittura* (1590).

³For a recent discussion of Italians in France in this period, see Jean-François Dubost, *La France italienne, xvi^e–vii^e siècle* ([Paris]: Aubier, 1997). This work is complemented by Emile Picot's *Italiens en France au seizième siècle* (1918; reprint fac., Rome: Vecchiarelli, 1995) which, as its recent republication indicates, remains an important part of the canon in this field. See also note 34.

ing center of dancing provided a type of cultural wealth⁴ valued by contemporaries not only in Italy and France, but throughout the courts of Europe.

In this paper, I first contend that dancing was an essential skill for courtiers and that dancing masters were highly regarded servants of the court. I then assert that northern Italian masters were in the van of the evolving *ballo nobile*. My argument rests in large part on the treatises written by the dancers themselves in both fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, supplemented by a variety of contemporary sources—poems, letters, and autobiographical writings. That dancing masters from Milan migrated to and were well received and rewarded in Paris, Madrid, Prague, and Cologne is important evidence of the influence of *il ballare lombardo* and the professionals who taught and performed in that style.⁵

IMPORTANCE OF DANCING IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

It is perhaps difficult in the late twentieth century to imagine the significance of dancing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a juncture of recreation, amusement, and exercise, dancing provided the courtier with an opportunity for self-aggrandizement or display of essential social and personal skills and virtues. The Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini, writing in his *Ricordi* of the advantages of facility in social dancing, noted that he had “seen from experience” that skill in dancing added “dignity and reputation even to men of good rank” to the extent that “whoever lacks [such skills] lacks something important” that “opens the way to the favor of princes, and sometimes becomes the beginning or the reason for great profit and high honors.”⁶

⁴This term is adapted from Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital. See Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), esp. 53–54, 70.

⁵The term “*il ballare lombardo*” is used by F. Alberto Gallo in his “Il ballare lombardo, circa 1435–1475,” *Studi musicali* 8 (1979): 61–84. It was adopted by Alessandro Pontremoli and Patrizia La Rocca in their excellent study of fifteenth-century dancing, *Il ballare lombardo: Teoria e prassi coreutica nella festa di corte dal xv secolo* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1987), but its use is questioned by Barbara Sparti, *Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro: De Pratica seu arte tripudii: On the Practice or Art of Dancing*, trans. and ed. Barbara Sparti (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). See note 22 below. Pontremoli and La Rocca write, “Il ballare lombardo: può indurre al sorriso un confronto tra intenzioni di tale impegno e una ricognizione che si applica con rigorosa acribia a un frammento apparentemente poco significativo della nostra vita storica,” and declare their intention “di correlare ai moti della vita storica propri di una grande civiltà come quella lombarda, gesti, movimenti, segni a forte dominante simbolica e rituale, come quelli che si lasciano riconoscere nella trattatistica rivisitata,” 5.

⁶Maxim 179 in Francesco Guicciardini, *Maxims and Reflections of a Renaissance Statesman* (*Ricordi*), trans. Mario Domandi, intro. Nicolai Rubenstein (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 86. This maxim is in “Collection C” (1530) and not in the earlier collections.

As courts changed in personnel and function, for those who wielded power or wished to do so, and those who associated with them, social accomplishments became as essential as political and military skills. The warrior-knight transformed into the courtier whose job became increasingly that of court ornament. Cultural knowledge and accomplishments helped to define his place in the hierarchic order and accentuated the social chasm that separated the elite from "ordinary people." Dancing trained the body in valued qualities of "gravity, elegance, grace, grandeur and majesty."⁷ A disciplined posture and gesture expressed control, confidence, and stability. Bodily courtesies paralleled verbal ones.⁸ Some of the conventions of courtesy had already emerged in the fifteenth century, but the sixteenth saw them become considerably more intricate.⁹

Dance rose to a position of special importance among the activities in which a courtier was expected to participate with competence and grace. Festivities, such as those that celebrated weddings or the arrival of important visitors, invariably included dances. Dance was also part of everyday life in the courts, even a spontaneous entertainment among peers. A literary, although instructive, example occurs at the end of the first book of *The Courtier*: to close the evening's discussion, the duchess Elisabetta asks two ladies to dance. The musician-dancing master Barletta then begins to play and the ladies perform two dances. The ladies undoubtedly practiced regularly with the court dancing master, but this particular performance does not seem to have been scheduled in advance.¹⁰

Stephen Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning can be applied to courts as well as to individual courtiers.¹¹ If it was essential to present oneself as refined and accomplished in all the social graces, as one who could fit into a court and adorn it, it was also desirable for the prince to present his entire court, a perfectly fashioned setting for himself and an expression of his taste and wealth. While for the courtier balls provided an opportu-

⁷Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 212.

⁸Mark Franko offers an interesting perspective on the Renaissance understanding of the dancing body. See his *The Dancing Body in Renaissance Choreography (ca.1416-1589)* (Birmingham, Ala.: Summa, 1986) and "Renaissance Conduct Literature and the Basse Danse: The Kinesis of *Bonne Grace*," in *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe: Papers of the 16th Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Richard C. Trexler (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1985), 55-66.

⁹Norbert Elias, *The History of Manners*, vol. 1, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Pantheon, 1939/1982), and *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon, 1983). The popularity of Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959) and of a plethora of courtesy books underscores the changes in manners and social expectations at this time.

¹⁰Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, 86.

¹¹Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

nity to demonstrate social graces, such events, and particularly the elaborately constructed mascarades and *intermedii*, afforded the prince a venue to promote his fame and power and to exhibit the bountiful knowledge and sophistication to be found in his court as well as his material resources in costumes, sets, machinery. Expensively dressed courtiers, moving in ordered choreographies, gave, in festive microcosm, a glimpse of the prince's rule over order and plenty.

A courtier needed instruction to fill his role at court, and dancing masters met this need. A prince needed dances of imagination, grace, refinement: a varied yet ordered geometry, and dancing masters met this need also. An ideal dancing master could instruct in the usual forms of social dance, compose new dances for celebratory occasions and rehearse the participants, tutor children in social graces such as bows, and even teach fencing and horsemanship. He could either perform himself in the more virtuosic, perhaps exotic or eccentric, dances beyond the capacity or dignity of the courtier, such as *moresche* or *mattachini*, or even the more difficult *gagliarda* variations, or he could present his students in sword dances and athletic displays, even the "*salti mortali*."¹² In the fifteenth century a semiprofessional category of dancing masters evolved with practitioners from varied social backgrounds who attended to diverse duties. By contrast, sixteenth-century dancing masters appear to have been fully professionalized and to have gained access to courts and preferment by their talents as performers and teachers, and, perhaps, their personalities and appearance.¹³

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Now let me argue for the leadership of Milan and my claim that it was a repository of terpsichorean riches. Regional dance practices were influenced by fifteenth-century links with Burgundy and the presence of a host

¹²These death-defying acrobatic feats were described by Arcangelo Tuccaro, master of ceremonies and choreographer for the French king and *hofspringmeister* for Maximilian II, in his *TROIS/ DIALOGUES DE/ L'EXERCICE DE SAVTER, ET/ VOLTIGER EN L'AIR./ Avec les figures qui servent à la parfaite demonstration/ & intelligence dudict Art/ Par le Sr. ARCHANGE TVCCARO, de l'Abruzzo,/ au Royaume de Naples/. DEDIE AV ROY./ A PARIS,/ Chez CLAVDE DE MONSTR'OEL, tenant sa bou/tique en la Cour du Palais, au Nom de Iesus./ M.D.LXXXXIX.*

¹³According to F. Alberto Gallo, during the second half of the fifteenth century, a split developed in the ways dancing was included at banquets and *feste*. Courtiers continued to participate at private gatherings in dances that were accompanied by monodic instrumental music; dancing masters also choreographed dances—*balli*, *balletti*, and *moresche*—to be done to French and Italian *canzoni* as *spettacoli*. Differing repertoires developed and the opportunities for professional dancers increased. Gallo, "La danza negli spettacoli conviviali del secondo Quattrocento" in *Spettacoli conviviali dall'antichità classica alle corte Italiane del Quattrocento: Atti del VII Convegno di Studi* (Viterbo: Centro del Studi sul Teatro Mediovale e Rinascimentale, 1983), 262.

of northern musicians. Lombard dancing may have incorporated Spanish influences, perhaps introduced by Jewish dancing masters as well as through ties with Naples.¹⁴ The result was a highly developed style of dancing that found a ready welcome in the Sforza court. The dancing masters of this area represented a cultural treasure for the region, known and respected beyond Lombardy.¹⁵

An idea of the reputation of the area can be gained from the response of the Florentines to the dancing of Galeazzo Maria Sforza on the occasion of his 1459 visit. They praised the fifteen-year-old who “danced without error,” and “made worthy reverences and lovely bows,” an indication of the recognized connection between physical deportment and dancing, and the ability to express in bodily gesture an understanding and respect for nuances of courtly hierarchy.¹⁶ Six years later, in 1465, Lorenzo de’ Medici, then fifteen, was sent to Milan, following the plan his grandfather had recommended when he was but five, to “domesticate himself with the duke [of Milan] and with his illustrious sons.”¹⁷ The domestication that Cosimo had in mind must have included instruction in *il ballare lombardo*, such as the Florentines had observed in the performance of young Galeazzo Maria.

Some contrast of Florentine and Milanese dances is implied by Galeazzo Maria who asserted that the women in Cosimo’s family danced “in the Florentine manner, skipping and shifting in refined fashion.”¹⁸ He appears to describe dances much closer to *caroles* and *farandoles*, the medi-

¹⁴For a discussion of whether there may have been a disproportionate number of Jewish dancing masters, see Sparti, “Introduction” to *De Pratica*, 33–35. See also, Sparti, “Questions Concerning the Life and Works of Guglielmo Ebreo,” in *Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro e la danza nelle corti italiane del XV secolo: Atti de Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, Pesaro 16/18 July 1987, ed. Maurizio Padovan (Pisa: Pacini, 1990), 46.

¹⁵According to Eugenia Casini-Ropa, a welcoming banquet for Isabella d’Aragona in Tortona in 1489, served as both “model and stimulus” for the theatricalization of celebrations throughout Europe, “Il banchetto di Bergonzio Botta per le nozze di Isabella d’Aragona e Gian Galeazzo Sforza nel 1489: Quando la storiografia si sostituisce alla storia,” in *Spettacoli conviviali dall’antichità classica alle corti Italiane del Quattrocento: Atti del VII Convegno di Studi* (Viterbo: Centro di Studi sul Teatro Medioevale e Rinascimentale, 1983), 291–306, esp. 292.

¹⁶Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Studies in Social Discontinuity, ed. Charles Tilly and Edward Shorter (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 238. Sparti gives a detailed description of these events in *De Pratica*, 48–50.

¹⁷Trexler, *Public Life*, 429. Trexler cites A. Rochon, *La jeunesse de Laurent de Medici (1449–1478)* (Paris: Société d’Édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 1963), 103 n. 46, who writes, “Un an plus tôt, Cosme songeait déjà à envoyer Laurent à Milan ‘a ciò si adomesticchi col Duca e co’ suoi incliti figliuoli,’” quoting a letter from Nicodemo Tranchedini to Francesco Sforza of 7 May 1464 and citing Rachele Magnani, *Delle relazioni private fra la corte Sforzesca e casa Medici* (Milan: Tip. S. Giuseppe, 1910), 28.

¹⁸Trexler, *Public Life*, 426. Trexler cites B. Buser, *Die Beziehungen der Mediceer zu Frankreich während der Jahre 1434–1494, in ihrem Zusammenhang mit den Allgemeinen Verhältnissen Italiens* (Leipzig, 1879), 347 seq. “Oldito questo tova apparchiata una festagliola de done per certo bella, dove erano la moglie di Piero, quella di Giohanne, una figliolla grande di Piero di Cosimo, la moglie di Piero-francesco, una giovane di Strozi, quale se non e la piu

eval line and circle group dances. Fifteenth-century Lombardic dancing, made up of *basse danze* and *balli*, emphasized refined and controlled movement that contrasted with the more repetitious, probably more ram-bunctious dances of the “vile and rude mechanicals.”¹⁹ Dancing masters strove to help the elite distance themselves from such disorderly activity and to make evident their social elevation through more complicated performance. One could infer that the “refined” fashion of the Medici had removed the disorderly aspects of medieval dances, but that the Lombard style was already more varied and nuanced.

The dancing that Galeazzo Maria had learned in Milan, *il ballare lombardo*, was apparently codified by Domenico da Piacenza and his disciples or associates, Antonio Cornazano and Guglielmo Ebreo.²⁰ Domenico’s

bella di questa cita, almancho e avanzata da puoche et cosi alcune villane et quivi si ballo per tute queste ala fiorentina con salti et scambieti a la polita...” (Paris, Bibl. Nat. fonds italien 1588, April 1459, Galeazzo Maria to his father, Duke Francesco Sforza, from Florence).

¹⁹The phrase is taken from the manual of Guglielmo Ebreo, one of three fifteenth-century treatise authors. “Ma aliena in tutto & mortal inimicha di vitiosi e mecanici plebei: i quali le piu volte con animo coroto & colla sclerata mente la fano di arte liberale & virtuosa scienza: adultera & servile: et molte volte anchora alle lor inhoneste concupiscense sotto specie di honestate la inducono mezana per poter cautamente al effetto d’alchuna sua voluptate danzando pervenire,” Sparti, *De Pratica*, 90–91. Guglielmo here contrasts the dance style in which he instructs with that of members of lower social classes, not with the Florentines. Patricia Parker offers an insightful examination of the Renaissance attitude to uncourtly members of society: Parker, “Rude mechanicals,” in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Sallibrass, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture, ed. Stephen Orgel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁰Domenico, who probably lived from about 1420 to 1475, was a member of the noble class, referred to as “*spettabili*,” a knight of the Order of the Golden Spur, and married to a member of a Ferrarese diplomatic family, the Trotti. Cornazano was a court humanist from a family of minor nobility. A dancing treatise constituted but a small part of works that included poetry, plays, biography, and writings on religious and military topics. According to Barbara Sparti, Cornazano should not be classified as a dancing master; while he undoubtedly participated in dancing at the Sforza court and elsewhere, his treatise, *Libro dell’arte del danzare*, simply records the instruction of his master, Domenico da Piacenza, and he was not himself a dance instructor (personal electronic correspondence with Ms. Sparti, 29 April 1998). Only Guglielmo, of the three, was primarily a dancing master. His father was Moise, also a dancing master, but Guglielmo claimed Domenico as his master. His ties with Milan and presence in that city were primarily the result of the patronage of the lord of Pesaro, Alessandro Sforza, and his son Costanzo. He ended his career in Urbino, where, with his son Pier Paolo, he served the duke. Guglielmo appended an “autobiography” to the Paris 1476 redaction of his treatise: F. Alberto Gallo, “L’autobiografia artistica di Giovanni Ambrosio (Guglielmo Ebero) da Pesaro,” *Studi musicali* 12, no. 2 (1983): 189–202. The most reliable introduction to the fifteenth-century dancing masters is Barbara Sparti’s “Introduction,” *De Pratica*, 3–72. Another excellent source for fifteenth-century Milanese dance and the dancing masters associated with it is Alessandro Pontremoli and Patrizia La Rocca, *Il ballare lombardo*. A further study of fifteenth century dance is A. William Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises and Collections in the Tradition of Domenico da Piacenza*, vol. I: *Treatises and Music*, trans. A. William Smith, Dance and Music Series, vol. 4, ed. Wendy Hilton (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1995).

treatise, *De la arte di ballare et danzare*, is considered by Italian dance and theater historian Alessandro Pontremoli the *fonte* for *il ballo nobile* of Lombardy in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries.²¹ Although Domenico's ties were primarily with Ferrara and he is also known as Domenico da Ferrara, he, along with his disciples, participated in festivities at the Sforza court of Milan. The Sforzas were notable practitioners of Domenico's style, and, while he himself may have served relatively briefly in Milan, it is not surprising that Domenico's teachings should be known as *il ballare lombardo*. The constant and close ties between Sforzas of both Milan and Pesaro and the Este of Ferrara, the Gonzaga of Mantua, and the Montefeltro of Urbino encouraged the circulation through these courts of all three men.²² Furthermore, the sources that refer to Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano link these towns in northern Italy with Naples, Florence, Rome, Bologna, and a multitude of smaller courts, and demonstrate a broad geographic distribution of *il ballare lombardo*.

Milanese ties with Naples were much stronger than to Florence and northern dancing styles were spread through the usual diplomatic strategy of marriage. When Ippolita Sforza arrived in Naples as the bride of Alfonso d'Aragona in 1465, her skills clearly impressed the Neapolitan court. According to a letter from Guglielmo Ebreo to Ippolita's mother Bianca Maria Sforza, Ippolita's new father-in-law King Ferrante sent to Guglielmo's patron Alessandro Sforza, asking for the dancing master to

²¹Pontremoli and La Rocca, *Il ballare lombardo*, 22. Domenico's *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi/De la arte di ballare et danzare* exists in only one manuscript: Paris, BN, f. ital. 972 (Pd). A modern edition was published by Dante Bianchi, "Un trattato inedito di Domenico da Piacenza," *La Bibliofilia* 65 (1963): 109–49. A more recent transcription by D. R. Wilson, *Domenico of Piacenza (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS ital. 972)* (Cambridge, England: The Early Dance Circle, 1988), is considered more accurate, according to Barbara Sparti, "Rôti Bouilli: Take Two 'El Gioioso Fiorito,'" *Studi musicali* 24, no. 2 (1995): 231–32, n. 5. A modern, translated edition of the extant copy of Cornazano's manuscript is available: *Antonio Cornazano: The Book on the Art of Dancing*, ed. and trans. Madeleine Inglehearn and Peggy Forsyth (London: Dance Books, 1981). Guglielmo's treatise was redacted more frequently than any other of the fifteenth-century dancing manuals. Eight copies and several fragments have been located. The most recent transcription (and only English translation) is that of Sparti. The manuscripts of the three dancing masters are discussed in W. Thomas Marrocco, "Inventory of Fifteenth-Century Bassedanze, Balli & Balletti," *CORD, Dance Research Journal* 13 (1981); as well as Sparti, "Introduction," *De Pratica*, 3–23; Pontremoli and La Rocca, *Il ballare lombardo*, 21 seq.; and Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, 117, 187–88.

²²The close relations among these courts is recognized by Siro Ferrone who notes that in the evolution of professional actors during the period prior to the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, Italy was divided into what he terms "politico-cultural areas" with distinct linguistic identities, one of which, the "*area padana*," included Mantua, Ferrara, and Milan. Ferrone, "Attori, professionisti e dilettanti," in *Il teatro del cinquecento: I luoghi, i testi e gli attori*, ed. Siro Ferrone (Florence: Sansoni, 1982), 64. The tendency to think of Lombardy as a geographic area, centered on Milan, and including more area to the north and northeast than to the southeast, may derive from the period of Spanish hegemony and from the regional administrative divisions of modern Italy.

come to Naples to teach his daughters Beatrice and Leonora *il ballare lombardo*.²³ Through Beatrice, who married King Matthias Corvinus, this style of dancing traveled to Hungary. Through her marriage to Ercole d'Este, Leonora maintained this style of dancing at the court of Ferrara. Both of Leonora's daughters, Beatrice and Isabella, were noted dancers.²⁴ When Leonora's son Alfonso wed Lucrezia Borgia, widely reputed to be a skillful and enthusiastic dancer, his sister Isabella begged her other brother, Cardinal Ippolito, for the services of his musician and dancing master Riccardetto in order that her dancing might not pale before Lucrezia's.²⁵

Correspondence between Bona Sforza of Milan and the rulers of Mantua, Federico and Barbara Gonzaga, alludes to the value attributed to dancing masters and the leading role of Milan. The letters record requests for the services of Lorenzo Lavagnolo, Barbara's *ballarino*, whom she described as "*maestro sopra ogni altro... in questo mestiero del danzare*."²⁶ Lavagnolo served the Gonzaga, but transferred to Milan, and the service of Bona of Savoy in 1479, returning briefly for a Gonzaga wedding in 1480. However, after five years in Milan, he shifted to Ferrara, where, although he traveled to other cities for special events—to Bologna for the Annibale Bentivoglio/Lucrezia d'Este wedding in 1487 and to Milan in 1491 for the Ercole d'Este/Angela Sforza wedding—he apparently completed his career.

The treatises ascribed to Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano share a common technical style and repertory of named dances, most of which were composed by Domenico.²⁷ Of the known choreographers of the fif-

²³Guglielmo's letter is transcribed in full in the appendix. It was written after Guglielmo had converted and changed his name to Giovanni Ambrogio. The interpretation of the letter is contested, as is the appropriateness of the term "*il ballare lombardo*." See note 5 above. See also Spati, *De Pratica*, 31, as well as personal electronic correspondence with Ms. Spati (3 July 1998 and 8 July 1998) in which she suggests that Guglielmo referred to this style of dancing as "*il ballare lombardo*" to please Bianca Maria Sforza, the Milanese duchess believed to be his godmother, to whom he was writing.

²⁴Beatrice became the wife of Lodovico Sforza il Moro, and duchess of Milan and Isabella, wife of Francesco II Gonzaga and marchesa of Urbino. Isabella, as a child of seven, danced with Guglielmo. Leonora's concern with proper court festivities led her to try to emulate the wealthier and, from the duchess's perspective, more socially correct Sforza court. Present in Milan for Beatrice's wedding, Leonora noted the formal protocols imposed by this carefully self-fashioning court and wrote to her husband, impressing upon him the importance of ceremonial rigor and urging that he obtain a master of ceremonies for the impending wedding of their son Alfonso to Anna Sforza: Richard Brown, "The reception of Anna Sforza in Ferrara, February 1491," *Renaissance Studies* 2, no. 2 (1988): 231–39.

²⁵Maria Bellonci, *Lucrezia Borgia: La sua vita e i suoi tempi* (Milan: Montadori, 1939), 229–30.

²⁶Pontremoli and La Rocca, *Il ballare lombardo*, 64–67; Motta, "Musici alla corte," 63–64; and Giuseppe Magaletta, *Teatro musica e danza a Urbino nel Rinascimento* (Urbino: Editrice Montrefeltro, 1992), 149–50.

²⁷Guglielmo also composed many of the dances. His treatises include compositions by other dancing masters: his brother Giuseppe Ebreo, Phyllipo, Giulio da Bologna, Marjotto da Perugia, and Lorenzo de' Medici. One of the dances performed for Galeazzo Maria in

teenth century, all but Lavagnolo were apparently teaching the repertory attributed to Domenico and it is probable that Lavagnolo's instruction was not dissimilar since his services were sought by virtually the same courts as were those of Domenico and Guglielmo—Milan, Mantua, Ferrara, Urbino, and Bologna. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century, the memory of Domenico's dances led the poet Trissino to compare them with the paintings of Leonardo and the poetry of Homer, Dante, and Petrarch, as a standard against which dancing could be judged.²⁸

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In the sixteenth century, the loss of Milanese independence to France and then Spain brought increased ties to the courts of those countries. The placement of Milan as gateway to Italy made it a cultural as well as military nexus for the Habsburg world. It was relatively common practice for the Spanish governors to entertain important visitors with performances that included dancing. Cesare Negri, the Milanese dancing master whose *Le Gratie d'amore* documents late-sixteenth-century *ballo nobile*, provides the modern scholar with two valuable resources that shed light on the influential role of Milanese dance and dancing masters.²⁹ First, he lists almost fifty dancing masters active in his lifetime, of whom over a dozen served outside Italy. Negri also provides a professional resume of events at which he or his students performed, often at the request of his patrons, Spanish governors of Milan. The honored guests at these events included Henry III of France, Don Juan of Austria, Rudolf and Ernest, the sons of the emperor Maximilian, Margherita of Austria, the queen of Spain, her mother the archduchess Maria and her brother Albert, and the Spanish infanta Isabella. In the cases of Don Juan, Rudolf, and Ernest, Negri gave

Florence—the *bassa danza* "Lauro," subsequently included in Guglielmo's manual—may have been composed by a very young Lorenzo de' Medici (Sparti, *De Pratica*, 48–50). A poem describing the visit of Galeazzo Maria to Florence does not name any of the dancing masters but it does mention dances composed by Domenico, "Leoncello," and "Belri-guardo." The presence of these dances, reportedly performed in Florence, in the manuals of all three dancing masters suggests that the Florentine dance was perhaps less different from the Lombardic than Galeazzo Maria's remarks imply. These dances can be found as follows: Domenico, Wilson, *Domenico of Piacenza*, 18–22; Cornazano, Inglehearn, *Antonio Cornazano*, 27–29; and Guglielmo, Sparti, *De Pratica*, 164–65.

²⁸In Trissino's discussion of the virtuous or vicious actions and customs of men, which the artist can imitate, he places "gioioso," "lioncelli," and "rosine," all dances in Domenico and Guglielmo's treatises, as examples of imitating the best. "Verbigrazia nel ballare, alcuni, ballando gioiosi e lioncelli e rosine e simili, imitano i migliori; altri, ballando padoane e spingarò, imitano i peggiori," in Gian Giorgio Trissino's "La Poetica," book 5, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del cinquecento*, ed. Bernard Weinberg (Bari: G. Laterza, 1970), 1:12.

²⁹Cesare Negri, *Le gratie d'amore* (Milan: Per l'her. del quon. Pacifico Pontio, & Gio. Battista Piccaglia, 1602; facsimile, New York: Broude, 1969).

instruction as well as entertainment. He probably taught them *mutanze* or variations of the popular *gagliarda*, a dance in which men, especially lively military men, liked to display complex and athletic leaps, turns, and kicks, as well as a well-turned calf.³⁰ For a gentleman traveling through Milan, a “master class” with Negri would be an extraordinary opportunity not available elsewhere.

At least one of Negri’s students was sent to Spain. The duke of Terranova, then governor of Milan, sent Giulio Cesare Lampugnano to the court of Philip II where he taught dancing and vaulting on horseback.³¹ From Negri we also learn that Francesco Legnano danced for both Charles V and for Philip II,³² and that Virgilio Bracesco, a Milanese then serving in France, traveled to Spain with Elizabeth Valois and also performed before Philip. It is probable that these three represent only a small part of the Italian contingent of dancers in Spain.

The flow of Italians to France began with Charles VIII who, according to Prunières, was more impressed by Italian festivities than by the wine or weather.³³ Even when Milan fell under Spanish rule, France continued to be the primary market for her rich troves of *ballerini*.³⁴ Negri names five Milanese serving the French, the poet Lomazzo includes several others, and at least eight others surface in modern literature, but there are few

³⁰Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 8. He refers to “molte e molte cose, che sommamente gli gustarono.” The relatively large number of manuals instructing in the *gagliarda* attests to its popularity. In the middle of the century, Lutio Compasso published his *Ballo della gagliarda* (Florence, 1560; facsimile, Freiburg, “fa-gisis” Musik- und Tanzedition, 1995, with introduction by Barbara Sparti), which contains 150 *gagliarda* variations; Prospero Lutij published his *Opera bellissima nella quale si contengono molte partite et passeggi di gagliarda...* (Perugia: Orlando, 1587 and 1589); at the end of the century, Livio Lupi published his *Mutanze di gagliarda, tordiglione, passo è mezzo, canari...* (Palermo: Carrara, 1600), republished with the title *Libro di gagliarda, tordiligone, passo è mezzo, canari...* (1607).

³¹Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 5. Lampugnano was living in Milan in 1582, listed in the parish census or *Stati delle anime* as a resident of the parish of S. Tecla. Terranova was governor from 1583 to 1592. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Milano (hereafter ASDMi) DSA 82, 1582, S. Tecla. Lampugnano had performed with Negri and another dancing master, Martino da Asso (possibly the “*senza naso Martin*” of Lomazzo’s poem) on 11 August 1574, before the returning King Henry of France who rewarded them with “*molte belle cose*.” This performance was at the request of the Spanish governor who may have found Lampugnano’s skills such that he wished his master, Philip II, to enjoy them. For more information on Henry’s visit in Milanese territory (he did not enter Milan itself), see Bonner Mitchell, *The Majesty of the State: Triumphal Progresses of Foreign Sovereigns in Renaissance Italy (1494–1600)* (Florence: Olschki, 1986), 124.

³²Although he received stipends and gifts from Charles V and Philip II, and Negri writes that he “sia stato caro” to them, it is not established that Legnano danced for Charles V and Philip II *outside* of Italy; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 2.

³³“Les rudes compagnons de Charles VIII et de Louis XII chevauchèrent à travers l’Italie sans rien voir des merveilles qui s’offraient à leurs regards indifférents. Ils regrettaient la France, trouvant le temps chaud et le vin aigre.... Seule, la magnificence des fêtes données en leur honneur exerça sur eux quelque attrait,” Henri Prunières, *L’Opéra italien en France avant Lulli* (1913; repr. Paris: H. Champion, 1975), xiii–xiv.

³⁴The migration of Italians into France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and related issues of anti-Italianism, both then and in subsequent historiographic moments, have

details as to the specific activities in which they were employed or, usually, the part of Italy from which they hailed.³⁵ Virgilio Bracesco and Giovanni Francesco Giera were among the most successful of the Italian dancers.³⁶ Bracesco served Henry II of France as well as his son Francis II and accompanied the French princess Elizabeth to her new husband Philip II. He married in France in 1566, was made *valet de chambre* of the duke of Orléans in 1585, and completed his career in the service of the French court. Although Negri does not claim Bracesco as a disciple of either himself or of his master, as a Milanese, it is probable that Bracesco's approach to dancing and instruction was not unlike theirs. Giovanni Francesco Giera, a disciple of Negri himself, served Henry III for twenty years, both while he was king of Poland and later when he assumed the crown of France Giera remained in France, apparently well recompensed, for the rest of his life.

Lomazzo's poem gives precedence to Negri's teacher Pompeo Diabono—*Tra molta gente que danzando giva, Vidi il raro Pompeo Diobone*.³⁷ Diabono was one of a "*bande de violiniste*," taken by the marshal de Brisac to France in 1554.³⁸ Diabono enjoyed a long and well-rewarded stay at the court of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici, charged by Henry with the "physical and social education of his son Charles, and paid both as *ballerino* and as *valet de chambre*."³⁹ Named *maître à danser* by Henry III,⁴⁰

provided an enduring theme in French political, social, and cultural accounts. See Dubost, *La France italienne*, "La Haine," 307–29; and Picot, *Italiens en France*, "Pour et contre l'influence italienne en France au XVI^e siècle," 2–32 of appendix.

³⁵While many of the dancers' names are lost or at least, without the opportunity for French archival research, I have not found them, the presence in France of at least twenty Italian dancing masters is documented. Negri's list of Milanese dancers includes Virgilio Bracesco, Giovanni Francesco Giera, Giovanni Ambrosio Valchiera, and Pompeo Diabono, in Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 3–5. Negri also mentions Lodovico Palvello, but does not tell whether he was from Milan. Lomazzo mentions Diobono, Valchiera, Padvello [Palvello?], Girolamo, Gallino, Martin, and "*il trombone*" (presumably Negri); Picot includes Bracesco, Giampietro Gallina [Gallino] de Milan, Pietro Bozzone, Beaujoyeux, Marcantonio, Julien Le Maistre, Giacomo Mario, Pompeo Dichon or Diccioni [could this be Diabono? see note 40], and Negri. Finally, Dubost cites Diabono, Gallin[o], Beaujoyeux, Francisque La Serre, and Bernard Teton.

³⁶Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 3–5.

³⁷"Di Pompeo Diobono," in *Rime di Gio. Paolo Lomazzo*, "Libro terzo dei grottesche," 167.

³⁸Prunières, *L'Opéra italien*, xv.

³⁹Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 3.

⁴⁰Dubost, *La France italienne*, 449. Diabono is not mentioned in Picot, but it is possible that a Pompeo Dichon or Diccioni, working for the court in 1560, could be identified with Diabono. The name Diabono is one rendering; Diobono and Diobone are sufficiently similar to raise no comment; the family is also identified as Aboni or Abboni. Picot does not identify the source of his information on Dichon/Diccioni. According to Negri, Diobono received 200 francs as *ballerino*, 260 francs as *valet de chambre*, 1000 francs in pension, and 160 francs for clothing; Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 3.

Diabono apparently served in France for the remainder of his life, although recently discovered documents suggest that he maintained his ties with Milan, perhaps even leaving his family in Lombardy while he provided for them from France.⁴¹

When Diabono went to France, he left a flourishing school that produced performers, choreographers, and teachers of dancing and of fencing in Milan and other Italian cities.⁴² Negri, then about eighteen, took over his master's school and became the leading dancing master in Milan. He danced or presented his students as dancers for dignitaries and he composed dances for state festivals.⁴³ Although he never claimed to have served any prince outside Italy, according to Emile Picot, Negri himself was in France in 1579.⁴⁴ It seems unlikely that Negri would fail to mention any honor or honorable service, and no other modern scholar has mentioned this possibility. It could be, however, that Negri, writing in 1602 and dedicating his treatise to Philip III of Spain, felt it impolitic to mention service to the French king. There is a gap in his autobiography between 1574, when he entertained Henry III in Milan on his return from Poland, and 1582 when he performed at Vercelli for the duke of Savoy.⁴⁵ In 1576 Negri and his family shared a house with five other families. By 1587 the family lived in a house that bore the name by which he

⁴¹He visited his Milanese relatives in 1583. Archivio di Stato di Milano (hereafter ASMi), Famiglie, *busta* 1, Abboni. In this letter, he asks permission to return to France and continue his service in order to receive his stipend of 700 francs. See my paper, "At Home in the 'Casa del Trombone': A Social-Historical View of Sixteenth-Century Milanese Dancing Masters," in *Proceedings of the Society of Dance History Scholars* (1997): 203–16, esp. 212–13, n. 16. In 1608 his wife or widow, Lucrezia Visconti, acted on behalf of their sons Francesco and Carlo in a proceeding of the Milanese Vicario & Conservatori dei Patrimoni over property taxes. The property under discussion in 1608 was in the Commune of Cusago, Pieve di Cessano. Archivio Storico di Commune di Milano (hereafter ASCMi), Famiglie, *busta* 611, Diabona (note alternative spelling of Diabono, used in this archive).

⁴²According to Negri, Diabono's disciples included Martino da Asso; Giovanni Battista Varade, also known as "*Il Cibre*," a noted teacher of fencing as well as dancing; and Pietro Francesco Rombello; Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 4–5.

⁴³Even in the following century, chronicles of the Milanese nobility continued to record the names of those members who had performed in his compositions in *mascherades* and *intermedii*. See Felice Calvi, *Famiglie notabili Milanese; Cenni storici e genealogici raccolti dai Signori Fausto Baggatti-Valescchi, Felice Calvi, Luigi Agostini Casati, Damiano Muoni, Leopoldo Pulle* (Milan: Vallardi, 1875–1885), in which the genealogical charts include, along with lists of civic and military honors, participation in events composed by Negri: Anna Moroni is described as one of the dancers listed by Negri; Paola Antonia Moroni danced in the festivities organized by Negri for Margherita d'Austria in 1598, as did her sister-in-law Giulia Visconti Moroni; and Fabrizio Melzi, dressed Hungarian-style, danced in the first quadrille.

⁴⁴Picot, *Italiens en France*, 253 and notes 1 and 2. Under note 1, Picot cites "Notes manuscrites de feu M. le baron J. Pichon, 5:31." Under note 2, he cites Negri. In his autobiographical statements, Negri recalls that, under the patronage of the duke of Terranova, he traveled as far as Malta, Saragossa, and Naples; Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 7.

⁴⁵Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, 11–12.

was commonly known, the “*Casa del Trombone*.”⁴⁶ Perhaps Negri helped the new French king to celebrate his coronation and the acquisition of this house, of which no notarial records have yet been unearthed, could be the result of gifts received in France. The possibility that Negri did serve in France is far from proven but there is some support: in his poem, Lomazzo includes “*il Trombon*” among the Italians in France, a clear reference to Negri’s sobriquet.⁴⁷

Although neither Lomazzo nor Negri mentions him, in addition to Diabono, the group taken by de Brissac included Baldassare Belgioioso, surely the most influential of these northern Italian dancing masters in France. Picot writes that Belgioioso “was not slow to conquer the favors of the court,” and quickly added the post of *valet de chambre* to his duties as *violiniste de la chambre*.⁴⁸ He served Henry II, his widow Catherine de’ Medici, and all of Henry and Catherine’s sons as well as Mary Stuart when she was queen. Known in France as Beaujoyeux, he made his reputation through his ability to produce the sumptuous entertainments that adorned the last quarter century of the Valois court. His best-known work, the 1581 “*Balet Comique de la Royne*,” is considered the prototypical *ballet de cour*, the form that became a staple of the French courts.⁴⁹ Subsequent literature often refers to Belgioioso as Piemontese, rather than Milanese, but his professional association with Diabono should be remembered and the town of Belgioioso is in Lombardy.

Although the majority of migrating dancers may have found their way to France, other courts also attracted the Milanese. Negri’s students served the duke of Lorraine;⁵⁰ grand princes of Flanders;⁵¹ the grand duke of Poland;⁵² the archbishop of Cologne, brother to the duke of

⁴⁶On the title page of *Le gratie d’amore*, Negri’s name is given as “*Cesare Negri Milanese, detto il Trombone, Professore di Ballare*” and under his portrait in the same book, he is again referred to as “*Cesare Negri detto il Trombone*.” In Lomazzo’s poem, he is alluded to as “*il Trombon*.” Another sign of his rising economic status is that in 1582 Negri was able to employ a wet nurse, relatively rare in Milanese households at this time. See my paper, “At Home in the ‘Casa del Trombone,’” esp. 206.

⁴⁷Since writing this article, I have found documentation that firmly establishes Negri’s service in France. See Jacqueline Boucher, *Société des mentalités autour de Henri III* (Lille: Atelier reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1981), 1:211–12. I would like to thank Professor Margaret M. McGowan for bringing this to my attention.

⁴⁸According to Picot, Giacomo Mario was also with this group of violinists brought by de Brissac, but he does not say whether this man was a dancer as well as musician, Picot, *Italiens en France*, 251–52.

⁴⁹The *ballet de cour* was close to Italian *intermedii* in its use of geometric symmetry and mythological characters, influenced by *balletti*, *mascarades*, pastorals, and ultimately depending on music, verse, and dance to create a unified entertainment. When Catherine de’ Medici entertained the Polish ambassadors who had come to invite her son, Henry, the duke of Anjou, to be their king, it was Belgioioso who created the “Ballet of the Provinces of France.”

⁵⁰Claudio Pozzo; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 6.

⁵¹Cesare Agosto Parmegiano; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 6.

⁵²Gio. Ambrogio Landriano, also known as “Mazzacastroni”; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 5.

Bavaria;⁵³ and the emperor Rudolf.⁵⁴ At the Prague court, another Milanese artist, not a dancing master himself, but the painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo organized festivities.⁵⁵ As boys, both the future Emperor Rudolf and his brother Ernest were sent to Spain, where they were tutored in dancing—perhaps by an Italian—and, in their trips between Vienna and Madrid, had enjoyed entertainments staged in Milan.⁵⁶ Rudolf and Ernest participated in dancing; surely their training was in the Lombardic style that had become the noble dance style throughout Europe.

CONCLUSION

The wide diffusion of Milanese-trained dancing masters is not surprising. In increasingly centralized courts, dancers served extensive and essential professional functions. Some simply performed for entertainment or organized festivities. Others were employed as governors or tutors to “civilize” young princes and courtiers. As courtliness became more complex and festivities more elaborate, the duties of the dancing masters expanded and made them indispensable fixtures of every court.

My contention that in the fifteenth century Milan was already a leader in *il ballo nobile* finds support in the contemporary approbation of the dancing of Milanese—Galeazzo Maria in Florence, Ippolita Sforza in Naples—and the fifteenth-century traffic in dancing masters versed in Domenico’s *il ballare lombardo*. In the following century, the superiority of Milanese dancing masters and their diffusion throughout Europe demonstrate that terpsichorean leadership continued to form an essential component of Milanese cultural wealth.

Why should it be that Italian, and particularly Milanese dancing masters were held in high esteem throughout European courts? A careful investigation into the reasons, while beyond the scope of this paper, will both bring to bear the influence of diplomatic and political history on cultural practices and seek to examine the etiological role of the individual in social and cultural change. My comments here are but a sketch of a subject

⁵³Gio. Stefano Martinello; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 5.

⁵⁴Carlo Beccaria taught both dancing and vaulting on horseback to Rudolf’s courtiers and to those of Duke Ernest; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 6.

⁵⁵These included the 1570 Carnival, a 1571 wedding at which both Maximilian and Rudolf performed, the coronation celebration of 1575, and the presentation of the Order of the Golden Fleece to Rudolf in 1585; Eliska Fucikova, “Prague Castle under Rudolf II, His Predecessors and Successors, 1530–1648,” in *Rudolf II and Prague: The Court and the City*, ed. Eliska Fucikova, James M. Bradburne, Becket Bukovinska, Jaroslava Hausenblasova, Lumomir Konecny, Ivan Muchka, and Michal Sronek (Thames and Hudson: Prague Castle Administration, 1997), 8–9, 19.

⁵⁶Fucikova, “Prague Castle,” 13–14. Negri taught the princes on their way to Spain; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 7; and performed for them in 1571; Negri, *Le gratie d’amore*, 8.

that deserves fuller treatment. A preliminary consideration suggests four possible lines of influence.

First is the existence of a supranational “family” of princely relations, holding more in common with one another than with their subjects. This relationship derived from the commonality of their experiences as members of ruling or elite families as well as generations of intermarriage. Princes and the leaders of their courts were part of a social stratum which was conscious of social, artistic, and cultural styles and practices throughout Europe. Northern Europeans and Spaniards had often traveled to (and from) Italian courts and been entertained there. For example, the dancing known to an Italian princess such as Valentina Visconti, married to the duke of Orleans, would be recognized and appreciated in France. Her father’s first wife was the French princess (and Valentina’s aunt) Isabella. In the sixteenth century, his descendants married into the ruling houses of Denmark, Poland, France, Germany, and Poland. These are but a few of the many examples of the complex genealogical ties which studies of any Italian house demonstrate.

Second, diplomatic, political, and military events of the late fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth brought French and Spanish influence to bear on Italy with a reciprocal influence of the Italians on those who governed them. Italians were well versed in the role of the arts in fashioning a court and in shaping spectacle to diplomatic and political ends. In the period of Spanish rule, governors understood well and utilized the artistic capabilities of Milan, as the examples from Negri’s career demonstrate. Often governors would send exemplary dancers back to their king in Spain. In fact, the flow of Italians to both Spain and France could be seen as a kind of “plunder” of some of the finest artist-subjects of a conquered realm.

And, of course, artists do flock to the centers of power where they may best express their talent. As the cases of Leonardo and Cellini in France suggest, artists themselves were undoubtedly anxious to find places in courts that could support and appreciate them and their skills. The habit of using entertainment for political and diplomatic purposes was well established in Italy, but the money for festivities must have been more ample in France, and probably in Spain.

Finally, “Why Italian dancers?” raises Burckhardtian questions parallel to those one might ask concerning Italian painters and sculptors. What is reputation? What part do talent and training play? The presence of many courts, each recognizing the power of artistic and theatrical display and taking festive responsibilities seriously, encouraged the development of an expanded pool of artists of all media—musicians, painters, dancers, dramatists. Beyond mere market competition, the presence of many dancers, or artists of any medium, can promote a creative ferment that inspires and

energizes, and bears on the quality of performance. And the presence of one or two “Lombard” dancers in a foreign court must have paved the way for others from that region. Here reputation and recommendation become factors. It would seem that Italy was producing dancers able to meet the needs of courts throughout Europe and that at those courts, the reputation of Italians was already established, both by the experiences of the princes and their families in their travels and perhaps their own origins and by the existing presence of Italian dancers who maintained ties with their Italian peers. The factors that made Italy, and particularly Milan, a center of political, military, and diplomatic significance created paths for Lombard dancers and their style of dancing to travel beyond the confines of Italy.

Sources are, as always, both blessing and hindrance for the historian. The fact that the most detailed primary materials for both the fifteenth and the sixteenth century offer a view of Milanese dance practices and nothing comparable for any other part of Italy, may skew the picture to the north. But this is more than a limitation; it reminds us that dance was taken seriously by the Milanese, both during Sforza and Spanish rule. Certainly manuals offer but a refracted, perhaps idealized view of dancing, but they do describe, in language that can be interpreted, otherwise lost experience of a valued art form.⁵⁷ Contemporary observers were often humanists and, like the scholars of today, more sensitive to the written word on a triumphal arch than to choreographic expression in the ballroom. And, in spite of Trissino’s admiration for dances almost a century old, it really is difficult to appreciate dances of yesterday. The constant evolution of physical possibilities and aesthetic response means that fashion in dance is as quick to become dated and forgettable as fashion in clothing. But, unlike clothing, the performance of dance leaves no artifacts. Unavoidably, the manuals are privileged as a source of information on dancing. And only Milanese dancing is represented in written form for both fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Giovanni Mario Filelfo spoke for us as well as his contemporaries when he wrote of Guglielmo Ebreo’s treatise, “*quasi un tesoro*.”⁵⁸ I would add of the Lombardic contribution to the noble dance styles that swept European courts, *veramente un tesoro*. A treasure and, for the region, a valuable and exportable resource.

⁵⁷I cannot address in this paper the issues of interpretation and reconstruction. Of course, dance manuals are not the only written materials that resist translation, and the reconstructor of early dance, like any translator or interpreter, faces a wide range of issues, including individual background, training, and subjectivity.

⁵⁸Pontremoli and La Rocca, *Il ballare lombardo*, 53.

APPENDIX

The letter from Guglielmo to Bianca Maria Sforza was published by E. Motta in his *Archivio storico lombardo* 4 series, "Musici alla corte degli Sforza" [Milan, 1887; reprinted in *Musici alla corte degli Sforza; Ricerche e documenti milanesi* (Geneva: Minkoff, 1977)], 61–63. The original is no longer to be found in the Archivio Storico di Milano, Potenze Sovrane, Ippolita Sforza. As transcribed by Motta, the letter reads:

Yhesus.

Ill.^{ma} et excell.^{ma} domina mi post recomandationem etc.

Io credo che la Sig.^{ria} Vostra debia sapere como yo sto cum la maystà de Re perchè ipso mandò ala Sig.^{ria} messere Alessandro che yo duvesse venire ad imparare madopna Lionora sua figlia e ancho madopna Biatrice alo ballare lombardo li quali yo lo facto maestre che la Maestà de Re non ave altro piacere se non vederle ballare donde yo volia venire ala S.V. per predicare et notificare le vertu de quiste vostre figlioli et may non o posuto aver licencia de la Maestà de Re benchè yo credo che la S. Vostra ey (è) informata de tucto.

Ben credeva de venirve a notificare delle virtù de la duchessa de Calabria vostra figliola che non se porria scrivere nè contare nè carta nè inchiostro non bastaria a scrivere le virtù de la vostra Excellent.^{ma} figliola, la quale tucte le bande de quà ne predica de la sua virtù et de la umanità sua. Massimamente notifico alla S. V.^a che nello danzare ey (è) multo appropriata che ave facto duy balli novj supra duy canzuni francese de sua fantasia che la Maestà de Re non ave altro piacere nè altro paradiso non pare che trove se non quando la vede danzare e anche canthare. Et quando la Maestà de Re vole fare honore a qualche gran Signore o qualche gran Maestro de fà danzare et cantare secretamente sichè non pare che la Maestà de Re e anche lo Signor Duca habia altro occhi in testa che la duchessa de Calabria et questo lo dico che yo me ze trovo ad omne hora a simele festa, vero che da pò che trapassao la benedicta anima nuy ne semo un può retenute. Et ancho yo so (*n*) appresso, sempre appresso del loro a piacevelizare et ballare benchè yo credeva de venire in persona a parlare cum Ill.^{ma} Sig.^{ra} Vostra, ma la Maestà de (*l*) Re et madopnna Lionora no me anno voluto dare may licencia. Non altro per lla (?) proxima, sempre me aricomanto ala Ill.^{ma} Sig.^{ria} V.^a donde per questo sempre stamo ad adorare dio, tanto yo quanto madopnna Lionora de vedere quello dì che vengamo a Milano.

Ex Neapolj die XV mensis Julij, XIIIJ Indictione,

lo vostro figliolo Johanne
Ambroso da Pesaro ballarino etc.

“Sad stories of the death of kings”: Lyric and Narrative Release from Confining Spaces in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*

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THE RELATION OF SHAKESPEARE’S PLAYS to other literary forms like lyric and narrative is a topic that continues to invite speculation.¹ A number of his plays contain songs and sonnets, reported stories and winter’s tales. In this essay I examine lyrics and narratives in *Richard II* and their dialogic relation to the surrounding text.² In a play about a self-enclosed King these utterances tend to occur in enclosures: Richard delivers lyrics while immured at Flint Castle and the dungeon at Pomfret, whereas his Queen laments in an enclosed garden and promises to tell the King’s story during her exile in a French cloister. The lyrics and narratives that Richard and his Queen fashion within such pri-

¹Diane E. Henderson in *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender, and Performance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995) and Christopher Martin in *Policy in Love: Lyric and Public in Ovid, Petrarch, and Shakespeare* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994) are examples of recent critics who discuss the relation of lyric to Shakespeare’s plays.

²I use the term “lyric” to denote a passage set off from the surrounding text and framed by a beginning and end, creating a seemingly enclosed textual space. Northrop Frye emphasizes the contained aspect of a lyric in “Approaching the Lyric,” in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, ed. Chaviva Hósek and Patricia Parker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 34. Although I argue that lyrics in *Richard II* are enclosures in several respects, I in no way contend that they are atemporal or ahistorical. Others who defend the necessity of reading lyrics in relation to their cultural context are Mark Jeffreys, “Ideologies of Lyric: A Problem of Genre in Contemporary Anglophone Poetics,” *PMLA* 110 (1995): 196–205; and Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 2–10.

In addition to the pronounced lyricism in *Richard II*, the play makes explicit and repeated reference to the genre of narrative. The word “tale,” for example, occurs seven times and the word “story” twice. In keeping with the limited scope of this study, I mean by the term “narrative” simply a piece of fiction like a tale, story, legend, or rumor. The relation of the play to narrative is a topic that demands further exploration. Joseph A. Porter states, for instance, that “there is in the criticism of the play a large and rather cloudily suggestive body of discussion of Richard as a poet figure.... Part of the problem with this discussion is that ‘poet’ almost always means roughly ‘lyricist’ (a view based mainly on Richard’s aria-like effusions, which are, indeed, in a sense lyric). However, Richard’s most explicit and direct references to a literary genre are not to the lyric at all, but rather to the narrative.” See *The Drama of Speech Acts: Shakespeare’s Lancastrian Tetralogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 34.

vate, interior spaces fittingly define inwardness in the play.³ Their despairing rhetoric and tears grant them additional avenues for expressing their grief.⁴ Richard's prominent displays of affection ally him with weeping women in the play and serve as a traditionally feminine form of defense. His woeful utterances provide him with a significant means of resisting his disempowerment.

Richard's empowering lyrical speeches, which exhibit his psychic state, are apparently closed and hermetic; their embedding in the drama, however, transforms them from monologues into dialogues between him and a variety of voices within the text. At times unwittingly and knowingly at others, Richard in these lyrical interludes converses both with interior voices that express the different histrionic roles he plays himself and with exterior voices of other characters who interrupt his endless reveries. The King's seemingly autonomous utterances—monologic on the surface—are therefore really a dialogic negotiation with other voices.

Richard's lyrics have yet to be analyzed extensively in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism," which he defines as "addressivity."⁵ Although Bakhtin ascribes dialogism to prose rather than to poetry or drama and argues in the wake of Romanticism that lyric is a pure form exclusive of otherness and untouched by the material fact of history or politics, Richard's lyrics are indeed dialogic, grounded in a particular time and place, and an empowering tool for political resistance.⁶ During these utterances, he either addresses other *dramatic personae* or himself as another, a phrase that recalls Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* in which he discusses the constitution of an identity through such a dialectic with otherness. This identity, however, "implies no asser-

³For other discussions of inwardness in the Renaissance see Katharine Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) and Anne Ferry, *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

⁴Although Richard B. Altick, in "Symphonic Imagery in *Richard II*," *PMLA* 62 (1947): 339–65, and several others have discussed the prominence of the term "grief" and its many forms in the play, few have observed the extent to which Richard uses his own tears to manipulate the sympathies of the audience. Dorothea Kehler, for instance, observes that Richard "breaks down and weeps" during the deposition scene but doesn't mention that his exclamation, "My eyes are full of tears, I cannot see," is politically motivated and allows him to circumvent Northumberland's request that he read a record of his crimes (IV.i.244): "King of Tears: Mortality in *Richard II*," *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 39 (1985): 13. Scott McMillin also overlooks the possibility that what he refers to as Richard's "real tears" during the deposition scene may in fact be disingenuous: "Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Eyes of Sorrow, Eyes of Desire," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984): 44.

⁵See *Speech Acts and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60–100.

⁶For a discussion of Bakhtin's ideas in relation to poetry see Marianne and Michael Shapiro, "Dialogism and the Addressee in Lyric Poetry," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 61 (1992): 392.

tion concerning some unchanging core of personality.”⁷ The King resists his powerlessness by fashioning a number of liberating personae.

Like deposed Richard, other figures such as his nameless Queen circumvent their lack of political power within the public arena by delivering lyrical speeches expressive of interior feeling while they conduct dialogues in more intimate settings. Within domestic spaces that afford them privacy, like the recesses of royal houses and castles, they evoke pity and sympathy for relatively powerless figures like themselves by fashioning laments and complaints and through their nonverbal gestures and tears.⁸

Richard defies his powerlessness even after death through these haunting lyrics and narratives. He regains a vital, if imaginary, sense of authority and agency by inventing multiple, literary selves and by encouraging those who hear his lamentable tale to memorialize him through tears. The oral narrative that his Queen promises to tell about his reign and the gossip and rumors that others generate within domestic settings grant him a degree of control over how he will be remembered. Like the rapid flight of the winged, many-tongued figure Rumor, his legend escapes from the confining space of his coffin and is continually retold and never finished.

* * *

The lament that Richard delivers from the walls of Flint Castle in III.iii exhibits several characteristics commonly associated with the lyric.⁹ It expresses his despairing state of mind within a seemingly enclosed textual space both aurally and visually distinguished from the rest of the play through rhetorical techniques like apostrophe and anaphora. Yet the development of Richard’s monologic utterance into dialogue, with

⁷Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 2.

⁸In “The Refuges of Intimacy” Orest Ranum demonstrates that walled gardens in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries were private spaces used for meditation and intimate conversation. See *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life*, gen. ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (Balknap: Harvard University Press, 1989), 207–63, here 210–17.

⁹*King Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure (1956; repr. London: Routledge, 1989). All quotations of the play are from this edition. My approach to the genre of lyric is in keeping with Barbara Lewalski’s argument that “historical genres” are “families whose members share several (but not always the same) features drawn from a given generic repertoire”: *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 10. She derives her definition of genre in part from Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 37–74. Lewalski is also indebted to Rosalie Colie, who initially provided the insight that the combination of different genres in Renaissance texts resulted in “metastable” generic conventions: *The Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 30.

Aumerle on the castle walls (160), with Bolingbroke and Northumberland at the base of the castle (170), and more subtly, with himself as another, temporarily release him from his solipsism, whether he likes it or not. The King is forced to acknowledge that he is enmeshed in a political context larger than himself.

Richard's lyrical venting of anguish is deceptive, as well as expressive; in every sense, it is beguiling. He represents his interior landscape in a rhetorically crafted style, as illustrated by the alliteration on "great" and "grief" and the repetition of "that" and "what" in the following lines:

O that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been!
Or not remember what I must be now! (III.iii.136–39)

The vast difference between what Richard was and what he is results in an implicit dialogue between these two selves. During his speech at Flint, he also engages in dialogue with his audience, both onstage and off. As Harry Berger has effectively argued, the King's theatricality suggests that this allegedly solipsistic speaker is more aware of his spectators than one would first suppose.¹⁰ Within the play itself Bolingbroke, like Berger, draws attention to the King's showmanship by ordering his men to "mark" how Richard "looks" (61). Viewing Richard's sudden entrance on the castle walls, York similarly remarks that the King's regal demeanor transforms his public appearance into a spectacle:

Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty; alack, alack for woe
That any harm should stain so fair a show! (III.iii.68–71)

Richard evokes sympathy for his plight from those who witness his performance at Flint by depicting himself as the abused victim and Bolingbroke as the aggressive villain in the lines, "Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee scope to beat, / Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me" (140–41). In this way he dodges his own responsibility for the loss of his political power. Reinforcing the King's claim of victimization, the metrical beat of these monosyllabic lines is as unrelenting as the beating he imagines enduring. His woeful histrionics, accentuated by the interjections of Bolingbroke and York, and his manipulative awareness of those around him qualify prior notions of his insularity.

¹⁰Harry Berger, Jr., "*Richard II* 3.2: An Exercise in Imaginary Audition," *ELH* 55 (1988): 762.

Despite Richard's attempt to orchestrate the responses of his viewers and auditors to his performance, at this point he remains a relatively enclosed speaker who manifests both narcissism and vanity. His conspicuous repetition of the words "I" and "my" eleven times anticipates his prison soliloquy during which he uses the first person singular twenty times. Befitting this self-centered speaker who physically isolates himself from other *dramatic personae* and thus enacts his own enclosure, his lament atop the castle walls seems contained as well. His repeated use of the letter "O" in apostrophes and at the beginning of phrases frames the following lines:

O God! O God! that e'er this tongue of mine,
That laid the sentence of dread banishment
On yon proud man, should take it off again
With words of sooth! O that I were as great
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!
Or that I could forget what I have been!
Or not remember what I must be now! (III.iii.133–39)

Richard's wish to disavow the past and present and thereby escape from time is an extreme example of his effort to alienate himself from others. R. F. Hill's description of his subsequent lines as "the *picturesque* Hermit speech" appropriately suggests their enclosure as well.¹¹

I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood;
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;
My subjects for a pair of carved saints
And my large kingdom for a little grave.... (III.iii.147–53)

The King's repetition of "my" and "for" particularly adds to the visual and aural impression that he creates a formal tableau set apart from the rest of the drama and contributes to the ritualistic effect of his catalogue.¹² Each line of this tableau is framed by the possessive pronoun "my" and by a prepositional phrase beginning with "for." During this set piece, he describes kingship in relatively shallow terms that demonstrate

¹¹R. F. Hill, "Dramatic Techniques and Interpretation in *Richard II*," in *Early Shakespeare*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), 111; my emphasis.

¹²Naomi Conn Liebler describes Richard's Hermit speech as a catalogue during her discussion of the ways in which he clings to ritual despite his loss of political power: "The Mockery King of Snow: *Richard II* and the Sacrifice of Ritual," in *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*, ed. Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 229.

his casual disregard for others: he dwells on the superficial trappings of his office without mentioning his responsibilities to his subjects. His imagining that he is befriended only by a “pair of carved saints” further illustrates his isolation, and his idyllic wish that he were surrounded by humbler possessions attests to his abiding materialism, which led to his lack of supporters and reduced him to the status of an alien in his own land.

Though lyrics are generally thought of as enclosures expressive of an escapist impulse rather than a political agenda, Richard’s is a form of protest in which he uses his desire to stop time to his advantage.¹³ He retreats into this enclosed textual space to defend himself from the assault of Bolingbroke. Hedonistically, he fashions his insubstantial fortress out of words and phrases like “jewels,” “gorgeous palace,” and “gay apparel,” which are indicative of his feminized desire for sensuous objects and his passion for luxurious language. Richard exhibits a pastoral impulse by claiming that he would relinquish such luxuries (except verbally) for the simplicity of a hermitage cloistered from worldly cares and responsibilities. These ritualistic lines enact cloistering as well by repeating the single notion of his desire for privacy and meditation instead of moving beyond it. Paradoxically, he expresses his wish to pare down his store of material possessions in expansive language. Without interruptions by impatient auditors like Northumberland, “My lord, in the base court he doth attend / To speak with you; may it please you to come down?” (176–77), and Bolingbroke, “What says his Majesty?” (184). Richard’s utterance at Flint is potentially endless. During it, time seems to stop. The King remains keenly aware of how little time he has left, however, and uses this lengthy rhetorical display as a means of delaying his capture by Bolingbroke.

Richard’s utterance enables him to resist not only his entrapment in the castle but also his imprisoning political role as king, which denies him the liberty to withdraw into a private enclosure—whether hermitage or pleasure-palace—for an extended period of time. Resistance is only deferral, however; he is forced out of hiding by Bolingbroke, who compels him to return to London for his deposition (208–9). Throughout the play Richard experiences a conflict between his public and private selves, illustrating the truism that rulers are often constrained by their social position to a greater extent than are their subjects.¹⁴ Anthony Giddens,

¹³In *Passion Made Public*, 22, Henderson lists a number of such assumptions about lyric in post-Romantic culture.

¹⁴In *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 73, Lena Cowen Orlin argues that in the early modern period public and private were often intertwined. Ironically, even apparently private settings like a cell or coffin in *Richard II* are sites for public display.

who discusses oppressive social forms and an agent's awareness of them, widens the ramifications of Richard's tunnel vision when he remarks that "those who in a largely unquestioning way accept certain dominant perspectives may be more imprisoned within them than others are, even though their perspectives help [those in dominant classes] to sustain their position of dominance."¹⁵ Richard's assumption that his status as God's deputy on earth makes him untouchable blinds him to his own vulnerability and indirectly contributes to his eventual imprisonment.

Even though Shakespeare's Richard is a figure conceived in the early modern period, he anticipates the idea of the divided subject in Ricoeur's sense by engaging briefly in a dialogue with himself as another.¹⁶ He dramatizes the growing division between the outward façade he maintains as king and the inward landscape he represents throughout his speech at Flint by addressing his multiple personae during his lament. He addresses the "king" as a dramatic role he must play when he states fatalistically,

What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented. (III.iii.143–45)

Richard's use of the third person signals the split between his royal mask and the face hidden behind it. Such a division between his public and private selves leads not only to his disenchantment with the institution of kingship but also to his discovery that he lacks a unified identity. He combats his growing awareness that without this regal mask he is fragmentary by inventing and perpetuating yet another fictional identity, this time as the victim of Bolingbroke.

Richard desperately tries to resist the dissolution of his political power by playing the dramatic part of the "lamentable" King convincingly and thereby reconstructing his life in fictional terms (V.1.44). His adoption of this woeful, public persona not only at Flint but throughout the play evokes pity for his seeming mistreatment by Bolingbroke rather than shame for his wasteful, careless reign. Richard's tears during his humiliating procession into London behind Bolingbroke, for example, make the Duke and Duchess of York weep (V.ii.2) and grieve the "heart" of the Groom of the Stable (V.v.76). The King also elicits sympathy for his apparent victimization by Bolingbroke by drawing attention to

¹⁵Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 72. In a passage reminiscent of Richard's style and diction, Shakespeare's King Henry V exclaims, "What infinite heart's ease / Must kings neglect that private men enjoy!": *Henry V*, ed. John H. Walter (1954; repr. London: Routledge, 1993), IV.i.218–19.

¹⁶I am indebted here to Berger's argument in "*Richard II*: 3.2: An Exercise in Imaginary Audition" that Richard's utterances are "directed at his auditors as well as at himself" (762).

another's tears prior to his surrender, "Aumerle, thou weep'st (my tender-hearted cousin!)" (III.iii.160). Such displays of woefulness and humility are politically enabling for Richard despite the possibility that his expressions of affection are disingenuous.

Craving perpetuation, Richard begins to forge a legendary identity at the castle that will be liberated from his coffin once he is dead.¹⁷ Although he claims that he would exchange his "large kingdom for a little grave, / A little little grave, an obscure grave," his whimsical desire for obscurity is outweighed by his overriding ambition for fame (153–54). Richard seems to hint at his ultimate desire for permanence when he exclaims that he and his weeping cousin will dig "a pair of graves" with their tears and thereby generate a legend that "there lies / Two kinsmen [who] digg'd their graves with weeping eyes!" (167–69).¹⁸ He hopes that such a sympathetic account of his deposition will escape from the enclosed space of his tomb. The King's retort to his sniggering audience, "Well, well, I see / I talk but *idly*, and you laugh at me" may contain a pun on the word "idyll" and further suggest that he perceives himself as a figure in that wish-fulfilling genre (170–71; my emphasis). By representing himself in these fictional terms he attempts not only to stave off his own mortality but also to control time, an unceasing reminder of his impending enclosure in a coffin. The possibility of a pun on the word "idyll" is also suggestive of his lyricism and vain desire for pastoral escape.

Like Richard at Flint Castle, the Queen resists her disempowerment by constructing a lyrical speech representative of inwardness within the enclosed space of the Duke of York's garden. Throughout her stylized lament, which highlights important similarities and differences between her and the lamenting King, she bemoans the impossibility of escaping from her "cares" as Queen. Richard will similarly acknowledge the impossibility of breaking free from his anxieties as King during the deposition scene that follows. He will exclaim, for instance, "The cares I give, I have, though given away, / They 'tend the crown, yet still with me they stay" (IV.i.198–99). Such parallels highlight the dialogic connections between their utterances. When the attendant suggests that the Queen and the servants dance in order to "drive away the heavy thought

¹⁷In "*Richard II*: 3.2" Berger similarly observes that the King's representation of himself is a mere fiction and that he becomes "more pathetic" as he displays his powerlessness (771–73). I build upon Berger's argument, however, by maintaining that Richard perpetuates his literary identity as a woeful King in an effort to control future impressions of his reign. In general, the relation between narrative and time in *Richard II* is relatively unexplored.

¹⁸Lois Potter argues that Richard II's conceits on tears emphasize "the power of something which is normally taken to be a symbol of helplessness." See "The Antic Disposition of Richard II," *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974): 38.

of care" (III.iv.2), she refuses because the weight of her sorrow would prevent her from keeping time with the music:

My legs can keep *no measure* in delight,
 When my poor heart *no measure* keeps in grief:
 Therefore no dancing, girl—some other sport (III.iv.7–9; my
 emphasis)

Paradoxically, the Queen expresses her immeasurable grief by repeating the phrase "no measure" in a measured fashion. Ceremonial lines like these bring order to the chaotic emotions she voices. In the conventional setting of a garden that is often associated with the topos of female warblers, the theme of singing appropriately emerges when a Lady suggests, "Madam, I'll sing," and the Queen replies, "And I could sing, would weeping do me good, / And never borrow any tear of thee" (19–23).¹⁹ Her equation of singing and weeping suggests that both are an expression of interior feeling. Yet the Queen has little faith in song or tears as a palliative.

The attendant's subsequent suggestion that they "tell tales" to alleviate the Queen's sorrow foregrounds the possibility of narrative, whether in verse or prose, as a means of release from despair (10). The Queen will eventually provide her husband with an avenue of escape from the humiliation of his deposition because she promises to tell his sad story once he is dead. Nevertheless, the spinning of such yarns in the garden offers her no present hope of relief:

For if *of joy*, being altogether wanting,
 It doth remember [her] the more *of sorrow*;
 Or if *of grief*, being altogether had,
 It adds more *sorrow* to [her] want *of joy*. (III.iv.13–16; my
 emphasis)

The Queen's reply to her attendant mirrors the elaborately patterned rhetoric of the King's lyrics. Her repetition of the words "joy" and "sorrow," "sorrow" and "joy" in inverse order is an example of antimetabole, a chiasmus with a single reversed word pair. Richard employs this figure during the deposition scene in a phrase that conveys his indecisiveness about relinquishing the crown: "Ay, no; no, ay" (IV.i.201) and during his prison soliloquy when he admits, "I wasted time, and now doth time waste me" (V.v.49). The King and Queen's use of this figure,

¹⁹In *Hamlet* Ophelia sings while distributing "rue" to Laertes and other herbs and flowers to members of the royal family (IV.v.179). Gertrude also reports that Ophelia chanted a "lay" and strains of "old lauds" or hymns before drowning beneath a willow tree near her garden (IV.vii.176, 181). See *Hamlet*, Harold Jenkins, ed., Arden (London: Methuen, 1982). The subsequent quotation of this play is also from this edition.

an enclosure in miniature that ends where it began, adds to the impression that their lyrics suspend the progression of the drama. The Queen also begins four prepositional phrases with “of,” a linguistic pattern that recalls the King’s framing of “the picturesque Hermit speech” at Flint. Her variation of a single phrase in the lines, “For *what I have* I need not to repeat, / And *what I want* it boots not to complain” further emphasizes the rhetorical artifice of her complaint (17–18; my emphasis). The Queen’s skillful employment of these figures suggests that she, like the King, is a practiced rhetorician. Yet in stark contrast to Richard, she desists from uttering a lengthy complaint and refuses to perpetuate her grief by constructing a narrative about it. Less of an egoist than her husband, she resists self-representation.

The Queen’s placement within the enclosed space of the garden in England serves as an emblem of her imprisonment in a society that not only marginalizes her role in politics, but also prohibits her from speaking publicly on behalf of her own plight as the wife of a soon-to-be-deposed monarch. She must eavesdrop upon a conversation between the Gardener and two servants, for example, in order to learn about her husband’s impending deposition. Her position behind the “shadow” of some “trees” while she overhears the dialogue further underlines her peripheral role in the play (25).²⁰ She particularly stands in the shadow of Richard, however. Ironically, he has usurped her role through all his “female warbling.”

The Queen resists her confining domestic role as the silent wife immediately after the Gardener reports that he has overheard the Duke of York discussing the King’s impending deposition with a friend:

Depress’d he is already, and depos’d
 ‘Tis doubt he will be. Letters came last night
 To a dear friend of the good Duke of York’s
 That tell black tidings. (III.iv.68–71)

Hearing this bleak news for the first time, the Queen emerges from the shadows of the trees and exclaims, “O, I am *press’d* to death through want of speaking!” (72; my emphasis). Mirroring Richard, whom the Gardener describes as “depress’d,” Isabel feels that her lack of a voice during the dialogue is a form of torture (pressing) to her.²¹ In this line

²⁰Jeanie Grant Moore, “Queen of Sorrow, King of Grief,” in *In Another Country: Feminist Perspectives in Renaissance Drama*, ed. Dorothea Kehler and Susan Barker (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1991), 31.

²¹In *King Richard II*, Peter Ure, ed., observes that the Queen feels as if she were “pressed” to death with weights, the punishment inflicted upon an accused person who refuses to plead (122). S. P. Cerasano adds, however, that women could not plead for themselves without a male guardian: “Half a Dozen Dangerous Words,” in *Gloriana’s Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance*, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 169.

the pun on torture and printing, hence publishing, also transforms the body of the Queen into a text and anticipates her future role as narrator of Richard's story. Her embodied voice promises to sound outside the walls of England and beyond the bounds of the play when she is enclosed in a French convent, a setting in which she fulfills Richard's frustrated desire for pastoral escape. His command that Isabel "cloister" herself, however, limits the degree of her liberation through narrative by perpetuating her current exclusion from political affairs in England (V.i.23). The Gardener's revelation that the King's impending deposition is common knowledge incites the Queen's anger because until the garden scene she was apparently unaware of her husband's fate. Indeed, her outrage is amply justified, for as the Gardener admits subsequently, "I speak no more than everyone doth know" (91).

Yet the Queen's lyrical words of protest, accompanied by her tears, serve as an authoritative weapon for resisting her disempowerment. She vents her anger at the Gardener by cursing him: "for telling me these news of woe, / Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow" (100–101). By singling out the grafted plants in the garden, she also curses Bolingbroke indirectly. Unlike Richard, who is the son of Edward the Black Prince, he has grafted himself onto that branch of the royal stock by conniving means. Whereas Isabel's curse emphasizes the illegitimacy of Bolingbroke's claim to the throne, her tears elicit pity for both Richard and herself. Sympathizing with the Queen's plight, the Gardener plants "rue" in an Ophelia-like fashion near the place where one of her tears fell and cultivates this herb associated with pity "in the remembrance of a weeping queen" (106–7).²² Like the King, the Queen attempts to exert influence over the future, in this case through cursing, and is memorialized by tears.²³ Exercising a choric function, the Gardener thus transforms Isabel into a legendary figure and at least symbolically releases her story of silent suffering from the imprisoning walls of the garden.²⁴ He does so in a play in which storytelling serves the same purpose of release for Richard.

Interestingly, Richard's Queen is one of the few women in Shakespeare entrusted with the task of memorializing another through narrative. When she and the King exchange farewells in a public thoroughfare on his way to the Tower, he resists his impending enclosure in the grave by imploring her to perpetuate his legend in the secluded (though not

²²Ure, ed., in *King Richard II* explains that the special association of the flower "rue" is "not with *rue* (repentance) but with *ruth* (pity)" (123).

²³On other characters' attempts to manipulate time through prophecy in *Richard II* and in *Henry IV*, parts 1 and 2, see Jonathan Hart, *Theater and World: The Problematics of Shakespeare's History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 105–8.

²⁴Gertrude's lyrical account of Ophelia's death similarly liberates her memory from the "prison" of Denmark (IV.vii.165–82).

literally enclosed) setting of a fireside (V.i.7–50).²⁵ His desire to defer his ending becomes apparent when he urges the Queen not “to make [his] end too sudden” by grieving over her fallen husband as if he were already dead (17). Instead, he entreats her to keep his sacred memory alive by continuing to voice her grief in the stories that she tells about him. Unwittingly and prophetically, the King resembles Hamlet, who asks Horatio “to tell [his] story” after he is buried (V.ii.349). Richard clings to the vain hope of transcending the burden of time and mortality and envisions himself and his wife as characters fit for saints’ lives. He urges her to seek refuge in a French “cloister” and imagines that their “holy lives must win a new world’s crown / Which our profane hours here have thrown down” (24–25). Despite the King’s persistent illusion of permanence, the phrase “profane hours” hints at his more realistic awareness of his irreverent misuse of time.²⁶ He also defers his fictional end by imploring the Queen to recount his personal history in the form of a “winter’s” tale, a female story.²⁷ Like Hamlet after him, he knows all

²⁵As Scott McMillin argues, the King hopes to become monumental through narrative “in some private place, within the walls of a cloister perhaps, beside a fire,... removed from the theatricality of politics”: “Shakespeare’s *Richard II*: Eyes of Sorrow, Eyes of Desire,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 35 (1984): 49.

The architectural arrangement of fireplaces in early modern houses and palaces vividly conveys the intimacy associated with them. Replacing open hearths in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, fireplaces commonly appeared in private chambers like bedrooms, or in the recesses and corners of other rooms set apart from the central hall. Benches or cushions were often arranged in a semicircle around the fire, creating a mood of closeness and comradeship, particularly among the women who tended it. Richard similarly imagines Isabel sitting beside a fire that is near the bedrooms “in some religious house” in France (V.1.22–23) when he implores her “ere [she]... bid good night” to tell his “lamentable tale” and “send the hearers weeping to their beds” (43–45). See *Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 2 of *A History of Private Life*, gen. ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (Cambridge: Belknap, 1988), 192–95, 354–55, 429, and 500.

Depicting a woman who warms her legs by lifting her dress above her knees, figure 1 from this volume illustrates the sense of intimacy created by a fireplace. Figures 1, 2, and 3 point out the semi-circular arrangement of benches or cushions around a fire, as well as the placement of fireplaces in the recesses and corners of rooms. Sir Philip Sidney’s description of the poet whose “tale...holdeth...old men from the chimney corner” is suggestive of the comparably private location of fireplaces in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century houses and palaces, though this captivating story draws the listeners away from the warmth of that corner: “A Defence of Poetry” in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 92. In a passage from Daniel’s *Civil Wars* that parallels Richard’s intimate conversation with Isabel, the King in Pomfret prison envies a peasant, who “sit’st at home safe by [his]... quiet fire”: III, st. 65. His description of this cloistered space further illustrates its privacy: *King Richard II*, Ure. ed., 148.

²⁶See Jonathan Hart, *Theater and World: The Problematics of Shakespeare’s History*, 110.

²⁷Cf. Lady Macbeth’s exclamation to Macbeth that his “flaws and starts” about murdering Duncan “would well become / A woman’s story at a winter’s fire / Authoris’d by her grandam”: *Macbeth*, ed. Richard Proudfoot (1951; repr. New York: Methuen, 1986), III.iv.62–65.



Figure 1

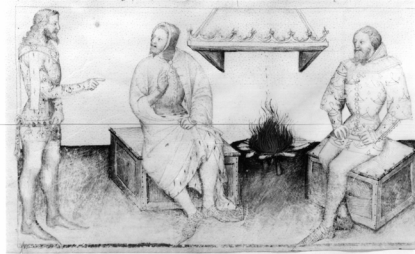


Figure 2



Figure 3

Fig. 1. *Heures de Louis de Laval*, late 15th century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Latin 920. Reproduced by permission.

Fig. 2. *Cuiron le Courtois*, ca. 1370–1380. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, French n.a. 5243. Reproduced by permission.

Fig. 3. Missal from abbey of Montierneuf in Poitiers, late 15th century. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Latin 873. Reproduced by permission.

too well that the perception of history is determined in part by the bias and perhaps even the gender of the narrator. Richard hopes that she will rekindle pity for his loss of political power by retelling this tale while she “sit[s] by the fire / With good old folks,” who “will sympathize” and “in compassion weep the fire out” (40–48).

The Duchess of York’s tearful entreaty that Bolingbroke pardon Aumerle for his involvement in the conspiracy to “kill the king at Oxford” parodies Richard’s own attempt to manipulate his audience through the conventionally feminine tactic of weeping (V.ii.99). Whereas the Duke of York’s “eyes do drop no tears” as he demands justice for his son’s crimes, hers presumably do when she begs for mercy on her knees (V.iii.98). Richard similarly weeps and kneels throughout the play, lead-

ing the Bishop of Carlisle to exclaim on one occasion, “wise men ne’er sit and wail their woes, / But presently prevent the ways to wail” (III.ii.178–79). During the deposition scene, Richard assumes a woeful persona by exclaiming, “O that I were a mockery king of snow, / Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke, / To melt [himself] away in water-drops” (260–62). By playing the feminine part of the “mockery king of snow” whose “water-drops” resemble tears Richard evokes pity and sympathy from his viewers both on and off the stage, as illustrated by Aumerle’s and Carlisle’s “tearful eyes” at the end of the scene (332).²⁸ Like Richard, the Duchess also brings her audience to tears. She remarks that Bolingbroke’s “eyes begin to speak,” suggesting that his eyes are moist, if not out of pity for Aumerle, then as a result of the hilarity of her excessive plea to pardon her son after he has already been pardoned (V.iii.123).²⁹ At the end of the play the sight of Richard in his coffin causes Bolingbroke to “weep after this untimely bier,” though whether or not his are crocodile tears remains ambiguous (V.vi.52). Parallels between Richard and the Duchess result from the dialogic relation of his utterances to the play as a whole and reemphasize his association with traditionally feminine means of combating powerlessness.

Richard, who continues to wage a rhetorical contest with his now absent opponent, resists his imprisonment at Pomfret by delivering a lyrical soliloquy. The dialogic dimension of his utterances in prison has been overlooked by other critics, who argue that Richard remains solipsistic throughout the play.³⁰ I argue, however, that Richard’s dialogue with the different facets of himself during his prison soliloquy and with the Groom of the Stable ultimately release him from his solipsism. Ricoeur’s *Oneself as Another* illuminates the notion that even Richard’s conversation with himself includes a liberating degree of otherness. He asserts that “the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other.”³¹ Although Richard attempts to manipulate his audience during his earlier dialogic

²⁸As Ann Pasternak Slater observes, the affective response of Richard’s onstage audience guides our own: *Shakespeare the Director* (New York: Barnes, 1982), 103.

²⁹Critics who discuss comedy in this scene and the prior one are Waldo F. McNeir, “The Comic Scenes in *Richard II*,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972): 815–22; Sheldon P. Zitner, “Aumerle’s Conspiracy,” *Studies in English Literature* 14 (1974): 239–57; and Leonard Barkan, “The Theatrical Consistency of *Richard II*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29 (1978): 5–19.

³⁰Terence Hawkes contends, for instance, that Richard’s soliloquy illustrates his failure to communicate with others through talking and listening: “The Word against the Word: The Role of Language in *Richard II*,” *Language and Style* 2 (1969): 312–13. Joseph Porter similarly argues that although Richard’s language is “addressed to himself and/or a general audience,” he fails to converse with anyone other than himself: *The Drama of Speech Acts: Shakespeare’s Lancastrian Tetralogy*, 41.

³¹Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 3.

lyric at Flint Castle, his prison soliloquy is less manipulative and more humane.³² His liberation from the prison of his own mind is fully realized when he finally acts in a timely, unselfish manner.

While Richard's jail cell provides the privacy he craved in vain as a public figure who would seemingly exchange his "palace" for a "hermitage," it also signifies his psychic dimension of self-enclosure; its walls serve as a physical manifestation of the verbal barrier he often creates between himself and other characters. At Flint, for example, he might be said to have retreated behind a wall of words to defer Bolingbroke's demand for his rightful inheritance. Like his vain utterance there, his soliloquy at Pomfret initially exhibits the enclosure of self-absorption. During this final lyric, Richard attempts to create an autonomous world by imagining that his private cell is a microcosm of the public domain beyond it:

I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world;
And, for because the world is populous
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out. (V.v.1–5)

He compares the interior setting of his cell to the exterior world much as a lyricist, or any other poet or rhetorician, might fashion a metaphysical conceit. Richard's concluding statement "Yet I'll hammer it out" (i.e., "I'll work hard at it" or "puzzle it out") implies that the yoking of disparate and unlike ideas requires a degree of force and even violence. Such elaborate conceits convey the careful rhetoric of his soliloquy.

Forging an analogy between the heterogeneous concepts of his solitary prison and the outside world, Richard imagines that his empty cell is populated by his own thoughts:

My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father, and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humours like the people of this world;
For no thought is contented. (V.v.6–11)

The self-contained lyric that Richard delivers in this physical enclosure paradoxically illustrates his dialectic engagement with otherness, or with the different parts of himself. He adopts both the female and male role

³²Though Harry Berger highlights the importance of "the dialogical play of speech and audition taking place between Richard and his interlocutors" in 3.2, he doesn't discuss this idea in terms of Richard's speech at Flint or his prison soliloquy: *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 79.

involved in conception and “beget[s]” a series of thoughts that are substitutes for the children he never had. Like the people in the exterior world, however, none of his interior thoughts are contented. He laments, for instance, that even his “thoughts of things divine, are intermix’d / With scruples” (12–13) and that his ambitious thoughts of escaping from prison are futile and “die in their own pride” (22). After analyzing his own thoughts and dissecting the different parts of himself they represent, he determines that he lacks a unified self and is fragmented. Recognizing how easily “one” becomes “none,” he concludes despairingly, “Thus play I in one person many people, / And none contented” (31–32). This line particularly illustrates Ricoeur’s notion that one’s address to oneself involves an implied listener and thus otherness.³³ On the verge of suicide, Richard arrives at nihilism: “Nor [he], nor any man that but man is, / With nothing shall be pleas’d, till he be eas’d / With being nothing” (39–41). Paradoxically, the deposed King is “eas’d” by the notion of “being nothing” and thus exhibits a glimmer of self-acceptance. Although the discovery of his own multiplicity initially threatens Richard with nihilism, it ultimately liberates him from solipsism, an imprisoning state of mind that negates the existence of others.

Fortunately, Richard’s despairing meditations are interrupted by the lyrical strains of music he overhears beyond his prison walls. Rupturing the closed nature of his soliloquy, the music challenges his notion that he can construct an autonomous, self-enclosed world within his prison cell and forces him to acknowledge that he is enmeshed in a political context. The lyric strains that fail to “keep time” remind him that he failed to rule in a timely fashion:

Music do I hear?
 Ha, ha! keep time—how sour sweet music is
 When time is broke and no proportion kept!
 So is it in the music of men’s lives.
 And here have I the daintiness of ear
 To check time broke in a disordered string;
 But for the concord of my state and time,
 Had not an ear to hear my true time broke:
 I wasted time, and now doth time waste me. (V.v.41–49)

Ironically, Richard’s awareness of the necessity of acting in time arrives too late. His overhearing of the music leads him to confess and perhaps even repent that while he wore the crown, he, too, “broke time”: he failed to keep “proportion” by wasting time with his favorites and he ruptured the royal line of succession by being deposed. Although now he

³³Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 43.

has “the daintiness of ear / To check time broke in a disordered string,” he “had not an ear to hear [his] true time broke” when he was King. The insights he acquired during prior attempts at privacy and meditation pale in comparison to his final realization that he has misused time. He acknowledges that his reign, like a tune without rhythm or harmony, lacked timing, “proportion,” and “concord.”³⁴ His clinging to the superficialities of rituals and ceremonies throughout the play, however, obscured the eruption of disorder within his kingdom.

Richard can’t stand reality for long, however, and continues to perpetuate fictitious accounts about his reign. In his soliloquy, for instance, he takes “refuge ... [from the] shame” of his misrule and wastefulness by displacing much of his guilt onto his usurper (26). Playing the part of the abused victim, he deludes himself into believing that he was “unking’d by Bolingbroke” (37) and metamorphosed into a “Jack of the clock” by him (60). In imitation of the tick of a clock, Richard uses monosyllables to express perhaps his most important discovery in the play: “I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.”³⁵ In a rhythmically rigid text the trochaic inversion at the beginning of this figure draws particular attention to its importance. The utterance also stands out because it is direct and succinct, a style uncharacteristic of Richard. Reminding him of the genuine otherness of politics and the sound of the bell “that tells what hour it is,” the lyrical measures of music lead him to acknowledge for a brief moment his responsibility for his deposition as well as his subjection to the tyranny of time (55). Though belated, the King’s awareness of his duty to his subjects momentarily delivers him from his self-absorption.

The prisoner further breaks out of his solipsistic predicament by engaging in a dialogue with voices both inside himself and with those beyond his prison walls. In the first segment of his soliloquy, he converses with multiple voices that are expressions of the different histrionic parts he plays. His monologue becomes a dialogue among the various facets of himself and releases him from his self-enclosure. As Tilottama Rajan argues, a communication with another, even oneself as another, forces the speaker’s words “to pass through an external detour.”³⁶ Rich-

³⁴In these lines from Richard’s lyrical soliloquy the word “proportion” means “metrical or musical rhythm or harmony,” *OED* sb. 10.

³⁵As R. P. Draper argues in his discussion of this antimetabole, “the change from ‘I’ (subject) to ‘me’ (object) ... highlights Richard’s change of role from active agent, ‘I’ to passive sufferer of action, ‘me.’” The rhetorical patterning of the line thereby sums up the crumbling of the King’s career: “Wasted Time in *Richard II*,” *Critical Survey* 1 (1989): 33.

³⁶Tilottama Rajan, “The Death of Lyric Consciousness,” *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, ed. Chaviva Hósek and Patricia Parker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 205.

ard's monological voice now includes traces of others, a psychic advance for the selfish King.

The strains of music Richard overhears beyond his prison walls transform his soliloquy into a dialogue with a lyrical voice from the outside world, a key sign of the King's development. Thanking the musician, he finally recognizes the presence of someone other than himself and his varied personae: "Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me, / For 'tis a sign of love" (64–65). Richard's expression of gratitude signals his capacity for fashioning a new kind of lyric, one that includes dialogue with other voices. His ensuing response to the music and his subsequent conversation with the Groom of the Stable, who enters to describe Bolingbroke's coronation, shift the focus of the prison scene from his attempt to create an autonomous, self-enclosed world to his genuine interaction not merely with interior and exterior voices but also with other dramatic personae. His release from self-absorption is also reflected in Shakespeare's verse. The Groom's address, "Hail, royal prince!" and Richard's reply, "Thanks, noble peer," is a shared line with parallel, metrically alike phrases in which the once selfish King actually listens to and echoes the formal structure used by his addresser.³⁷ As Marina Tarlinskaja notes, the split line also signals "livelier action" and "a faster speech tempo."³⁸ The altered pace of the dialogue prepares for Richard's brief shift from passivity to action at the end of the scene.

Richard's dialogue with the Groom ultimately reincorporates him into the action of the drama. Aware of his impending death when the Keeper of the Prison enters with meat that he refuses to taste because it might be poisonous, the King finally displays a sense of timing when he orders the Groom kindly, "If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away" (96). His previous dialogue with the voices inside his own mind, his meditative exchange with the lyrical bars of music, and his pivotal conversation with the Groom of the Stable all lead to his embracing of otherness within himself and his ability to act, even on behalf of his subjects.³⁹ Proclaiming "Patience is stale, and I am weary of it," he resists his impending fate by striking and cursing the murderers (103). Exton feels the lasting sting of Richard's curse when he admits guiltily, "For now the devil that told me I did well / Says that this deed is *chronicled* in hell" (115–16; my emphasis). He, too, seems to know that Richard's story is not over.

³⁷See George T. Wright's discussion of the shared line and its effect of "tightening the dramatic relationships between people": *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 141.

³⁸Marina Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare's Verse: Iambic Pentameter and the Poet's Idiosyncrasies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 136.

³⁹In "Wasted Time in *Richard II*," 42, R. P. Draper describes "a new and firmer quality of action" by Richard.

Although Richard never escapes from prison, tales and rumors about his reign, deposition, and murder escape from the coffin enclosing his body in the final scene of the play and haunt his usurper, Bolingbroke.⁴⁰ Even though the loquacious monarch seems to lie “all breathless” in a coffin before his reticent successor, the story of Richard’s tragic fall from the wheel of Fortune continues to speak, both prospectively within and retrospectively without the play (V.vi.31). For example, the Archbishop continues the Groom’s unfinished narrative about Richard’s “lamentable” procession when he reports in *2 Henry IV* that those who “threw’st dust upon [Richard’s] goodly head, / When through proud London he came sighing on / After the admired heels of Bolingbroke” are “now become enamour’d on his grave” and “cry’st... ‘O earth, yield us that King again / And take thou this!’”⁴¹

The rumors that are generated about Bolingbroke’s ascent to the throne serve as yet another empowering kind of narrative for Richard. Though Bolingbroke’s ascent to the throne is initially applauded by the voice of the people, his claim to the throne becomes more tenuous as his popularity wanes.⁴² The letter that York discovers in Aumerle’s pocket attesting to his involvement in the conspiracy to murder Bolingbroke, along with the Groom’s oral account of the usurper’s humiliation of Richard during the procession into London, are manifestations of the new King’s relative powerlessness to censor written and spoken forms of resistance to his reign. Though Henry IV was a medieval ruler, his plight is illuminated by Royal Proclamations on rumor during the latter part of the sixteenth century. These documents make clear that the danger of verbal assaults upon the reputation of the King is especially great “when the tales...[speculate upon] the hidden designs or intentions of [a] sovereign.”⁴³ In stark contrast to Richard, taciturn Bolingbroke refuses to articulate his mind throughout the play and thus invites such speculation. He exhibits fear that the “deed” of Richard’s death will in fact “slander” his reputation and defame him throughout England when he exclaims,

Exton, I thank thee not, for thou hast wrought
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand
Upon my head and all this famous land. (V.vi.34–36)

⁴⁰See Paul Strohm, “The Trouble with Richard: The Reburial of Richard II and Lancastrian Symbolic Strategy,” *Speculum* 71 (1996): 87–111, especially 93–96.

⁴¹*The Second Part of King Henry IV*, ed. A. R. Humphreys (1966; repr. London: Routledge, 1991), I.iii.102–7. The subsequent quotation of the play is from this edition.

⁴²Richard Abrams notes that Henry IV’s reign is precarious because those who elected him are “fickle.” He is an apparently “electoral sovereign” who derives “his authority from others like himself, rather than from an eternal source.” See “Rumor’s Reign in *2 Henry IV*: The Scope of a Personification,” *ELR* 16 (1986): 472.

⁴³Kenneth Gross, “Slander and Skepticism in *Othello*,” *ELH* 56 (1989): 849.

In *2 Henry IV*, a play ruled predominately by Rumor, Henry's fears become reality. Haunted by the living memory of Richard, he echoes the dead monarch's prophecy that "the time will come, that foul sin, gathering head, / Shall break into corruption" and bemoans its fulfillment toward the end of his reign (III.i.76–77). Henry is racked by care and battles "inward wars" as a result of the damage this commonly female monster "painted full of tongues" has done to his reputation (97–98, 107).⁴⁴ The rumors that originate in *Richard II* resist the restraining power of censorship and, for a knowing audience, undermine the play's sense of closure. These "winged words" escape from the written bounds—the enclosure—of that text and take flight throughout the *Henriad*.

⁴⁴Richard Abrams interestingly observes that during his insomnia speech, Henry IV "becomes a dramatically effectual version of Richard II in prison": "Rumor's Reign," 479. See also Harry Berger, Jr., "Sneak's Noise or Rumor and Detextualization in *2 Henry IV*," *Kenyon Review* 6 (1984): 58–78.

The Changing Understanding of the Making of Europe from Christopher Dawson to Robert Bartlett

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TWO BOOKS WITH THE SAME TITLE, *The Making of Europe*, published sixty-one years apart, may help us assess profound shifts that have taken place in the understanding of Europe over the last two-thirds of the twentieth century. Both books were or are by master, if quite dissimilar, historians.¹ Though the books share the same title, profound differences, perhaps the program of each author, is revealed in their subtitles. For Christopher Dawson (1889–1970), arguably the most eminent Catholic historian of the twentieth century, *The Making of Europe* was *An Introduction to the History of European Unity* (London, 1932). As a member of an interwar generation concerned about the fragility and liberal prospects of Europe, Dawson's special interest was to trace the process by which Europe had achieved whatever hard-won cultural unity it had. For Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe* is, in fin-de-siècle language, a story of *Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (Princeton, 1993). In the present essay, I would like to compare the understanding of "Europe" in these two books. Part of my argument is that the difference in the treatment of European identity in the two works closely tracks changes in the understanding of, and attitudes toward, Europe in the larger society. In these shifts, the argument also is, we have lost at least as much in understanding as we have gained.

The differences between the books are most evident in their portrayal of the role of Christianity in the formation of European identity, and their consequent understanding of what Europe is. European history, especially since the Enlightenment, involved a "settling of scores" several times in the matter of Christianity.² If the Enlightenment attacked the medieval

¹An earlier form of this article was given as a paper at the V Congreso "Cultura Europea," held at the University of Navarre, Pamplona, 28–31 October 1998, and is being published in the *Actas* of that Congress.

²On this and the following paragraphs, see Adriaan Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages: The Relations between Religion, Church, and Society*, trans. Reinder

acculturation of Christianity, Romanticism defended it under the banner of the “Christian Middle Ages.” The work of Christopher Dawson, with its argument that Christianity was the most central element in the making of Europe, bears some marks of this latter approach.³ In some respects, Dawson wrote as an anti-Gibbon, insisting against Gibbon’s obtuseness that Christianity played a preservative and creative role in the Middle Ages.⁴ Dawson was a careful and measured thinker, but he feared the imminent demise of both Christianity and Europe. Several of his books in effect express Evelyn Waugh’s thought that when Europe “ceases to be Christian, it will cease to be.”⁵ Dawson’s point was that the spread and history of Christianity had provided the narrative which had formed Europe, and that taken out of this narrative Europe could hardly be spoken of as existing.

In contrast, the work of Robert Bartlett, while far from an aggressively laicist attack on medieval Christianity, does, especially through its use of an analysis according to categories of power now common in French historiography, bear the mark of profound shifts in historical fashion which, whatever else they do, in fact continue the “settling of scores.” In Bartlett’s case, this seems largely inadvertent, more found in what is not discussed than in what is. He considers the Church as one more institution, one more player in the power game, at some length. He hardly describes the Church as school of sanctity or locus of prayer and adoration, and it seems clear to me that Bartlett’s chapter on “The Roman Church and the

Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994), ix. Cf. especially to Bartlett the approach taken by J. R. S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³Glenn W. Olsen, “The Maturity of Christian Culture: Some Reflections on the Views of Christopher Dawson,” in *The Dynamic Character of Christian Culture: Essays on Dawsonian Themes*, ed. Peter J. Cataldo (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984), 97–125 at 108–13 and 119, considers Dawson’s retention of elements of a Romantic and Hegelian approach to history. Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity*, 11, in noting the influence of Romanticism on the writing of Church history in the first half of the twentieth century, justly observed “The complexity of social change—now better appreciated by historians due to the influence of the social sciences—has changed the approach of historians to the relationship between religion, church, and society in the Middle Ages, when compared to that of their Christian predecessors in the period between the World Wars.”

⁴Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), in a chapter featuring “The Convert Historians,” gives good characterizations of Dawson’s achievements, and develops the idea of Dawson as an anti-Gibbon (243 and 253). See also Christina Scott, *A Historian and His World: A Life of Christopher Dawson 1889–1970* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1984).

⁵Waugh as described by J. A. Gray, “A Voice Crying in the Bewilderedness,” *New Oxford Review* 65, no. 7 (July–August 1998): 33–41 at 34. See especially Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1960), chaps. 10–13, and *The Crisis of Western Education* (Steubenville, Ohio: Franciscan University Press, 1989), chaps. 13–15.

Christian People” is easily the least satisfactory chapter in his book.⁶ In this book we encounter the monks as colonizers, drainers of swamps, and cultivators, but not as liturgical innovators and scholars. The drive behind European expansion is found in such practices as primogeniture, but apparently there is no thought to assess the role of Christian reform ideas such as *reformatio in melius*, fostered above all from the time of the Gregorian Reform, in encouraging a forward-looking attitude toward time, a shift in important circles in people’s attitudes toward time.⁷

The issues may be engaged by summarizing Dawson’s and Bartlett’s view of how Europe came to be. For Dawson, Europe formed in the early Middle Ages, especially during the Carolingian period, as a synthesis, an organic growth, a unity achieved, formed from quite disparate elements.⁸ Chief among these were the Greek philosophic and scientific tradition, Roman imperial memory, the social and military customs of northern Europe, and Christianity.⁹ Dawson’s idea was that at the center of all culture is religion, that culture is embodied religion or religion given material and concrete expression. This culture is not specifically “high” culture, culture in the intellectual historian’s sense, but shared worldviews, “culture” as it was understood by anthropologists in Dawson’s day. Dawson was one of the first historians to sit at the feet of the anthropologists and sociologists, and to adopt some of their ways of thinking. Romanticism, specifically the notion that each civilization develops common ways of thinking or a common spirit, and the anthropologists’ idea of culture came together in such of his remarks as that “the essential unity of a civilization consists in a common consciousness,” and “behind the cultural unity of

⁶Paul Freedman and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Medievalism Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies,” *The American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 677–704, exhibits a partially overlapping paradox. In the first half of the twentieth century, many American medievalists approached the Middle Ages in a secular way, being primarily interested in how the Middle Ages had developed rational institutions such as bureaucracy, central government, and universities. In doing so, they emphasized the modernity of medieval people and tended to be sympathetic to religion, understood as the promoter of efficiency rather than of superstition. Today, when medievalists arguably give much more attention to medieval religion, or at least to the less rational aspects of medieval religion, and analyze things uncongenial to the modern mind such as belief in miracles and visions of heaven and hell, the Middle Ages is increasingly portrayed as, if not repellent, quite foreign.

⁷Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought in the Age of the Fathers*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); eadem, *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art*, 2 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1983), 2:517–763.

⁸Cf. the thoughtful views of an American Catholic historian of a later generation, Richard E. Sullivan, “The Carolingian Age: Reflections on Its Place in the History of the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 64 (1989): 267–306.

⁹Cf. *The History of the Idea of Europe*, ed. Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen, rev. ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 13, which retains Christendom, with liberty and civilization, as a (vague) triad defining modern Europe. Cf. Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

every great civilization there lies a spiritual unity.”¹⁰ To the extent that a culture articulates over time a coherent form, this form, Dawson observed, historically, has been religious. That is, in all historical settings before our own, religion has tended to permeate and order the various strands of social life. If many westerners now do not see this, this is because they have in their own education been given a laicist history from which religion has been largely excised or portrayed as a dark thing from which progressive people have struggled to free themselves.

In the Christian Middle Ages, according to Dawson, Christianity slowly and with much effort became that which gave unity to Europe. Reviewers at the time of the publication of *The Making of the Middle Ages* remarked on how unusual its approach was. In a day when much writing of history was determined by nationalist allegiances and interests, Dawson wrote the history of Europe; that is, a history which transcended national boundaries and refused national prejudices.¹¹ Though he argued that Christianity was the element which had most shaped European experience, he understood that Europe had been forged from a multitude of material and spiritual factors, and that in it had existed many overlapping subcultures. In several of his books he explored some of these, such as the “‘insular’ Celtic-Anglo-Saxon tradition of vernacular culture,” or the world of the *chanson de geste*.¹² But his leading idea was that culturally it was *christianitas*, a term used as early as the fourth century, that gave Europe what unity it had. By the end of the eighth century this term carried a meaning which we can translate as “Christendom.” We must remember, however, that though the Carolingians made *Franci* virtually identical with *christiani*, Dawson’s argument was that the term *christianitas* had more a cultural than a political force. It referred to shared religion more than to membership in any specific political entity.¹³ Though, as we see in the *Song of Roland* centuries later, there was for a long time a tendency for each people to identify itself with Christianity, *christianitas* was more than any national experience. If it had an institutional expression, it was in the life of the Church wherever found, for it was the sum total of Latin Christian experience.

Before Dawson died in 1970, a shift was taking place from speaking of the “Christian Middle Ages” to speaking simply of “medieval Christian-

¹⁰These two phrases, from Christopher Dawson, “Cycles of Civilization,” in *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933), 70, are quoted in Allitt, *Catholic Converts*, 255, and see 256 on Dawson’s understanding of culture.

¹¹Allitt, *Catholic Converts*, 253–54, characterizes this book.

¹²Christopher Dawson, *Medieval Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1959), 151–55.

¹³Jean Rupp, *L’idée de chrétienté dans la pensée pontificale des origines à Innocent III* (Paris: Les Presses modernes, 1939), 13 ff., and Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity*, 16–19, give later and in the case of the former, fuller, accounts than that of Dawson.

ity.” That is, Christianity was increasingly perceived as merely one element within medieval culture rather than the chief and ordering element. As interest in the study of “popular religion” grew, for instance, doubts developed as to how “Christian” medieval culture indeed had been, specifically as to how much documents left by a clerical and monastic elite spoke for all. Some wrote of two largely disconnected levels of society, a small religious elite at the top, and a mass of people following largely pre-Christian ways of life summarized in the term “popular religion.”¹⁴ Next, with the growth of “multi-culturalism,” “post-colonialism,” and similar movements, and the increasing portrayal of European history as characterized by aggressiveness, expansionism, and colonization, but also by cultural negotiation between colonizer and colonized, a portrayal which has left deep marks on Robert Bartlett’s book, medieval Christianity was increasingly seen as at heart one more form of “quest for power.” *Christianitas* became less something to be studied for itself, in the terms in which it presented and understood itself, and more an “ideology” to be unmasked.

Let me, with the help of a very useful essay by Mark Lilla on “The Politics of Jacques Derrida,” recall a bit of the cultural landscape of the 1970s and 1980s, especially in France, because this has so profoundly influenced American historical scholarship and academic attitudes, and thus Bartlett’s new vision of *The Making of Europe* (though Bartlett now teaches at St. Andrew’s, his book was published while he was on the faculty of the University of Chicago). As Lilla points out, as early as the 1950s Claude Lévi-Strauss, writing during the breakup of the French empire, had attacked “the defining myth of modern French politics,” namely the idea that the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 expressed universal truths “which France had been anointed to promulgate to the world.”¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism suggested that the language of universal rights or values was “a cover for the West’s ethnocentrism, colonialism, and genocide.” His structuralism, on the other hand, “spoke of cultural difference and the need to respect it....” Lilla observes that the rhetorical gifts Lévi-Strauss learned from Rousseau “worked an aesthetic transformation on his readers, who were subtly made to feel ashamed to be European.”

In the 1960s Lévi-Strauss’s writings fed “the suspicion among the new left that...all the universal ideas to which Europe claimed allegiance—reason, science, progress, liberal democracy—were culturally specific weapons fashioned to rob the non-European Other of his difference....”

¹⁴John Van Engen, “The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem,” *The American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 519–52, summarizes and intelligently attacks such views. I have further reflections in my “On the Frontiers of Eroticism: The Romanesque Monastery of San Pedro de Cervatos,” *Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1999): 89–104.

¹⁵“The Politics of Jacques Derrida,” *The New York Review of Books* [NYRB] 45, no. 11 (25 June 1998): 36–41 at 37. The four following quotations are also from this page.

In the next decade and to the present, writers such as Jacques Derrida have continued to promote such ideas, and the result is that there are few educated westerners today who are not at least vaguely aware of the manifold ways in which Europe has been called before the bar of history.¹⁶ More generally, whether Europe is the historical actor or not, it has become commonplace to note the ways in which cultural imperialism has taken its toll around the globe. Events called to one's attention by the daily newspapers such as the demolition of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, by a mob the year before Bartlett's book was published, have drilled the long history of cultural imperialism into Western consciousness. Here a Hindu mob attacked a symbol of sixteenth-century Islamic conquest, particularly odious to them because constructed from a Hindu temple which had previously stood on the site.¹⁷ An acute observer could note that what Moslem had done to Hindu was not unlike the Christian appropriation of *spolia*, the remains of earlier buildings and cultures, in the Middle Ages. Writers such as V. S. Naipaul gave themselves to extended critique of such phenomena as Islamic fundamentalism, which they viewed as a particularly cruel and uncompromising form of imperialism which "strips converted peoples of their past, their sacred places, and their attachments to their native land."¹⁸ To an almost astonishing degree, French "postcolonial" thought on such matters has found its way into American discourse. Thus, though there is no explicit reference to any of this in Robert Bartlett's account of *The Making of Europe*, his book could not exist without the shifts in the cultural landscape marked by the popularization of such French thinkers as Lévy-Strauss and Derrida.

These remarks made, we can turn to Bartlett and summarize his understanding of how Europe was made. Perhaps the first thing to be said is that Bartlett never refers to Dawson. In this sense his book is the ultimate colonization, taking over Dawson's title and subject without even ironical acknowledgment. This is not explained by the fact that the books only partly overlap chronologically, Dawson's ending about 1100, and Bartlett's beginning about 950. Further, there is an important inversion at work in Bartlett's book. Dawson never reified Europe in the sense of making Europe into an historical actor. He understood that European civilization was an amalgam of many interacting forces in which Christianity had been not just the shaper of cultures, but profoundly influenced and shaped by the various cultures it encountered. In portraying Europe as a region which had formed through both peaceful and warlike means, his

¹⁶Ibid., 40.

¹⁷Pankaj Mishra, "A New, Nuclear, India?" NYRB 45, no. 11 (25 June 1998): 55–64 at 58.

¹⁸Ian Buruma, "In the Empire of Islam," NYRB 45, no. 12 (16 July 1998): 8–11 at 8, and see also 10.

eyes were on the interpenetration of ideas, religion, and habits of life between colonizer and colonized. However, though he lamented an earlier historiography which gave insufficient attention to what is now called material culture, Dawson did not consider in detail subjects that have in the last generation come to dominate economic and social history.¹⁹ Thus though one can get a good idea from his writings of how certain ideas and practices of the northern cultures influenced Christianity and European culture, for instance in the institutions of Crusade and knighthood, he did not pay much attention to the more mundane ways in which the process of colonization and conquest shaped European culture. Bartlett's Europe is formed as much by the process of conquest as it is by any ideas or views of the world carried by Christianity. Thus, though both men agree that Europe and European Christianity were profoundly influenced by each of the cultures they encountered, in the end Bartlett sees this cultural interchange itself, not Christianity, as giving Europe its definition.

In one fascinating chapter after another, Bartlett lays out the ways in which Europe was formed by a host of factors including the inheritance patterns of the aristocracy, military technology, agricultural and eating habits, and the colonization and establishment of new towns and trade. He traces race relations on the frontiers of Latin Europe, and brings all these ingredients to a boil in a chapter on "The Europeanization of Europe." Here he defines Europeanization as the growing homogenization of Europe in the high Middle Ages from a core "in France, Germany west of the Elbe and north Italy" (269). The argument in general is much "closer to the ground" than that of Dawson. Thus while Dawson writes of the spiritual unity of Europe, Bartlett remarks that "The unity of the medieval West was, in part, a traders' unity."²⁰ Such observations are obviously true, useful, and important, and often may be taken as complementary to Dawson's approach. But gone is much attention to, say, the Greek inheritance as an essential element of European civilization, or indeed to the history of medieval European thought and educational institutions. Europe is still viewed as "both a region and an idea" (1), and Christianity has as large a role in Bartlett's account as in Dawson's, but more as institution than as idea, sacrament, or theology. Bartlett's leading idea, that "Europe was a world of peasant communities" (1), has much greater prominence in his account than did the peasantry in Dawson's works.

I have already suggested that in many ways these two books are complementary. Bartlett's greatly expands our knowledge of all sorts of forces at work in European life. There are, however, important things lost as we pass from the one book to the other, and I want to close by a consider-

¹⁹Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1958), 12-13.

²⁰Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 196.

ation of these. My argument is not directed against the writing of a new kind of history. My argument is that important things previously known fall out of Bartlett's analysis, not so much by not being present as by not influencing what is present. This is most obviously so in his chapter on the Roman Church, which has many flaws. As especially social historians have replaced the Romantic "hermeneutic of empathy" with an "hermeneutic of suspicion," many historians have felt less and less obligated to understand Christianity on its own terms—to have, for instance, an exact knowledge of Scripture, doctrine, and liturgy. They—certainly not all but many—increasingly have been content to approach Christianity simply as a structure of power. One irony of this has been that popular culture, formerly portrayed in an undifferentiated manner as hardly worth study in comparison to Christian high culture, is now studied with great refinement, while Christianity itself has been increasingly marginalized as an undifferentiated Other.²¹ This seems to me to occur in Bartlett's book, specifically in his chapter on the Roman Church.

In this chapter Bartlett defines Latin Christendom as constituted by obedience to Rome and a relative uniformity of liturgical practice as determined by Rome. In a book covering the period from 950 to 1350, he makes no chronological qualifications to such definitions. This seems part of a tendency to treat the papacy as a rather undifferentiated entity. Presumably in his definition Bartlett has in mind the period of growing papal ascendancy from the time of Gregory VII (1073–85), but there is no indication that he is aware of, for instance, a scholarship which has increasingly insisted on the sophistication of early-eleventh-century reform ideas, a sophistication achieved largely without the papacy. In the words of a book published after his own, "Before there was a center, there was reform."²² Although Bartlett's definition of Christendom is true so far as it goes, his emphasis on power relations pretty much excludes all else: "Latin Christendom was constituted by the lands and peoples admitting these claims" (243). From such definitions, one gains little sense of the shared beliefs or views found in Christendom. A recent review of Ramsay MacMullen's lively *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, 1997), notes an odd thing about this book's portrayal of the process of Christianization: its "total lack of interest in Christian doctrine."²³ A similar complaint might be lodged against Bartlett. A further result of his presentation is that the reader is likely to carry away an old stereotype

²¹Cf. a letter of Brian Tierney to the editor of *The American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 1758–59 on the dangers of the passion for alterity in current study of the Middle Ages.

²²John Howe, *Church Reform and Social Change in Eleventh-Century Italy: Dominic of Sora and His Patrons* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), quoted in a review by Maureen C. Miller, *The Catholic Historical Review* 84 (1998): 532–34 at 533.

²³Averil Cameron, *Church History* 67 (1998): 567–69 at 569.

of the high medieval Roman Church as powerful, with little sense of all the ways Rome was in every century ignored, ineffective, and thwarted by national governments. From a book which talks about primogeniture much, but, for instance, the history of marriage little, it is difficult to obtain a clear idea of how difficult the Church found it actually to get assent to its ideas.

Again, without anywhere in the book giving an adequate account going beyond questions of power in the issues between the Gregorian papacy and Henry IV of Germany, Bartlett describes a letter of 1073 from Gregory VII to Rudolf of Swabia as a “sinister expression of goodwill” (245) toward Henry. Then, seriously misunderstanding the attempts of Gregory and some of his successors to have the papal office recognized as superior in principle to those of secular rulers, Bartlett tells us that “one aspect of his programme was the assertion that large parts of the Christian world were actually the property of the saint [Peter] and his earthly representative, the pope” (248). Without an explanation of historical context, such statements can only seriously mislead. No eleventh-century pope attempted to rule Hungary, Dalmatia, Spain, or any other kingdom. What the popes wanted was “fealty to St. Peter,” an idea coming from the world of feudalism. Just as a feudal overlord was not to usurp the rights of his vassals or rule in their stead, but wished acknowledgment from them of their fidelity, their readiness to respond to his initiatives, so the pope used the ideas of papal proprietorship and fealty to St. Peter to speak of duties owed the papacy or tasks incumbent on all Christendom, things like raising or paying for the troops against Henry, or later responding to the call to crusade. Such ideas urged the view that the papacy had primary responsibility for Christendom and for the spiritual life of Christians, and attempted to obtain from lay rulers acknowledgment of the papal office as in this goal intrinsically higher than lay offices, to which were given concern for human temporal flourishing. These ideas stand in the long Gelasian tradition of distinguishing between the spheres of king and priest while insisting on the final superiority of the priestly authority.

Dawson's view that the unity of Europe was spiritual led him to employ the title “The Rise of the Mediaeval Unity” for a chapter of *The Making of Europe* that begins with the demise of the Carolingians and ends with “the new order which arose in the West in the eleventh century” (219). After the destruction by the Vikings of the political unity the Carolingians had begun to give Europe, the reforming Church had for the most part to begin from the ground up in the eleventh century. What Dawson saw as so central to this second struggle for European unification was that it was essentially a work of the reformed papacy. It was not that the goal of the papacy was the unification of Europe; rather, this was the result or an offshoot of the papacy working for a more effective assimila-

tion of Christianity. Bartlett would not quarrel with seeing the eleventh-century initiatives of the papacy as central to European unification. This said, his book conveys little of the sense in which, going beyond issues of power, this unification was a work of the spirit. It was not the creation of a temporal regime but the insinuation of Christianity into more areas of life than it had claimed in the early Middle Ages.

An irony is that, by talking so little about the Church's interior life, Bartlett misses some of his best opportunities for showing Rome engaged in a power game. He never alludes, for instance, to André Vauchez's impressive 1981 detailing of the process by which, by increasingly taking charge of and defining canonization, Rome tried to control the definition of sanctity.²⁴ In similar manner, a section on "The Crusades" in the same chapter on the Roman Church never introduces a body of scholarship that has called the very existence of the "Crusades" into question. This scholarship sees in this term "Crusades" a modern anachronistic linking and numbering of various forms of what initially was called armed pilgrimage.²⁵ From his first mention of them, the Crusades are for Bartlett "wars of Christian expansion" (13), one of the best examples of European colonialism. He seems completely unaware of scholarship that, beginning from the fact that "until the 1700s there *was* a desperate struggle between Christendom and Islam," now draws an analogy coming from the late 1980s, the struggle of John Paul II to overthrow communism, "to remind... Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians that the church had not forgotten them."²⁶ Here the Crusades are placed in the context of clash between cultures and struggle for human minds, and seen as involving much more than colonialism and economic expansion. Scholars have begun to reflect on the fact that one was more likely to lose than to gain money from going on crusade, and that no European institution, papal or royal, was capable of protecting by force commerce, tourism, or pilgrim-

²⁴André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁵Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading 1095–1274* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), vii, notes that in the period covered by her book there was no specific terminology of crusade. Of the articles "Confronting the Crusades" edited by Nigel Saul in the March and April 1997 issues of *History Today* 47, see esp. "The Pilgrim Origins of the First Crusade," by Marcus Bull, March, pp. 10–15. Even after a century of crusading, what we call the "Fourth Crusade" was still simply called an "expedition," and no numbering of "armed pilgrimages" and "expeditions" into a continuing series of "Crusades" had taken place. See Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

²⁶William Urban, "Rethinking the Crusades," *Perspectives: American Historical Association Newsletter* 36, no. 7 (Oct. 1998): 25–29 at 26–27. Cf. Aleksander Gieysztor, "Le mythe de croisade," in *L'Europe dans son histoire: La vision d'Alphonse Dupront*, ed. François Crouzet and François Furet, foreword by Pierre Chaunu (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998).

age in the Holy Land.²⁷ But to introduce such scholarship would be to introduce the medievals' own way of understanding themselves as more than creatures in power relationships, as more varied than Bartlett presents them. In sum, great achievement as it is, Bartlett's book, by embodying a partiality of perspective now common in the writing of social history and by the loss of empathy, flattens out all those things which were most differentiated in Dawson.

²⁷Ibid., 29, and Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East and the Costs of Crusading, 1095–1130," in *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period: Essays Presented to Areyh Grabois on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Goodich, Sophia Menache, and Sylvia Schein (New York: P. Lang, 1995).

ALLEN D. BRECK
AWARD WINNER

“Ples acsep thes my skrybled lynes”: The Construction and Conventions of Women’s Letters in England, 1540–1603

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THE CENTRAL THEMES OF THIS ESSAY are delineated by the contrasting examples of two female correspondents. Both women are from similar gentry backgrounds and wrote in the late 1570s to early 1590s. The first is Mary Harding, the court maid of Lady Bridget Manners, herself the daughter of Elizabeth, countess of Rutland, famed for her marriage to Robert Tyrwhit in 1594, which so greatly incurred the wrath of Elizabeth I.¹ Only four of Mary Harding’s letters have survived, all of which were sent to her mistress’s mother in order to keep her abreast of court news, her daughter’s progress, and potential marriage suitors.² Of particular interest is the fact that although the letters bear her signature Mary appears to have been unable to write them herself, but instead relied upon the services of an amanuensis. Indeed, she wrote on one occasion, “Umbly beseeching your honor not to be ofended withe me for that I write noe oftner to your honour. Thee caues is that I cannot write myselfe and I am louth to make any bodye acquainted withe my leaters.”³

The second example is Elizabeth Bourne, the wife of Anthony Bourne and probably the daughter of Sir James Mervin of Fonthill, Wiltshire. She experienced an acrimonious separation from her husband, which involved proceedings in the Privy Council and the Court of Requests, and a battle for the wardship of her daughters. Approximately seventy letters written by her during this period survive. In contrast to Mary Harding, Elizabeth Bourne could write her own letters. Moreover, she wrote several different

¹Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), 96.

²Mary Harding to Elizabeth, countess of Rutland, 18 November 1589, *H[istorical] M[anuscripts] C[ommission] Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland, G.C.B., Preserved at Belvoir Castle*, 4 vols. (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1888), 1:278; Mary Harding to Elizabeth, countess of Rutland [ca. June 1592], *ibid.*, 1:300; Mary Harding to Elizabeth, countess of Rutland, 24 July [1592], *ibid.*, 1:301; Mary Harding to Elizabeth, countess of Rutland, 5 July [1594], *ibid.*, 1:321. The original letters are in private hands and access to them is routinely denied to scholars.

³Mary Harding to Elizabeth Manners, countess of Rutland, 24 July [1592], *ibid.*, 1:301.

hands, created a number of personas for herself, and on at least two occasions apparently wrote under a pseudonym.⁴ Her letters also reveal a real desire to express herself in writing: “I must nedes speke my mynde,” she once wrote to Sir John Conway. Chastising him for failing to keep to his word she continued, “never promyse me any thinge but p[er]forme hit or else tell me som cause whye you may breke promyse...or else I canot be contented / yf I speke reason saye so and mend your fawtes.”⁵ On another occasion insomnia forced Elizabeth Bourne to write to Conway in order to unburden herself of her troubles:

after the wrytyng of my lette[r] and I gon to bed I fynde my selfe
som thinge trubled so as I can take no reste tyll I haue imparted
hit to you / I had thought to haue kept hit tyll I dyd speke
w[i]t[h] you but I p[er]seve that shalbe god knowes when.⁶

Although Elizabeth Bourne was clearly a highly literate woman who wrote most of her own correspondence, she also sometimes sought help from others to compose letters. In one letter she thanked Sir John Conway for correcting a draft of a business missive, writing “I wyll wryt the leter a newe and I lyke the altering of it well.”⁷

These two examples open up a number of interesting issues which this essay seeks to explore. To begin with and most obvious is the range of writing abilities, and the varying degrees of female literacy and illiteracy encountered in the material surveyed. At one level there are those women unfamiliar with the practice of writing, who were unable to pen their own letters and who could perhaps only scrawl a crude signature or perform a mark. At the other end of the spectrum, however, are highly literate women, who achieved fluency in penmanship and were capable of writing in a variety of styles. Importantly, women at both extremes were able to operate through letters, although in very different ways.

A second and related issue is that of the construction of letters; that is, who wrote them, how they were written, how much control a woman had over the text, and ultimately whether they represent the voice of a female letter-writer (if indeed such a thing exists). My research has shown that a significant proportion of women’s letters during this period were in fact written by amanuenses, or bear the signs of having been written by more than one person. Of approximately 2300 letters analyzed, dispatched by

⁴For letters written by Elizabeth Bourne under the pseudonyms Frances Wesley and Anne Hayes see B[ritish] L[ibrary], Add. MS 23212, fols. 193–193v, 199.

⁵Elizabeth Bourne to Sir John Conway, n.d., *ibid.*, fol. 177.

⁶Elizabeth Bourne to Sir John Conway, n.d., *ibid.*, fol. 157.

⁷Elizabeth Bourne to Sir John Conway, n.d., *ibid.*, fol. 153.

some 650 different women, about one-fifth were written by a secretary.⁸ The implications of this are far-reaching and have been touched on by various scholars. The theme of women's "mediated" writing, questioning as it does modern definitions of authorship and textual production, is one that has concerned literary scholars of the late medieval and Renaissance periods.⁹ Social historians too have encountered similar problems in their use of depositional evidence, where the voice of a female deponent is muffled by legal and bureaucratic procedure.¹⁰ What is clear is that the mechanics of letter-writing and the degree of female input are at the very heart of a range of questions, such as women's persuasive and rhetorical skills, the degree of confidence and authority that they displayed, as well as the intimacy and emotional content of social and family relationships.

While the majority of correspondence examined appears to have been written by women unaided, there are a number of different methods by which letters were composed cooperatively.¹¹ As seen from the example of Elizabeth Bourne, women often drafted letters themselves first and then sought help in correcting and refining. At a more basic level, some women merely copied out in their own hands letters written entirely by someone else. Frances, duchess of Suffolk, asked her former equerry and then husband, Adrian Stokes, to write a letter for her to convey to the queen, requesting her consent for the marriage of Katherine Grey and Edward Seymour. The duchess wrote to Stokes, "devise a letter, and rough draw it for me to copy, so that I may write to the Queen's Majesty for her good-

⁸For a more detailed analysis see James Daybell, "Women's Letters and Letter-Writing in England, 1540–1603" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading, 1999), 75–76, 104–6 [hereafter Daybell, Thesis].

⁹Margaret W. Ferguson, "Renaissance Concepts of the 'Woman Writer,'" in *Women and Literature in Britain 1500–1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 143–68; Lynn Stanley Johnson, "The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe," *Speculum* 66 (1991): 820–38; Julia Boffey, "Women Authors and Women's Literacy in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century England," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 159–82.

¹⁰Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Polity Press, 1987), 1–6; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 8–9; Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 20; Tim Stretton, "Women and Litigation in the Elizabethan Court of Requests" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1993), 24; idem., *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9, 13–19; Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker, eds., *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 5. In this respect women did not differ from male deponents whose words were similarly buried beneath a layer of protocol and formulaic legal language.

¹¹For a more detailed discussion of methods of composition see James Daybell, "Women's Letters and Letter-Writing in England, 1540–1603: An Introduction to the Issues of Authorship and Construction," *Shakespeare Studies* 27 (Sept. 1999): 161–86.

will and consent to the marriage.”¹² Clearly, therefore, a holograph letter does not necessarily represent the unimpaired voice of a female correspondent.

Furthermore, secretaries or amanuenses were involved in various ways in the production of women’s letters. First, and perhaps most common, was the dictation of correspondence. Some letters were dictated verbatim, while others were only dictated in part, leaving the secretary to add conventional opening and closing formulae, and perhaps the place and date the letter was written. Alternatively, amanuenses could work from written notes detailing what a woman wished to have included in the letter. Finally, secretaries also used model or form letters tailored for individual circumstances. The use of such models was widespread well before 1500, and during the sixteenth century a large number of printed letter-writing manuals and manuscript formularies were produced.¹³

In the event of collaborative epistolary composition, the language used was not entirely that of the female signatory and the level of influence exerted by a third party varied. For example, a letter that was first drafted by a woman will have a far greater level of input by a female letter-writer than one written specifically for her, the actual wording of which she would have had very little to do with. Likewise, a letter that was dictated verbatim is more likely to represent a woman’s initial intentions than those letters that were written from notes, where the secretary was given greater freedom to write what he thought fit.¹⁴ In particular, when a woman drafted or dictated a letter, the majority of the text can be attributed to her. In relation to the latter, it is important to remember that the physical act of putting ink on a page was only one of a range of skills associated with authorship: skills such as composition, memory, imagination, legal and business acumen, and attention to detail. Indeed, a woman who dictated a letter would still have used many of these skills, the only difference being that she would not have worked on paper herself. This suggests that one must accept a relatively broad definition of women’s writing.

The degree of control that a woman had over a letter was ultimately dependent upon whether she was able to read it and whether she did so

¹²Hester W. Chapman, *Two Tudor Portraits: Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and Lady Katherine Grey* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 181.

¹³Jean Robertson, *The Art of Letter Writing: An Essay on the Handbooks Published in England during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Liverpool University Press, 1942); Katherine Gee Hornbeak, *The Complete Letter-Writer in English, 1568–1800* (Northampton, Mass: Smith College, 1934); R. R. Bolgar, “The Teaching of Letter-Writing in the Sixteenth Century,” *History of Education* 12, no. 4 (1983): 245–53; R. A. Griffiths, “Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 30 (1980): 109–30, esp. 120–21.

¹⁴The male pronoun has been adopted here to indicate that the majority of secretaries employed were in fact male. Indeed, I am only aware of one example of a woman acting in a secretarial capacity: Daybell, Thesis, 77–78.

before it was sent. In this sense, the construction of letters sometimes may have been more a function of a woman's ability to read a letter than her ability to write one. There is widespread evidence to indicate that women did review letters that were written and amended for them. The fact that almost all the letters surveyed bear a holograph signature is important. A signature is usually understood to connote the ability to read and at least a rudimentary level of writing ability.¹⁵ Furthermore, in order to sign a letter a woman would need to have seen it before it was sent and presumably would have read it before signing. For example, John Drury, a servant of the countess of Bath, sent his mistress a copy of a letter that he had written for her and wished her to sign. He wrote:

[I] umbely desyer your honor to put your hand to a letter that I have sent by this bearer / w[hi]ch is acordyng to a copy w[hi]ch I haue sent also not w[i]th standyng if ther be any thyng not greabell to your plesure & kindnes then to awltar yt as yt shall please you.¹⁶

Similarly, holograph postscripts, which many female signatories employed as a means of personalizing secretarial letters, further attest women's contact with their correspondence before it was dispatched.¹⁷ In sum, the final draft of a letter would have incorporated suggestions made by others, but ultimately it was the woman alone who decided what was to be included and what to be excluded. This was, however, dependent upon individual circumstances, including a woman's level of literacy and her personal confidence and authority.

A letter in the British Library from Elizabeth Willoughby to her husband Sir Francis more fully illustrates the effect that a third party might have had in refining a woman's letter.¹⁸ The letter is one of only three original letters of this writer that survive, all of which were incidentally

¹⁵R. S. Schofield, "The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 311–25, esp. 319; David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 53–61; Margaret Spufford, "First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographers," *Social History* 4, no. 3 (1979): 407–35, esp. 410–12; W. P. Ford, "The Problem of Literacy in Early Modern England," *History* 78 (1993): 22–37, esp. 31; R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education, 1500–1800* (London: Longman, 1988), 125–26.

¹⁶C[ambridge] U[niversity] L[ibrary], Hengrave MS 88/I, fol. 130, n.d.

¹⁷On postscripts see Daybell, Thesis, 128–30.

¹⁸The progress of this marriage has been expertly detailed by Alice T. Friedman in *House and Household in Elizabethan England: Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); eadem, "Portrait of a Marriage: The Willoughby Letters of 1585–1586," *Signs* 11, no. 3 (1986): 542–55.

penned by an amanuensis.¹⁹ Interestingly the letter appears to have been dictated and shows signs of modification by a secretary. At the bottom of the letter the secretary wrote, “Madame as I haue altred this l[ett]re yow may w[i]th good warrant send it to Sr ff [Sir Francis Willoughby, her husband] but in any wise / remember the condicions how they stand w[i]th yow / that yow be not overtaken w[i]th them.”²⁰ The draft is full of crossings out and other amendments in the same hand as this note. In part the alterations were made to correct grammatical errors; in addition, certain nonessential information seems to have been excluded. The main effect, however, was the toning down of certain passages. While the tone of the first draft appears to have been largely conciliatory there are points in the text where Lady Willoughby’s obsequious style displays an almost desperate desire for reconciliation with her husband, revealing simultaneously extreme submissiveness and the frustration she felt regarding his maltreatment of her. It is this more emotional, less controlled side of the letter that the secretary filtered out. This can be seen in the following passage; the parts of the text that have been struck through represent secretarial alterations:

I require no one iote [jot²¹] of favor at yo[u]r handes / ~~So I pray god to dele w[i]th me further as w[i]th a most faithles & periured parson both towards him and yow /~~ So againe if yo[u]r meaning be to have me acknowleg of my former forgettfullnes of my dutie / ~~many wayes~~ towards yow for & concerninge howshold matters only / Then my answe is / that that hath bene donne many times & long synce / both by my l[ette]rs / and by my self apon my knees / ~~And for your further & full satisfaction herin / I do here once agayne confesse to yow under my hand & seale that I have behaved my self towards yow both unadvisedly & undutifully both in worde & deede many wayes & many tymes / for the w[hi]ch I have bene & am very hartely sory / humbly requiring yow both to forgive me & forgett it.~~²²

¹⁹The remaining letters survive as copies made by Cassandra Willoughby in the late seventeenth century. A partial transcription of these is printed in *HMC Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton Presently at Wollaton Hall* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), 504–610. The actual copies themselves are held at the University of Nottingham Library.

²⁰Lady Elizabeth Willoughby to Sir Francis Willoughby [ca.1586], BL Lansd. MS 46, fols. 65–66v.

²¹Given the use of the letter “i” instead of a “j” in the word “periured” in the second line, it is more likely that “iote” represents jot rather than iota, both of which were current during this period.

²²Lady Elizabeth Willoughby to Sir Francis Willoughby, [ca.1586], BL Lansd. MS 46, fols. 65–66v.

This is a clear example of a secretary helping to construct a female persona—but the result is not the distortion of the writing to conform to inherently male ideas of female behavior. Rather, it seems implicit that Elizabeth Willoughby was fully aware of the effectiveness of presenting a submissive self-image, but that this sometimes ran to excess; the secretary was merely colluding with her in the writing of the letter, to develop and shape it. Significantly, his alterations seem to have been designed to moderate Lady Willoughby's excessive submissiveness and to prevent her from taking the full blame for the rift in relations between herself and her husband.²³

Where the draft of a letter survives, as in this case, there are a number of levels on which it might be read, each of which is revealing. The first draft often reveals more of a woman's initial response to a situation, a response often lost as a result of rewriting.²⁴ In contrast, the final product can be less spontaneous, showing how a woman wished to fashion herself. Letter-writing as an activity is therefore more self-conscious and calculated than might previously have been assumed.

More nebulous than issues of secretarial input and female authorship are the constraints and self-censorship that an absence of epistolary privacy might have imposed. This is apparent from Mary Harding's letter with which this essay began, in which she stated that she was "louthie to make any bodye acquainted withe" her letters. This suggests that certain matters were too sensitive or intimate to have been made privy to a secretary. The use of amanuenses also brought distinct formal and stylistic constraints and often led to textual omissions or modifications.

Nowhere is the potential effect of a lack of epistolary privacy more significant than in the study of the family, where letters have frequently been used to examine change over time in the emotional content of relationships. In part, differences in sentiment are related to the nature of the sources studied. Those letters written using an amanuensis are less likely to read as personally or as spontaneously as holograph letters. Just as there were certain topics unsuitable to be shared with a secretary, so too were there certain emotions and intimacies that one would have been ill at ease in sharing with those outside the family, or even outside a particular relationship. This necessitates scholarly sensitivity to different methods of

²³This is made clear by the secretary's aforementioned note on the bottom of the letter.

²⁴For a fascinating study of the drafting and reworking of correspondence by a woman see, Sara Jayne Steen, "'How Subject to Interpretation': Lady Arbella Stuart and the Reading of Illness," in *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450–1700*, ed. James Daybell (forthcoming, Macmillan). In particular, Professor Steen persuasively argues that letters should be approached as texts capable of complex or multiple readings. In her analysis of illness in Arbella Stuart's letters, Steen investigates the competing balance between impulsiveness and calculation in Stuart's writing, assessing the extent to which complaints of ill health appear genuine or in actual fact represent political strategy.

epistolary construction. Indeed, Professor Ralph Houlbrooke has argued that marital correspondence “became a more personal and private matter” in the second half of the sixteenth century.²⁵ He sees this stemming less from a changing view of women’s place within society, or a marked shift in spousal affections, than from increasing levels of female literacy during the sixteenth century and the consequent rise in epistolary privacy that this promoted, as greater numbers of women took individual responsibility for writing their own letters.²⁶ More generally, in discerning the extent to which correspondence can be considered personal, the question of how far women’s letters are mannered or sincere, and whether they reflect true feelings or merely imitated appropriate styles is also problematic.²⁷

As with the example of Elizabeth Bourne, many women employed a secretary out of choice, at other times writing letters for themselves. Indeed, during the second half of the sixteenth century, some 40 percent of female correspondents studied both wrote their own letters, and utilized amanuenses.²⁸ Thus, a distinction must be drawn between whether a woman could write and whether she chose to write. Given that a woman was capable of writing herself and not prevented from doing so by either old age or ill health, the decision to write was dependent upon a variety of factors: the type of letter written, the writer’s relationship with the addressee, and the level of confidence she felt in her own epistolary ability. Clearly, a woman who was fully literate (that is, a woman who could both read and write) might overcome the problems that the use of an amanuensis entailed. This essay is, therefore, concerned as much with the social conventions governing female literacy and the writing of letters as it is with actual levels of female literacy.

The more personal and intimate the relationship between sender and recipient, the more likely it was that a letter would be personally written, and the greater the expectation that this would be the case. Conversely, the more formal the purpose of writing and the less impersonal the relationship, the more acceptable it was for the sender to distance herself from the task of writing. Therefore, while business letters were commonly written by amanuenses, it became increasingly expected during the period that family correspondence would be conducted personally.²⁹ Lady Eleanor Zouche, for example, wrote to her cousin Thomas Randolph explaining that:

²⁵Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450–1700* (Harlow: Longman, 1984), 101.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷James Daybell, “Introduction,” *Early Modern Women’s Letter Writing, 1450–1700*.

²⁸Daybell, Thesis, 104–5.

²⁹The social conventions of letter-writing are outlined more fully in James Daybell, “Female Literacy and the Social Conventions of Women’s Letter-Writing in England, 1540–1603,” in *Early Modern Women’s Letter Writing, 1450–1700*.

I haue bene very sicke / & not yet so well recouered th[a]t I can
/ in duer to wryt or to read / but w[i]t[h] great payne / yet
when I remember to whom it is / I can not in any wyse yeld to
any excuse.³⁰

A similar desire for letters to be written personally is displayed in marital correspondence: Elizabeth, countess of Shrewsbury, explained to her husband George Talbot, “of late I haue yoused to wryte letyll w[i]t[h] my owne hande but coulede nott now forbayre.”³¹ Writing letters to parents was also looked upon as a filial duty. The strong-willed Anne Bacon chided her sons Anthony and Francis for not writing to her in their own hands, as did Gertrude, marchioness of Exeter, her son, the earl of Devonshire.³²

Equally, women who enjoyed personal connections with leading political figures such as Lord Burghley and Sir Robert Cecil often considered it important to write personally to these men on business matters. Great value was placed on letters written in one's own hand. Elizabeth Russell thanked Burghley for taking the time to write to her himself: “I kiss the hand th[a]t tooke so much payne w[i]t[h] penn.”³³ Indeed, many women felt the need to apologize for using an amanuensis. Margaret Clifford, countess of Cumberland, sent a letter to the duke of Lennox excusing that “an other bodies hand...hath expressed my heart.”³⁴ This clearly shows that nonholograph letters were felt to be less intimate than epistles penned by the signatory. What is more, the act of writing in one's own hand was a mark of respect, indicating that individual attention had been paid to the letter. Correspondence of this nature, which was personally conducted by women, was highly important in the cultivation and maintenance of political and social contacts.

In spite of rising literacy levels, the use of secretaries for composing business correspondence was seemingly prevalent among the upper classes for both women and men throughout the sixteenth century.³⁵ This in part

³⁰Lady Eleanor Zouche to Thomas Randolph, 28 Apr. 1586, BL Harl. MS 6994, fol. 4.

³¹Elizabeth, countess of Shrewsbury, to George Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, n.d., L[ambeth] P[alace] L[ibrary], Talbot MS 3205, fol. 73.

³²Anne Bacon to Anthony Bacon, 5 August 1595, LPL, Bacon MS 651, fol. 328; Gertrude, marchioness of Exeter, to Edward, earl of Devonshire, 8 June 1555, M. A. E. Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies from the Twelfth Century to the Close of Mary's Reign*, 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1846), 3:303.

³³Elizabeth Russell to Burghley, 25 August 1584, BL Lansd. MS 10, fol. 136.

³⁴Margaret Clifford, countess of Cumberland, to the duke of Lennox, n.d., Kendal Record Office, Hothfield MS, WD/Hoth Box 44, unnumbered.

³⁵For the use of secretaries see Paul E. J. Hammer, “The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, ca. 1585–1601,” *English Historical Review* 109, no. 430 (February 1994): 26–51; A. G. R. Smith, “The Secretariat of the Cecils, circa 1580–1612,” *English Historical Review* 83 (1968): 481–504; Alan Stewart, “The Early Modern Closet Discovered,” *Representations* 50 (1995): 76–100; Muriel St. Clare Byrne, *The Lisle Letters*, 6 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 4:229–30; Richard Rambus, *Spenser's Secret Career* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

stems from the fact that the writing of business letters had a sense of stigma attached to it. Mary Fitzroy, duchess of Richmond, for example, described the “travail” of writing.³⁶ A crucial distinction, therefore, lay in the purpose of writing between business writing, on the one hand, which was considered menial, routine, and technical, and private writing, on the other, which was thought to be personal, spontaneous, and creative. The former was normally undertaken by an amanuensis; the latter was increasingly conducted in women’s own handwriting. Thus, the ability to write was treated as a reserve skill, one that could be called upon when needed.

Additionally, women were more likely to have sought advice in the writing of business letters than for family or domestic correspondence. Elizabeth Hatton, for example, wrote to Sir John Hobart regarding the conveyancing of some land. She asked him to inform her “to what porpos & in what forme I shall wryte to thos that shall conuay the land,” adding “I know you will drawe out my meanyng beetor then I can seet it doune.”³⁷ Requests for advice in this manner at first sight appear to indicate women’s lack of confidence in operating in the business sphere by themselves. Nevertheless, business letters needed to be very carefully worded with the legal and political implications worked out; it was therefore only sensible to receive advice from someone familiar with such practices. Men also took technical advice and it is not uncommon to find examples of women who gave assistance to men in the writing of their letters. Indeed, John Bourchier, earl of Bath, wrote to his third wife, Margaret, asking for her opinion of an epistle that he had written to Lord Stourton and inviting her to make any amendments that she considered necessary:

I haue sent you a copy of the same / yf you shall so like it / if no
I haue sent you a blanke & my name therunto / prayenge you
and if any thinge be amysse therin to reforme the same according-
lye as you did the laste wiche I did very well like.³⁸

Obviously Bath considered his wife to be a proficient and able letter-writer; he also appears regularly to have relied on her counsel.

Whether a woman chose to write personally may also have been related to educational ability and personal confidence. A number of women’s letters reveal an apparent lack of self-assurance and writers’ embarrassment at their lack of epistolary proficiency. Certainly women were conscious of their poor spelling: Edmund Coote in *The English*

³⁶Mary Fitzroy, duchess of Richmond, to Sir Thomas Smith, 4 May 1549, P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], Kew, S[tate] P[apers] Dom[estic], 10/7/1.

³⁷Elizabeth Hatton to Sir John Hobart, n.d., Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 286, fol. 5.

³⁸John Bourchier, earl of Bath, to Margaret Bourchier, countess of Bath, n.d., Cambridge University Library, Hengrave MS 88/I, fol. 141.

Schoole Maister, published in 1596, was intent on teaching rules of correct English spelling to an audience of “both men & women, that now for want hereof are ashamed to write unto their best friends: for now which I have heard many gentlewomen offer much.”³⁹ Women also suffered censure for their writing. Elizabeth Bourne, writing under the pseudonym Frances Wesley, addressed a letter to Lady Conway, in which she rather bitingly taunted her for her “late learned eloquence.” She wrote:

you must sett aparte more of your idell exercyses / by larger tyme and more industrie of your scole M[aster]s to become a deaper student in rethoricke then yet you arr / a good wyll you shoue such as yll wordes may sett forthe / but your scole M[aste]r... he maks you use many sentences and lytell substance and you tell strayinge tales and no trothe / the faulte ys greate and I wyshe you to mende yt / though wee well some tymes take lyberty to speak barborously / yett owght yt not to be untrewly when the wytt-ness of our hand maks yt a recorde / but happellie you apply to the exercyse to become a plesyng scoler to your m[aste]r.⁴⁰

Susannah Fanshawe was undeniably self-conscious about her poor writing abilities. In a letter to her cousin, Thomas Fanshawe, she expressed concern that no one else should see her writing:

Thus being desirus to heare of your good helth...I am so boulder to trouble you with my rude wrighting and in ditieng / for nobodi is privi to it but my pen and I presumieng that you will take it in good parte or ells I should be diskurged hereafter to indite ani more of my selfe.⁴¹

This indicates that some women may have felt greater confidence maneuvering within domestic or household contexts, and that the family offered women a more private environment within which to write letters, one in which they hoped that their educational deficiencies and weaknesses would be accepted without ridicule.

Nevertheless, a striking feature of sixteenth-century women's letters is the number of apologies writers made for poor handwriting and orthography, as well as lack of erudition and skill. For some women such self-deprecation seems to have been less a sign of the unease they felt in writing than merely a matter of etiquette. Lucy St. John, for example, wrote to her

³⁹Edmund Coote, *The English Schoole Maister* (London: Widow Orwin, 1596), sig. A2r.

⁴⁰Frances Wesley [Elizabeth Bourne] to Lady Eleanor Conway, n.d., BL Add. MS 23212, fols. 193–193v.

⁴¹Susannah Fanshawe to Thomas Fanshawe, 28 August 1580, PRO SP Dom. Supplementary 46/16/211.

father, Lord Burghley, in a very neat and elegant italic script, yet courteously mentioned her “bade writynge.”⁴² Likewise, many other letter-writers, both female and male, referred to their “scribbled lines” and the “rudeness” of their writing. Within educated circles it appears to have been considered proper for writers to uphold a demeanor of false modesty in their letters. Moreover, several scholars, including myself, have argued that women were able to exploit to their own advantage gendered assumptions of female inferiority, in order to project an aura of vulnerability to men. Indeed, this manner of self-presentation was employed to good effect by women operating in the business arena, as a ploy to secure help, guidance, and pity.⁴³ It is within this light also that one should read women’s efforts to secure advice in drafting letters.

Many women through their household duties were required to traverse the boundaries of the traditionally defined “public” sphere, and there is a very real sense in which the sixteenth century saw women becoming more confident in their ability to write letters and more inventive in the uses to which they put them. Women were frequently prepared to speak up for themselves in order to defend their own interests. Bridget Willoughby, for example, the daughter of Sir Francis Willoughby, wrote to one Mr. Fisher a letter “full of outrage and incivility as hardly becomed a gentlewoman.”⁴⁴ She blamed Fisher for trying to cause dissension between herself, her father, and her husband, writing:

malicious knave thou art that canst not spare poor gentlewomen and infants with thy tongue and practices; gentleman thou know’st thyself to be none, and tho’ at this instant I have no better means of revenge then a little ink and paper, let thy soul and carkes be assured to hear and tast of these injuries in other sort and terms then from and by the hands of a woman. And seeing by thy practices and theirs, to whom by oath thou art confederate with, I am like to lose my father’s favour (which was all the world to me), while I am able to speak thy treacherous knav-

⁴²Lucy St. John to Burghley, September 1588, BL Lansd. MS 104, fol. 175.

⁴³Daybell, Thesis, 120–21, 155–61; idem., “The Political Role of Upper-Class Women in Early Tudor England as Evidenced by Their Correspondence” (unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Reading University, 1996), 15–21; Anthony J. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (London: Yale, 1995), 123–24; Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture: the Seventeenth-Century Newdigates of Arbury and Their World* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 88; Linda Pollock, “‘Teach Her to Live under Obedience’: The Making of Women in the Upper Ranks of Early Modern England,” *Continuity and Change* 4, no. 2 (1989): 231–58, esp. 234, 251.

⁴⁴Mary Fisher to Lady Bridget Willoughby, n.d., *HMC Middleton*, 577.

erys shall not rest altogether concealed, and complain to my father if thou dare again.⁴⁵

On a more sophisticated level, Lady Penelope Rich appropriated and altered a letter written from her husband, Lord Rich, to her brother Robert Devereux, earl of Essex. Her purpose in doing this seems to have been for the amusement of herself and her brother at the expense of her husband. Lord Rich had been offered the services of a French secretary by Essex; the letter was written to decline the offer. In Lord Rich's version the letter read: "as yo[u]r lo[rdship] wel knoweth [I] am a pore man of no language only in the french havenge therin but a littell sight." However, after Lady Rich's alterations to the text Lord Rich seemed to be admitting that he had the pox. The altered version reads, "as yo[u]r lo[rdship] wel knoweth [I] am a pore man of no language only in the french ^desease^ havenge but a littell ^under^ sight ^with coming over^." At the end of the letter she pokes further fun at Rich, writing "you may imagin my lo[rd] Riche hath no imploiment for a languitt secretar ye / exsept he hath gotten a mistris in france."⁴⁶ Lady Rich's mockery of her husband is clearly pronounced, distancing her from the ideal of wifely obedience. These letters, which are by no means exceptional, indicate greater levels of female confidence, tenacity, and forcefulness in writing than might previously have been suspected. Furthermore, the assertiveness displayed by certain female letter-writers partly reflects the significance of the epistolary medium as a *modus operandi* for women, which allowed them to operate on paper and at a distance, and in some cases more easily than they could have done face to face.

Concomitantly, women were aware that in asserting such self-expression they risked transgressing the boundaries of acceptable female behavior. Indeed, numerous women felt the need to justify and explain their writing: Dorothy Seymour wrote to her brother-in-law, Sir Henry Neville, declaring "I would not haue been so silent...when I have so much increaste in needfull matters against my will."⁴⁷ This illustrates the tension

⁴⁵Lady Bridget Willoughby to Mr. Fisher, n.d., *HMC Middleton*, 577. According to Lady Willoughby, Fisher threatened to have her summoned before the Privy Council for writing to him in such a libellous manner: Lady Willoughby to Sir Percival Willoughby, n.d., *HMC Middleton*, 576.

⁴⁶Lord Rich to Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, 23 Dec. 1596, Warwick County Record Office, "Essex Letter Book ca. 1595–1600," MI 229, unfoliated. I am grateful to the Finch family for their kind permission to quote from these documents. See also Michele Margetts, "Notes and Documents: 'The Ways of Mine Owne Hart': The Dating and Mind Frame of Essex's 'Fantastical' Letter," *The Bodleian Library Record* 16, no. 1 (April 1997): 101–10, esp. 104.

⁴⁷Dorothy Seymour to Sir Henry Neville, ca.1600, Berkshire Record Office, Reading, Neville Papers D/EN F 6/2/7.

often felt between restrictive codes of female behavior, and an individual's personality and assertiveness.

In the final analysis there were significant benefits that were conferred only by an ability to write oneself. These include conducting personalized correspondence in maintaining social and business relationships; writing more intimate letters to family members; greater degrees of personal control over language and self-expression, as well as maintenance of a tighter grip on household and business affairs. Furthermore, the availability of an amanuensis was not always guaranteed, nor could one always trust him or her to carry out one's will. Among the nobility and gentry at least letter-writing, therefore, increasingly formed an integral part of a woman's education, one that equipped her with the necessary skills for the roles that she would play in society, as wife, mother, and mistress of the household.

While this is true one must guard against emphasizing too strongly the advantages of personal literacy; educational barriers did not preclude women from epistolary activity. The essay ends where it began with an example of a woman who was unable to write herself. Elizabeth Shelton in 1603 sent a letter to her father complaining of the treatment that she was experiencing from her uncle, in whose household she had been placed. Despite her inability to write, not only was she able to persuade someone within her uncle's household to write a letter for her, but she also seems to have had it secretly conveyed to her father. "I desire you in any wayes," she implored her father, "let not my uncle knowe th[a]t I have writte unto you / for I gett one to write unawares to him / by cause I hard him in such a rage."⁴⁸ Although it became increasingly unacceptable for upper-class women to be unable to write, those whose illiteracy prevented them from so doing were clearly able to conduct correspondence within difficult and restricted circumstances.

⁴⁸Elizabeth Shelton to J. Astwick, 1603, PRO SP Dom. Supp. 46/57/204b.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Jean Renart: The Romance of the Rose or of Guillaume de Dole (Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole). Ed. and trans. Regina Psaki. Garland Library of Medieval Literature 92A. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995. xli + 280 pp.

Gina Psaki's edition and translation of Jean Renart's *Roman de la Rose* provides a great service to medievalists by offering a scholarly English translation (as well as a diplomatic edition), of a text which has received increasing attention from scholars in recent years. This late-twelfth-century romance, often referred to as "Guillaume de Dole" in order to avoid confusion with the more famous *Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, had originally attracted the attention of literary scholars and musicologists for its use of intercalated lyrics, as well as that of historians for its depiction of courtly dress and its extended tournament episode. More recently several critics have called attention to the extreme literary self-reflexivity of the text, while feminist scholars have explored the romance's unusual twist on the wager motif.

Psaki's introduction presents an eminently readable and cogent presentation of the *Rose*—both the text itself and the major critical work done on it. Psaki presents the often disparate views of modern medievalists such as Michel Zink, Roger Dragonetti, and Henri Rey-Flaud in an organized manner which clearly establishes the various "schools" of thought on the *Rose* without sacrificing either the often opposing and nuanced positions of these critics or her own views of both the text and the critics' positions. Psaki's introduction is, as at least one other reviewer has noted, an exemplar of what a scholarly introduction to an edition can, and should, be.

Psaki also acknowledges in her introduction the English translation published in 1993 by Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling.¹ But she quite correctly notes that where the University of Pennsylvania publication (a slim paperback containing "only" a lively prose translation and few notes), was clearly designed for classroom use, her hardcover edition addresses the needs of scholars rather than students. Which brings me to the meat of the book—and this review. Psaki not only offers a facing-page, nearly line-by-line translation but also a new, essentially diplomatic "edition" of Jean Renart's text. The translation is readable without sacrificing either English syntax or the line order of the Old French too often. As such it complements Terry and Durling's prose translation admirably. It is the edition, however, which commands real comment, for although the

¹Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose or Guillaume de Dole*, trans. Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

choice of a diplomatic edition is possible because the *Rose* exists in only one manuscript (Vat. Reg. 1725) such a choice is also debatable. Psaki explains that as the three previous complete editions of the *Rose* are all “highly interventionist in nature” her editorial policy will be rather to “actually edit as little as possible...to reproduce the text of [the] manuscript as exactly as possible” (xxx). She goes on to explain that she has reproduced the manuscript even “where it appears ‘faulty,’ and even where the earlier editors have made very persuasive corrections” (xxx). Psaki’s philosophical rationale for such an approach is that modern critical editions are so different from the actual manuscript as to produce “a counter-productive alienation from the material existence of the text” (xxix). She concludes thus that, “If the [post-structuralist] notion of meaning as inhering in expression, of content as inhering in form, is at all valid, then the differences between a medieval manuscript and a standardized printed document of this century *will* influence the way we read” (xxx).

While one can certainly disagree with this philosophical position, I do not think one can argue with the actual end product. This edition succeeds in fulfilling Psaki’s purpose: it provides the reader with a close(r) approximation to actually reading the manuscript. In doing so it enables (forces) the reader to realize just how much intervention even a “conservative” editor is forced to make. While a comparison of key passages from the text in this edition and Lecoy’s SATF volume (in particular the prologue, the first tale by Jouglet and the Emperor’s reaction to it, the scene between Senechal and Lienor’s mother, and the finale as Lienor proves her innocence) did not bring to light any “major” differences, it does demonstrate the slippage, the “mouvance” which can occur between manuscript and edition. To give just one minor example, by retaining the “word” divisions of the manuscript Psaki’s edition “allows” the reader to choose, in line 6–7 “et q[ue] lebiaus miles lapregne / De nantuel uns des preus del regne,” to read “lapregne” as “la pregne” or “l’apregne.” While the difference in meaning between “and that the fair Milon of Nanteuil take it” and “that he learn of it” is not overly significant, this example does, I think, point out the choices an editor usually must make. In other words, rather than “trust” an editor’s decisions this edition forces readers (at least those who don’t look at the facing page translation) to make the choices themselves.

This edition is thus not perhaps what one wants, or needs, at all times, such as when one is reading a text for the first time or when it would be the only edition available—in such situations the expertise and knowledge of an editor is invaluable. However in this case, where a fine scholarly edition exists and is readily available, Psaki’s diplomatic edition is a welcome and an important work of scholarship both for the service it offers in providing a facing-page translation and for the philosophical and method-

ological challenge it represents. No matter how often we say (to ourselves and our students) that an edition is not a “real” medieval artifact, that it is only one possible “reading” of a text, we still often forget and read as if what is printed on the page is what Milon de Nanteuil heard when “Jean Renart” presented him with his “romans de la rose.” This “edition” helps us remember the truth.

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Confident Readings: Medieval and Early Modern (Christian) Spirituality and Its Recent Interpreters

Catherine M. Mooney, ed. *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999. xiii + 277 pp.

Richard Rambuss. *Closet Devotions*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998. xiii + 193 pp.

What is at first most striking about these two books are their differences. Catherine M. Mooney’s edited volume takes on medieval saints (or, really, in most cases, near saints), beginning with Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and ending with Dorothea of Montau (d. 1394); central to this inquiry are the genres of hagiography, autobiography, and visionary writing. Richard Rambuss’s study focuses largely on the seventeenth century and devotional poets like John Donne, Richard Crashaw, and George Herbert, though he also examines “popular prayer books, devotional manuals, and guides to godliness” (105). The contributors to Mooney’s book represent for the most part the disciplines of history and religious studies, though literary scholars are also included; Rambuss, author of *Spenser’s Secret Career*, approaches his material largely from within English studies. The title of Mooney’s book announces gender as its primary theme, and her introduction situates the volume in relation to “the vibrant research conducted since the 1970s in the field of women’s history” and, more specifically, “religious women’s history” (2). Rambuss’s title points us, via the figure of the closet, to an interest in sexuality and particularly male homoeroticism; his book is importantly informed by Georges Bataille’s “ecstatic theorems on the complementarity of the sacred and illicit” (3) and by queer theory, particularly the work of Michel Foucault, Jonathan Goldberg, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

Nevertheless, in their focus on religious expression, on the “voices” of devotion, these two books also share much, and both their shared areas of interest and their differences may be instructive as to the current state of critical/historical work on gender and sexuality in medieval and early modern Christian spirituality. In reflecting on these two books, I would like—rather than reinforce the distinctions history/literature, gender/sexuality, women’s studies/queer theory, medieval/early modern—to consider how such apparently opposed terms might be repositioned, as contrasting but also complementary, as distinctive but intersecting. If, in the works at hand, such terms do tend to be treated as largely separate or oppositional, might there be ways more productively to bring them together in our considerations of the spiritual practices of the past?

Mooney clearly sets out the agenda of *Gendered Voices* in her introductory essay, “Voice, Gender, and the Portrayal of Sanctity”: the essays she gathers together are to examine how saints and their interpreters, differently gendered, differently experienced, reported, and interpreted exceptional spiritual states. At the center of the volume are three “interrelated methodological questions”: [1] how we can “distinguish the voices and the points of view of saints ... from those of their interpreters” (1); [2] “whether or not the voices one hears in these texts are ‘gendered’” (1); and [3] “to what extent portrayals of sanctity are influenced not so much by gender as by genre” (2). Mooney presents the method of her volume as essentially experimental, asking what happens if we identify a set of medieval texts—similar in genre, in content, in the gendered dynamics of their production—and rigorously analyze these in light of the questions of voice, gender, and genre.

The contributors to *Gendered Voices* have closely adhered to this overall project, though, of course, with some significant differences of approach and voice. The result is a collection of essays that is unusual in its unity. Barbara Newman’s “Hildegard and Her Hagiographers: The Remaking of Female Sainthood” presents a careful, detailed reading of the triple-authored *Vita S. Hildegardis*, showing how Hildegard’s self-understanding “as a prophet” modeled “on biblical heroes” is rewritten by her male hagiographers, as, first, “aristocratic abbess and foundress,” and then, according to a “newer model,” “feminine bridal mystic” (19). Anne L. Clark’s “Holy Woman or Unworthy Vessel? The Representations of Elisabeth of Schönau” similarly discerns different, and gendered, depictions of the saintly woman in the different voices of Elisabeth and her brother Ekbert, though Clark also sees the two as participating in a “mutually reinforcing dynamic” (39) in which each significantly shapes the other’s view of Elisabeth’s experience. Mooney’s own contribution to

the volume, "*Imitatio Christi* or *Imitatio Mariae*? Clare of Assisi and Her Interpreters," takes on an even more complex comparative analysis, examining both Clare of Assisi's and Francis of Assisi's writings in comparison to each other and in relation to their various hagiographers. Mooney shows how, despite Clare's own representation of her life in terms of *imitatio Christi*, "hagiographic texts and iconography tended increasingly to portray Clare," in sharp contrast to Francis, "as a follower of Mary," reinforcing the "secondary position" of Clare and her female followers "vis-à-vis Francis and his male followers" (76).

In the most theoretically interesting and challenging of these essays, "Inside Out: Beatrice of Nazareth and Her Hagiographer," Amy Hollywood shows how Beatrice's male "biographer consistently translates her internally felt experience into external, visible markings on the body of the saint" (81), while Beatrice herself insists on the interiority of her experience, "claim[ing] the autonomy of the internal self in order to free herself from cultural demands for a visibly suffering female body" (98). Hollywood consequently cautions materialist historians and theorists that their attacks on an "internalized self" associated with modern subjectivity may serve an unintended purpose—an erasure (like that performed by Beatrice's biographer) of the importance, for at least some medieval women, of an interior experience that might resist the simple identification of female sanctity with bodiliness. John Coakley, in "A Marriage and Its Observer: Christine of Stommeln, The Heavenly Bridegroom, and Friar Peter of Dacia," argues that Christine's "autohagiography" emphasizes "the trials both external ... and internal ... that demons inflicted upon her," while Peter "make[s] much of Christine as a bride of Christ—a woman in privileged mystical contact with the divine, as evidenced in observable episodes of rapture" (100). Frank Tobin's "Henry Suso and Elsbeth Stigel: Was the *Vita* a Cooperative Effort?" reverses the gendered situation of the other studies in *Gendered Voices*. Considering the question of how to distinguish real and fictional presences in a text like Suso's, Tobin suggests that Stigel, no matter how fictionalized, leaves "her imprint on the *Vita*" (133), "function[ing] as a kind of ever-present literary and spiritual super-ego to whom [Suso] must answer" (134).

Karen Scott, in "Mystical Death, Bodily Death: Catherine of Siena and Raymond of Capua on the Mystic's Encounter with God," argues that Raymond's hagiography focuses on "paranormal bodily experiences and visions ... to prove [Catherine's] holiness and establish her cult as a saint," while Catherine herself "usually preferred to write a more sober theology of the ordinary soul's encounter with God" (136). Finally, Dyan Elliott, in "Authorizing a Life: The Collaboration of Dorothea of Montau and John Marienwerder," examines a case where the woman's voice is much harder, perhaps impossible, to locate, suggesting that Dorothea's confessor John,

in trying to authorize her mystical life as well as his own judgment of that life, “virtually obscures the independent contours of [the] mystic’s spirituality” (169).

All the essays collected by Mooney are thus concerned with distinguishing the voices of saints and their interpreters, with considering how gender inflects these, and with examining the ways in which voice is determined by the genre of hagiography, by the demands of presenting a saint *as* a saint. At the same time, each of these analyses depends upon a very specific historical and textual investigation—a disentangling of complicated composite texts in order to reveal different voices at work. In the process, sometimes the essays become, for quite long stretches, more about specific textual or historical problems than about the larger questions at the heart of the volume. Nevertheless, because of the similarity of concern across the essays, they do resonate with each other, and Mooney, in her introduction, is careful to lay out the more general conclusions regarding gender difference she feels can be drawn from the volume’s experiment: [1] “where women appear to speak in their own voices, they speak of themselves in decidedly more active and assertive terms than do their male promoters” (10); [2] “Male hagiographers...were wont to see their female subjects as mysterious and otherworldly” (10); [3] male writers tend to use “nuptial imagery” more frequently than do the holy women they depict (11); [4] medieval writers “regularly describe holy women” in corporeal terms, but at least some women resist such characterization (13); and [5] “female saints...tend to pattern themselves after male exemplars,” while “their male hagiographers are likely to enhance or sometimes replace these male models with female exemplars” (13–14).

Closet Devotions takes a very different approach to its material, one that we might call experiential rather than experimental. What shapes Rambuss’s book, in other words, is not so much a programmatic laying out and investigation of questions about a particular body of material as a set of desires articulated by the author in an insistent first-person voice. For one striking instance, among many: “Although this line of my discussion becomes more speculative—some no doubt would even say wishful, an appraisal that I would not take entirely as a rebuff—I want to pursue this sodomitical Christ” (61). At the same time that he asks, “What did it mean for these seventeenth-century Christians to envision and to speak of themselves as being ravished by God or lusting after Christ?” Rambuss is concerned with “Another question—one no less legitimate to my thinking”: “what *we*, centuries later, may want to make of, how *we* may experience, this historical inheritance of sexualized devotion, with its erotic Christ” (5).

Rambuss's brief introduction, "Sacred Eroticisms," lays out the book's overall concern with "devotion...as a form of desire" (1). Of the three chapters that follow, the first, "Christ's Ganymede," is the longest and most complex. In a series of close readings, Rambuss argues that we find seventeenth-century devotional poets "more or less self-consciously reassigning in same-sex configurations (male God, male devotee) the erotic postures and blandishing conceits of the Renaissance love lyric" (13). Christ's body is put on spectacular display in these poems, and not just, Rambuss emphasizes, as human and wounded but as erotic object and subject. Thus, Crashaw "envision[s] Christ in his Passion as a highly fertile somatic field, one generative of numberless kissing mouths and tearful eyes, of countless orifices and dilated valves, of a literally promiscuous, hypersemantic mix of bodily fluids" (34). And Rambuss resists seeing Christ's body, wounded and penetrated, in feminized terms, a move that "effac[es] the primary maleness of his body and its operations, as well as, perhaps more important, the possibilities a male Christ affords for a homoeroticized devotional expression" (38). He "insist[s] that any account of the erotics of Christian devotion, whether premodern or modern, needs to consider as well its homoerotics. Stimulated by a spectacularized, denuded, and penetrable male form—the ravished, ravishing body of Jesus—the amorous expression of the prayer closet requires as much" (58).

In his second chapter, "Devotion and Desire," Rambuss moves to consider a broader range of erotic conventions used in seventeenth-century devotional contexts, in order to "accord a more unsettled meaning to such Christian commonplaces" (74). Lovesickness, marriage, friendship, the affective bond between master and servant are all, Rambuss argues, turned to use in an eroticized devotion. Most interestingly, Rambuss suggests that these tropes may "exceed a framework of 'mere metaphor'...to authorize...perspectives and behavior that are themselves far from conventional" (83); that is, living one's life *literally* as Christ's lover or friend or servant, conventional though the idea may be, can disrupt a whole set of social expectations. (Witness, in an earlier period, a life like Margery Kempe's.)

In chapter 3, "The Prayer Closet," Rambuss moves more intently to consider the "closet" of the book's title, showing how a growing emphasis on the private devotion of the "prayer closet" shapes seventeenth-century spiritual life. Arguing (after Foucault) that "Closet devotion...is the technology by which the soul becomes a subject" (109), Rambuss further suggests that the work of private devotion not only leads to a "deepening, individuating inwardness" (107) but also potentially "disrupts" and "disarticulates" a sense of self: "Under the heightened pressures of prayer and introspection uniquely engendered here, the self is repetitively, almost ritually, undone" (115). And the subjectivity effects of the early modern

prayer closet, Rambuss emphasizes, involve not just “inwardness” but body and voice, and the (homo)erotic.

A significant feature of Rambuss’s argument throughout is its linking of early modern texts and tropes to modern, postmodern, and often queer ones. Thus, in the first chapter alone, Rambuss compares seventeenth-century devotion to the gay porn video *More of a Man* (11–13), Andres Serrano’s photography (21, 25–26, 32), Martin Scorsese’s *Last Temptation of Christ* (63, 65), Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* (65–66), Marsden Hartley’s “Christ Held by Half-Naked Men” (67), Juan Davila’s “Holy Family” (67–68), and Freud’s case history of Schreber (70–71). In part, Rambuss here is concerned to make a political intervention, “stag[ing] a historical salvo in Christianity’s own terms . . . against its mobilization on behalf of a censoriously normalizing social and cultural vision” (6). Queer works like Serrano’s *Piss Christ*, rather than profaning Christianity, are, in Rambuss’s view, firmly within Christian devotional tradition. Perhaps, however, Rambuss’s introduction of such twentieth-century and contemporary works into his argument too often levels differences between the early and postmodern. Is it really the case, for instance, that Schreber’s “religious fantasia” serves “as a striking recapitulation of the orthodox postures and tropes of Christian devotion in their most hyperbolized presentation” (71)?

While I am quite ready to accept the main conclusions of Rambuss’s argument in *Closet Devotions*, too often I find myself, in reading, asking questions about how Rambuss has chosen his material. How typical are the texts he analyzes? What kinds of countertexts might one adduce? Is early modern devotion so *fully* the hothouse, eroticized realm that Rambuss constructs? Is there not, too, an austere side to seventeenth-century English devotional practices? Rambuss himself cites early modern texts that warn against “eroticized devotional enticements” (96)—but he does so only to show that early modern readers were able to recognize the erotic in the devotional, not to analyze any antierotic impulse within seventeenth-century spiritual discourse. Rambuss’s readings would be more persuasive if we had the sense that he were considering not just texts that so easily support his argument—or if, more often, he were willing to grant the *partial* nature of his readings. In discussing a (balanced) line like Herbert’s “Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound,” Rambuss focuses our attention firmly on the body *rather* than the soul (16). One might wish, in sum, for a more “experimental” design to *Closet Devotions*—an examination of a body of material in order to discover what it might yield rather than, as it so often feels, a marshalling of material designed to support an already constructed and decided argument.

But, conversely, Mooney and her contributors might benefit from engaging with a more “experiential” side of their project. That is, they might engage more fully with the desires that lead them to study a particular set of figures, texts, and questions. The volume, after all, does not really constitute an objective experiment: a selection of materials and a narrowing of questions have been made here on the basis of certain interests. Why these particular materials and questions? What are the current interests that these studies serve? More specifically, what is the place of this set of studies in a feminist project (of “religious women’s history”) that is admitted by Mooney as foundational but that is largely implicit and unmentioned in the individual articles. While we might read in essays like Hollywood’s and Elliott’s a clear feminist commitment, and while Scott engages (negatively) with “postmodernism,” most of the authors keep their late-twentieth-century positioning and interests outside the scope of their work.

The differences between Mooney’s “experimental” and Rambuss’s “experiential” approach are at least partly disciplinary, reflecting differences between historical and (postmodern/queer) literary methodologies. Each might learn something useful from the other, as I have just suggested and as I will sketch further here, thinking particularly about the two books’ relation to period divisions and to the categories of gender and sexuality.

1: *Medieval/Early Modern*. If there is a significant difference in how these projects are articulated in relation to the late-twentieth-century moment of their production, there is also a striking difference in how they navigate the traditional period divide between the medieval and the early modern. Mooney’s study clearly focuses its attention on historical change, noting a “steady and striking shift...in depictions of female sanctity from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries” (14). But the volume resolutely remains within the bounds of the high and late Middle Ages. Rambuss’s treatment on the other hand glances from its seventeenth-century vantage point back to the Middle Ages, even as it moves forward to the (post)modern. The medieval, however, is consistently subordinated by Rambuss to the early modern, either as *difference*—“the forms of piety we find in the religious cultures of early modern England tend to be quite different from the medieval Catholic extravaganzas that light up Bynum’s account” (17)—or *sameness*—“the body’s homoerotic possibilities [are]...as richly present in the medieval religious materials [Bynum] studies as they are in the seventeenth-century devotional verse to which we now return” (49). What we don’t find here is a real engagement with the complexities of partial similarity and difference between the two moments. Yet, the work in both Rambuss and Mooney often suggests, to this reader

at least, ways in which the medieval and early modern might be productively read with and against each other. For just one example, Rambuss sees a certain “modern subject” emerging in the seventeenth-century prayer closet, while Hollywood sees the emphasis on interiority in the thirteenth-century writings of Beatrice of Nazareth moving toward a similarly modern sense of self. What might we discern if we brought Rambuss’s Donne and Hollywood’s Beatrice together in thinking spirituality’s role in the development of modern subjectivity?

2: *Gender/Sexuality*. In Mooney’s volume, the categories man/woman and male/female tend to be treated as unproblematic: “Since each essay concerns at least one woman and one man... we can ask to what extent women’s experiences of sanctity and ideas about it, on the one hand, and men’s experiences of sanctity and ideas about it, on the other, are influenced and therefore distinguished from each other by their respective experiences of themselves as females and males in societies that attached very particular meanings to being women and to being men” (1–2). And yet the essays collected here strongly suggest some important complexities in these categories. To take just one example: if, as Mooney argues, men had difficulty “in thinking of women, even an extraordinary woman such as Clare, as their spiritual equals” (67), what do we make of Peter of Dacia’s imagining himself, as Coakley notes, as Leah, “the bridegroom’s rejected wife” (107), to Christine of Stommeln’s Rachel? Perhaps in thinking this through, we might benefit from some of the gender flexibility, complexity, and excess that Rambuss emphasizes especially in his treatment of Crashaw’s poems on Teresa of Avila: “Teresa... seems not to transcend but rather to occupy all imaginable gender space” (42). The treatment of gender in Mooney, too, might benefit from a stronger attention to sexuality. Is there a certain homoeroticism in Peter’s self-presentation as wife? Mooney depicts Clare and Francis as “a couple” (54), as does Elliott Dorothea and John, whose “union” she sees as “imbued with nuptial overtones” (168); yet neither pursues a full reading of the presumably chaste and yet potentially eroticized relations thus implied.

On the other hand, while Rambuss attends to sexuality and to a malleable “ecstatic” gender (39–42), he fails really to consider how gender is stabilized, how the gender play of the texts he considers operates beside and perhaps in conflict with insistent and coercive systems of compulsory gendering. Here, the emphasis in Mooney on how certain gender stabilities do shape spiritual experience might be useful. Further, Rambuss is able to discern some gendered/sexualized possibilities more fully than others. In treating Crashaw on Teresa, for instance, he insists on a homoeroticism, but one that is male; refusing to admit a feminized Christ here forecloses on a female/female possibility that seems to me to inhere in the verse. At other moments, Rambuss does focus on female/female desire

(46–48, 92–95), but this is secondary to his emphasis on male erotic experience; summarizing the variety of eroticism active in devotion, he tellingly neglects lesbian desire: “In one devotional conjunction we have Christ and Christian in ecstatic congress with each other as males; in the other, they come together as male and performative female. Then again, in still other eroticized devotional scenarios, gender, at least as a defining status or position, hardly seems a determinative denotation whatsoever” (68, 70).

Caroline Walker Bynum, in her foreword to *Gendered Voices*, notes the “excitement” of the essays collected by Mooney as emerging in “their engagement with the full complexities of both ‘gender’ and ‘voice,’” and she goes on to suggest: “Even more exciting...is their confidence. For the eight authors of this collection, empowered in part by their philological skills, in part by their deep historical knowledge, listen hopefully, certain of catching genuine echoes of the whispering voices of the past. They know that texts can be authenticated, strands of transmission sorted out, better and worse readings of manuscripts established. They know also that any text tells us first and foremost about itself but that we see very little in any text if it is the only one we read; the more we know, the more context we have; texts do tell us about the world from which they come” (xi).

Here, there’s a whole lot of knowing going on. Bynum is concerned (as is Scott in her essay) with countering the claims of a postmodernism that would in her view believe, after the “linguistic turn” (x), that we can’t really know anything about the past. Yet, when we move to a postmodern writer like Rambuss, we also see knowledge being strongly claimed; Rambuss no more hesitates to draw conclusions about early modern sensibility and practices than do the contributors to Mooney’s volume hesitate to know the medieval past. Indeed, both *Gendered Voices* and *Closet Devotions*, though in quite different ways, evince a strong “confidence,” which I would emphasize in the etymological sense of a *believing with*. The essays in Mooney try to enter the religious world of the texts they treat; Rambuss’s insistent juxtaposition of early modern and postmodern queer texts suggests a belief in their mutually informing qualities.

While valuing each of these approaches, I would call for a bit more *diffidence* in each. Do we really know what medieval gender is, as is usually the assumption in the essays collected by Mooney? Are the things that seem similar in early modern and postmodern culture really expressions of the same sort of impulse, as Rambuss repeatedly suggests? And is the way to understand medieval Christian devotion really to *believe with*—to immerse ourselves in the practices, beliefs, assumptions of those being studied? Both Rambuss and Mooney’s contributors do this, in their radically different ways. But might other, equally useful things be learned, for

instance, by means of a less confident *standing outside*—with those who might not have wanted, been able, or been allowed to participate in the Christian sanctity and devotion at the heart of these two studies?

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Jeffrey Powers-Beck. *Writing the Flesh: The Herbert Family Dialogue*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998. 290 pp. incl. bibliography, 3 appendices, and index. \$54.50 cloth. ISBN 0-8207-0283-5.

Jeffrey Powers-Beck's *Writing the Flesh* is organized around the refreshing proposition that the settlement of one's family affairs has a measurable effect on one's poetry. This idea, delivered with the force of a manifesto, is derived not from Freud but from historicist, materialist, and feminist critiques of cultural and women's histories (although Freud makes a welcome appearance). By observing that "writing sometimes takes family conflict itself as its subject, portraying the domestic scene as a locus of natural and supernatural crisis," Powers-Beck moves the discussion of Herbert's witty religious lyrics from ecclesiastical and political concerns to the more insistent demands of siblings, parents, and near relations, in this instance Herbert's scandalously young stepfather, Sir John Danvers. Herbert was the seventh of ten children and fifth of seven sons, at least three others of whom, Lord Edward of Cherbury, Sir Henry, and Thomas, also left literary remains. Their mother, Magdalen Herbert Danvers, married young and was widowed in 1596 when Herbert was three. When she remarried in 1609, the year Herbert entered Trinity College at age sixteen, Danvers was twenty-one.

The text chiefly scrutinized here is *The Temple*, with particular attention paid to "The Church Porch," "The Family," "Affliction I and V," "Love III," and "The Church Militant." Powers-Beck also translates some of the elegiac Latin written for Magdalen's funeral and occasionally calls upon *The Country Parson*. His methodological forebears are Lawrence Stone's 1977 *Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* and Gary Waller's 1993 *Sidney Family Romance*. His impressively deployed critical pretexts include Martz, Patrides, Schoenfeldt, Shuger, Summers, Strier, Vendler, Watson, and many others; biographical details derive from Aubrey's 1669 *Brief Lives*, Isaac Walton's 1670 *Life*, and a 1652 biography by Barnabas Oley.

This last account lends the book its title and nominal argument. As Powers explains, "Oley observed that the poet 'writ Flesh and Blood' in

his Latin verses for his mother, but that his English poems were ‘Inspirations propheticall.’” In other words, Oley felt Herbert’s Latin elegies remained earthbound while his devotional lyrics rose heavenward. Oley also frankly states that he finds Herbert’s Latin verses inferior: “The Obsequious *Parentalia*, he made and printed in her memory, which though they be good, very good, yet...they be dull or dead in comparison of his *Temple Poems*.” Quotations from Oley are by way of Patrides.

Herein lies my only cavil with Powers-Beck’s argument. The provocative hypothesis that Herbert honored his mother in deadly Latin and his God in lively English is dismissed before being explored, or even explained, with the comment that “Oley’s preference for the supernatural father over the natural mother is unfortunately misogynistic and short-sighted.” That may be so, but if the idea is substantial enough to supply the book its epigraph and title, then it surely merits a few paragraphs of development before being expelled for misconduct. If nothing else, the notion that Latin lends itself more readily to epideixis than does the King’s English is an intriguing one that Sidney also broaches in his *Defense of Poesie*.

At a few points I worry that this graceful, meticulously researched study suffers from an excess of tact, so that it occasionally defeats its purpose of exploring the volatile familial anxieties inscribed in the lines of *The Temple*. The most compelling of these attach to Herbert’s feelings toward his mother’s second marriage and the redistribution of affections that such arrangements compel. Perhaps because the subject reflects doubtfully upon Lady Danvers, the two chapters devoted to her touch only briefly upon it. Instead they linger on her “Kitchin Book,” an unassuming document used to establish her skills as a “mediator” and vital participant in “patronage and family networks.” Other qualities brought forward include her “generous ambiguity,” that is to say her ideological flexibility, and her diligent promotion of her children’s careers. (For example, as a widowed single parent, she moved her family to Oxford, where her oldest son Edward was in residence, in 1599–1601; later the family repaired to London.) This she did by “petitioning patrons at court, giving gifts, boarding and visiting kin and clients, and arranging marriages.”

The discussion of Danvers himself, in the seventh and final chapter, also diverges from the book’s stated intention, as Powers-Beck refrains from interrogating the motives behind that young nobleman’s marriage to Magdalen Herbert, several of whose ten children were already grown. Not that she lacked any graces: John Donne, a family friend, suggested that Danvers was beguiled by her “witt,” and the match was hardly inexplicable. But it was unusual, and one wonders at the particular combination of Danvers’s motives, especially since his father strongly objected. Instead of pursuing this line the chapter establishes a connection between Danvers

and his stepson by way of “The Church Militant,” the point of convergence being the Virginia Company, a doomed enterprise in which Danvers was heavily invested and whose evangelical mission “The Church Militant” arguably endorses. How Herbert felt towards the dashing usurper of his father’s affections, or how Danvers felt about Herbert, or how Magdalen triangulated their relations, or why Herbert married Danvers’s niece, Jane Danvers, in 1629, when his mother was two years dead, the book forbears to inquire.

The area where Powers-Beck’s argument sparkles is in his discussion of the poetic “dialogue” between Herbert and his older brother, Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who served as English ambassador to France until royalist allegiances sidelined him. This eldest versifying Herbert, a firm believer in the privileges of primogeniture, had to be forced to fulfill his financial obligations to his family by means of arbitration entered into with his mother. They worked out a *quid pro quo* by which, in exchange for settling an annuity upon his youngest brother Thomas, who was born after their father’s death and therefore not written into his will, Edward would pay 30 annuities to each of his brothers, rather than the 40 specified by the will, together with portions of 1000 divided between his three sisters.

In the event, Edward was dilatory in his payments, and Powers-Beck sensitively explores how his neglect contributes to the frustration and resentment registered and repressed in *The Temple*. Even more happily, Powers-Beck establishes dialectical differences between the two brothers’ poems based on their handling of similar themes:

In George Herbert’s poetry, the tormented Son is exalted as hero, the crucifixion sacrifice is considered the center and meaning of history, the speaker’s greatest desire is to ingest the Son’s body and blood.... In contrast, in Edward Herbert’s poetry and philosophy, the character of the son is elided, and the imagery of sacrifice is eschewed. (130)

By skillfully probing the symbolic implications of the brothers’ ideological and economic disparities, Powers-Beck establishes a dialogue between the Platonizing royalist and the Puritanical parson, and develops it through a discussion of paired poems.

The chapter on Edward and George, “Comparing Fruits,” is the strongest, and sets a high standard for the others to meet. For the most part they do. The chapter on “The Church-Porch” is dedicated to the implicit proposition that much of the practical wisdom proffered in that poem is borrowed from the lips of Magdalen Herbert. Interesting documentary is advanced to support the hypothesis, including four of her letters, which are thick with protests, pleas, and reminders. What somewhat

impedes the analysis is a rigorous self-censorship which leaves little more to be concluded of Lady Danvers than that she was a dedicated mother, artful arranger, and convivial entertainer.

Altogether the book takes an ample measure of its subject (two younger brothers, Sir Henry and Thomas “the obscure sailor-poet,” are discussed in separate chapters). Of Herbert’s career in Parliament, which Powers-Beck mentions briefly, more could profitably be said. Likewise, an exploration of Herbert’s feelings toward the Sidney family would be welcome (Philip Sidney’s niece, Lady Mary Wroth, author of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and *Urania*, was Sir William Herbert’s married lover and bore him two illegitimate children). A detailed chronology or genealogy might also be useful. But these are minor suggestions and altogether the book makes an interesting, original, and deeply scholarly contribution to our understanding of seventeenth-century literary discourse.

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Arthur Marotti, ed. *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999. 266 pp.

Arthur Marotti has edited a significant new collection of essays that address a topic relatively ignored by literary scholars, namely the place of Catholic and anti-Catholic discourses in early modern England. Following the lead of revisionist historians such as Peter Lake, Christopher Haigh, Eamon Duffy, and Anthony Milton, for example, Marotti has selected essays that underscore the significance of religion in cultural and political formation during the early modern period. Not surprisingly, the contributors include both historians and literary scholars, whose essays explore the neglected and marginalized history and literature of Catholicism in its conflicted relationship with the discourse of anti-Catholicism. The essays cover the period from the early Elizabethan period through the Restoration era and focus on canonical writers such as Donne, Dekker, Campion, and Milton, but also include unknown or relatively unknown writers such as Richard Carpenter, John Mush, John Good, and Elizabeth Cellier.

In the first essay in the volume, Marotti explores the perplexing relationships between recusant Catholic women and Jesuit missionary priests within the sociopolitical contexts of harsh antirecusancy laws and religious difference. According to Marotti, Protestant iconoclasm and misogyny demonized the Catholic woman as the whore of Babylon, portraying her as the seductress of Protestant men, much like Spenser’s Duessa. Catholic

women were perceived as both disobedient to their husbands and to the state in their refusal to participate in the state religion and in asserting religious autonomy. Marotti illustrates his points by analyzing the case of the first woman, Margaret Clitherow, to be executed under the antirecusancy laws. Clitherow converted to Catholicism after her marriage to a Protestant husband who tolerated her religious practices. Her last confessor and adviser, John Mush, wrote a “culturally symptomatic” account of her as an exemplary wife and as an exemplary Catholic woman and martyr. Marotti analyzes Mush’s narrative, showing how he could separate out her Catholicism from the charges of political subversion in accordance with his own anti-Jesuit policy and declaration of Catholic loyalty to the crown. After providing examples of anti-Jesuit propaganda by John Gee, Donne, Thomas Middleton, Phineas Fletcher, and Milton, Marotti concludes his argument showing how Catholic women and Jesuit priests were characterized as being alien to English Protestant identity.

Ronald Corthell examines how Robert Persons’s polemical writings establish an English Catholic subject position within the larger debate about obedience and resistance. According to Corthell, Persons’s polemical writings are characterized by a powerful ideological style that allows him to represent “a divided recusant subject of power,” a “subversive critic of Elizabethan politics,” and an “imaginary subject of a newly ‘reformed’ England.” Situating his argument within the broader debate among historians of Catholicism over the question of discontinuity (Bossy) and continuity (Haigh), Corthell locates Persons’s writings within Weimann’s concept of the production and dispersal of authority and representation. Persons believed that open polemics could resolve the deep questions of religious difference between Catholics and Anglicans while he also understood that embracing a religion was a political act. Accordingly, he bases his polemics on what he considers to be a sounder scholarship than that of his Protestant opponents. In doing so, Persons is able to argue that freedom for Catholics to publicly worship produces loyal subjects. In effect, Corthell discloses how Persons could criticize Protestant authority while establishing his own authority. In his attempt to change England, Persons went so far as to create an imaginary view of what a Catholic controlled England would be like. According to Corthell, this Catholic dream failed, but produced a “fairy story” that would be controverted in the future.

Julian Yates surveys the landscape of Catholic identity through both recusants and pursuivants. For Yates, that geography includes both “the imagined space of recusancy” and “the very real terrain of Catholic resistance”; that is, Catholics experienced real obstacles in having to negotiate in a hidden landscape while the authorities had to confront the hidden presence of Catholics, whom they saw as subversive of the realm. Richard Topcliffe, the chief pursuivant, was alarmed at the increasing rate of return-

ing priests as was Anthony Munday in his accounts of Catholic life and the execution of Thomas Campion. Protestants labeled Catholic priests as “parasites” bent on destroying England. Yates uses the search for and the capture of Edmund Campion to illustrate the perplexities of this landscape.

Anthony Milton provides a cautionary essay that attempts to place recent historical emphasis on the role of anti-Catholicism in a more contextualized setting by arguing that Catholic ideas, books, images, and people were omnipresent in England. In analyzing anti-Catholic writings, Milton discovers that there was not one discourse in which Catholicism was perceived as the false church, but many discourses that presented Catholicism in more complex and ambiguous ways. Protestant polemicists realized that there was a rhetorical and tactical advantage in not just depicting Catholicism as “a satanic inversion of normative Protestant values.” Instead, writers like William Perkins depicted the division between the two churches not as polar opposites, but instead as sharing similar points. Moreover, most persons did not automatically react negatively to things Catholic. Many anti-Catholic polemicists, including William Prynne accepted the legitimacy of some Catholic philosophers. The availability and popularity of Catholic devotional writings suggests that many did not see a “yawning gulf” between the two churches’ doctrines. These accepted forms of cross-confessionalism extended to Protestants using Catholic exegesis and to the presence of Catholic arts in England. Even on the diplomatic field there was not strong popular objection to Charles I’s marriage to his French Catholic bride. Although the government prosecuted many Catholics, most Catholics were accepted by their neighbors as being loyal. According to Milton, these many adaptations and accommodations of Catholics show why a virulent and polarized anti-Catholicism was not the dominant mode of anti-Catholicism in England.

John Watkins explores the complexities created for James I by Elizabeth’s anti-Catholicism. According to Watkins, James I’s own attitude toward Catholics is difficult to pin down because he manifested two opposing views of the Catholic community, seeing that community as potentially loyal and as potentially subversive. Because the elite supporting James I wanted him to continue Elizabeth I’s antirecusant laws, they emphasized his Tudor ancestry and his experience as a ruler while playing down his foreignness and Catholic mother. The Gunpowder Plot in 1605 unified the Protestant elite in their attempts to prevent James I from easing those antirecusant laws. In order to stress the continuity between Elizabeth and James, numerous writers employed the trope of the phoenix, initially used for Elizabeth, but now used to praise James I as her reincarnation. From the Catholic side, when Elizabeth I died, Catholic apologists depicted her as a woman who died a terrible death, suffering from hysteria, malice, paranoia, and certain damnation for persecution of

Catholics. Robert Persons and others highlighted Elizabeth I's character flaws, claiming that she was illegitimate and had atrociously executed her own sister. In turn, Cecil and the Protestant elite mounted a propaganda campaign against the Catholics by defending her staunch Protestantism. Bacon and Barlowe defended Elizabeth I by showing her death as peaceful and urging the maintenance of the antirecusancy laws. Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* presented James I's victory over the Gunpowder conspirators as a reenactment of Elizabeth's victory over the Spanish Armada. Watkins explains how preachers, dramatists, poets, chroniclers, and engravers perpetuated these ideas and as a result how James I adopted a conspicuous antirecusant domestic policy.

Michael Questier and Simon Healy join forces to examine current arguments about Catholicism and conformity in order to modify the model of church papistry that showed a gradual transfer from Catholicism to "parish anglicanism." Using the case of John Good, an MP from Camelford and a church papist, they argue that many could remain Catholic and still conform to the Anglican Church. Catholic loyalists such as Good also supported the 1606 Oath of Allegiance in order to show their loyalty and mark the distinct type of Catholicism many wanted within the state. However, because his conversion treatise is problematical and contradictory, he cannot, according to Questier and Healy, be called a "church-papist" in the conventional sense and cases like his call into question the recent historiographical obsession with only using outward behavior as a means of determining a subject's religion.

In a long and carefully argued essay, Alison Shell explores how Richard Carpenter employed Menippean conventions to represent himself to the world. Carpenter was an Anglican convert to Catholicism who formally recanted and reconverted to Anglicanism, was given a benefice by Laud, and then later gave evidence against Laud. As an apostate, Carpenter was caught up as a pawn in the struggles within the Anglican Church. Shell carefully examines his recantation sermon and the evidence he gave to the Committee of Religion to show his own wandering quest for religious truth. Becoming an Independent during the 1640s and 1650s, Carpenter employed intellectual forms of Menippean satire as the means of making religious arguments against his enemies. Exploring the state of Menippean satire in England and employing a Bakhtinian approach, Shell provides a thorough analysis of Carpenter's works and the unique frontispieces to his works, including the one in which he is depicted as vomiting. Through Menippean satire, Carpenter finds the appropriate means to indulge his obsessive autobiographical questing and the problems of identity caused by his multiple conversions.

John N. King reexamines the anti-Catholic satire in Milton's "Paradise of Fools" in book 3 of *Paradise Lost* in order to show how it func-

tions as a concealed attack on Laud's ecclesiastical policies and practices. The attack on Limbo by Milton extends into an affirmation of justification by faith alone. King finds in Cranmer's sermon "Of Good Works" precedent for Milton's attack on Catholic abuses. In targeting the four orders of mendicant friars, Milton establishes a "screen" from which to attack Laudianism and superstitious religious practices. King targets a number of Milton's terms such as "trumpery," "gate," and "wicket" to show that the same terms were used by other anti-Laudians. For example, Milton's scatological satire and use of metaphorical flatulence finds precedent in Chaucer and John Bale and is used to mock the birth of a false church as well as the Catholic concept of transubstantiation and clerical aggrandizement. As he does in his antiprelatical pamphlets, Milton uses clerical disguises as the means to attack hypocrisy, especially that of Satan who degenerates through a series of hypocritical costuming. King finds precedents for Milton's strategy in the *Roman de la Rose*, Chaucer, Tynedale, and John Bale. Moreover, he sees Uriel's inability to detect hypocrisy as commenting on a fundamental epistemological problem in Protestantism and one that Satan employs in the temptation of Eve. For King, the subtext in this section of Milton's poem alludes to various anti-Catholic polemics, including idolatry, true worship, and the deceptive fancy, among others. King suggests that Satan's whispering into Eve's ear may be a veiled attack on the Catholic concept of the Annunciation.

Frances E. Dolan, in the concluding essay, investigates the celebrated case of Elizabeth Cellier, known as the "Popish Midwife" and implicated in the Meal Tub Plot, an offshoot of the Popish Plot. After providing an overview of the case, Dolan focuses on how the numerous representations of Cellier "reveal the tension between, as well as the overlapping or collapse of, the realms of the real and the representational, the historical and the discursive." The Meal Tub Plot was an alleged Catholic scheme to redirect blame for the Popish Plot onto the Presbyterians. Cellier was charged for treason and acquitted and, after, wrote a self-justifying treatise that caused even more notoriety and her subsequent conviction for libel. Dolan explores the nature of the evidence presented, Cellier's defense, and the many public verbal and visual representations of the trials. For Dolan, the attacks on Cellier embody the Protestant association of Catholicism with the woman's body along with traditional misogynistic attacks on women. Thus, her gender and her religion shaped her representations as a "wretched subject" publicly and in history.

This rich and diverse collection of essays opens up to historical and critical evaluation texts that generally are ignored and provides readers with significant ways to understand those historical lacunae. Each essay in its own way helps give us a much more complete picture of oppositional

religious discourses and those who created them and engaged them in the religio-politics of early modern period.

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R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor. *Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw*. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, Ltd., 1997. 332 pp.

Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997. 723 pp.

In recent medieval scholarship, few revivals have been as vibrant as the regreening of what had been the all too easily dismissed field of "Robin Hood Studies." Indeed, in the preface to their newly revised *Rymes of Robyn Hood* (1997), Dobson and Taylor note "the remarkable expansion of academic study on the outlaw hero during the last twenty years (greater no doubt than during the previous two centuries)" (x). Certainly there can be little doubt that a major impetus to that "remarkable expansion" was the original publication, in 1976, of the Dobson-Taylor text, itself. Yet this latest revival of interest in the greenwood hero might well be credited in large part to the 1994 publication of Stephen Knight's *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw*.

Most recently Knight and Thomas Ohlgren have produced a competing classroom text, *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales* (1997), bringing Robin Hood studies to a fork in the road, with paths leading to ends as separate and related as Barnesdale and Sherwood, the competing locales of the outlaw legend. While the two classroom texts apply remarkably different scholarly and pedagogical approaches to virtually the same corpus of ballads, plays, and rhymes, both volumes find their respective marks, although their aims and target audiences differ. The road to Barnesdale; the road to Sherwood: Dobson and Taylor or Knight and Ohlgren, it all depends where you stand critically/pedagogically and what your allegiances are. And there's argument, and now a text, for each.

In many ways, the fork in the road is similar to one encountered previously in the study of *Beowulf*, a work at one time viewed primarily as an historical, philological document—often at the expense of considerations of the poem's literary merit. Tolkien's famous essay on "The Monsters and the Critics" in many ways altered the course of scholarship by foregrounding the Anglo-Saxon poem's literary possibilities. Dominated until recently by questions of philology, textual transmission, and above all the

historical reality of Robin Hood, the study of the Sherwood outlaw has undergone a similar metamorphosis.

While it would be an exaggeration to say that Knight's 1994 study was the equivalent of Tolkien's 1936 essay, Knight's volume clearly signaled an altered direction, if not a new critical path, at least in terms of literary criticism as practiced in the 1990s. Knight's is an essentially social reading, one influenced by Marxist approaches, taking as its major themes appropriations and gentrification.

That Robin Hood studies have come to such a fork in the road is readily apparent in the two classroom texts' treatment of historical background. Anyone who has taught medieval literature knows the dilemma. Exactly how important is background and at what point does one introduce it to the course? Does one begin the semester with a lengthy "background" lecture (historical and cultural context) or does one leap headlong into the subject text supplying such background along the way?

Not surprisingly, Dobson and Taylor take the former approach, providing a lengthy and detailed historical context (27 pages of "Foreword" and 67 pages of "Introduction") as the primary approach to the material, although each work is also introduced by a brief two to three page headnote, usually historical/philological in nature.

Knight and Ohlgren naturally provide a much briefer nineteen-page general introduction, with well-developed headnotes that focus on interpretive issues, while manuscript and explanatory notes are reserved for the end of the sections devoted to individual works. Dobson and Taylor, reflecting an essentially historically focused approach, spend some sixteen pages of front matter discussing the quest for historical Robin Hood, while Knight and Ohlgren, whose interests are more critically/literally minded, dismiss the issue in a single page (4-5).

Part of what allows Knight and Ohlgren to turn their attentions to other matters is no doubt a profound change in our notions of literature and what constitutes literary inquiry since the publication of the Dobson-Taylor text in 1976. As long as "literature" was closely associated with "high culture," the Robin Hood material, as ballads, was bound to suffer neglect in favor of, say, *The Canterbury Tales* or the courtly Arthurian cycle. However, with the change in approach to literature as arena for cultural considerations of such issues as class and gender, Robin Hood could now be the focus of "literary" attentions such as those of Knight's 1994 study.

In contrast, Dobson and Taylor's notion of scholarship is to rescue the legend from the "clutches" of the lower (or at least less intellectual) classes. Thus they observe, "Even before the first edition of this volume appeared...historians and critics had begun to rescue the greenwood hero from the clutches of the local enthusiast" (ix).

That a literary/interpretive approach is for Dobson and Taylor a road not taken is quite evident in their text. While the 1997 preface to Dobson and Taylor does note “the remarkable expansion of academic study...during the last twenty years, the two scholars tellingly complete the sentence by candidly adding that this “expansion...has naturally not left our opinions completely unaltered”(x). This is neither gentlemanly nor British understatement—although Dobson and Taylor are both—for their understanding of the texts has, indeed, hardly been altered at all from what it was in 1976. It’s their bibliography, not their essential vision of the material, that has been updated in their 1997 revision.

Although the new Dobson and Taylor edition does of necessity recognize Knight, Dobson and Taylor continually attack his 1994 work as “vigorously iconoclastic” (xxvii) in order to champion their historical approach, asserting that the historical evidence “leave[s] one in little doubt that by the end of the Middle Ages a tolerably coherent and largely self-consistent greenwood outlaw legend had indeed been fully articulated” (xxix). Claiming “that the early ballads can be analyzed in terms considerably more precise than the allegory or symbolized ‘ideality’ which Professor Knight seems to prefer,” Dobson and Taylor insist that it is Knight’s “very reluctance to accept a traditionally historical approach to the greenwood legend which makes his treatment of the late medieval ballads of Robin Hood the least convincing part of his book” (xxix).

In the end, Dobson and Taylor take to defending “history” as well as historical praxis from Knight’s “attempt to demolish the most important new documentary evidence for the early development of the legend” (xxx) along with his “‘curiously obsessive distrust of allegedly empirical historians’ [which] often seems to do more to obscure than to clarify the search for the medieval origins and the nature of the legend” (xxx).

Dobson and Taylor’s purpose, then, has as its goal a type of literary archeology, a “search for origins” exactly paralleling early *Beowulf* studies. For Dobson and Taylor, historical context is both the end product as well as the informing context of study of Robin Hood. For Knight and Ohlgren, these are something quite different, and the two divergent views result in two different pedagogical approaches and two different textbooks.

Perhaps the best way to bring the differences into focus is to compare the two introductions to the ballad, “Robin and the Potter.” Knight and Ohlgren begin with a single paragraph that duly notes that the ballad exists in a single manuscript and was not reprinted until 1795. They briefly, almost in passing, note the relationship between the ballad and a sixteenth-century play which begins with a potter.

In contrast to the brevity of Knight and Ohlgren, Dobson and Taylor, in keeping with their quest for “origins,” observe that the ballad “may be

reckoned the second in point of antiquity of the Robin Hood series" (123). They not only describe the "unique" status of the manuscript but also its provenance, form ("24 leaves with approximately 30 lines to each page"), and go so far as to provide a full-page reproduction of its opening lines (125) so that readers might observe the scribe's "clear bastard hand." They go on not only to note that the ballad is contained in an anthology "compiled with no obvious principle" but to list the other works contained in the manuscript. Pointing to its "unusually corrupt orthography," Dobson and Taylor speculate on its origins by finding the ballad to be either "extremely carelessly" transcribed or an "orally transmitted version written down by a semi-literate 'minstrel.'"

In regard to those minstrel origins, Dobson and Taylor note, "Like 'Robin Hood and the Monk,' 'Robin Hood and the Potter' will always be one of the few fundamental sources for any attempt to describe both the evolution of the Robin Hood legend and the development of the English popular ballad." As consideration of that development, Dobson and Taylor remark that the ballad relies on a "direct form of address closer to the minstrel style."

Noting that "Robin Hood and the Potter" "uses dialogue more than other early Robin Hood ballads..." (59) and quoting Dobson and Taylor directly in terms of the ballad's use of "direct form of address," the more hermeneutically minded Knight and Ohlgren find this same feature not indicative of origin but rather to be the basis for interpretation of the class issues that are the focus of their interest: "These subtleties may be thematic. At the beginning and end the ballad asserts the elusive value of good yeomanry and it may well be that this text, like other early Robin Hood ballads is something of an exploration and realization of just what values might be."

More remarkably the difference in the two volumes is brought into high relief as each text notes that "Robin and the Potter" contains the essential elements of the Robin Hood legend. Of course, it's the clear diversity in the two sets of essential elements that's revealing. Dobson and Taylor, in keeping with their historical/anthropological approach, describe the ballad as containing the "most popular ingredients in the later Tudor and Stuart legend: single and by no means inevitably successful combat with one adversary; dramatic victory in an archery competition; and inveiglement of a remarkably naive sheriff into the 'ffeyre forest' where he was completely at Robin's mercy" (125). Clearly most of these "ingredients" are structural in nature. On the other hand, Knight and Ohlgren see in the ballad "a set of themes central to the myth" (58). Unlike the "popular ingredients" listed by Dobson and Taylor, those listed by Knight and Ohlgren are largely "thematic" rather than structural in nature: "Robin as yeoman among yeomen; recurrent suspicion of towns

and its activity; Robin's innate skill at archery; the full and free ethics of the forest" (58). Just as Dobson and Taylor's detailed description of the manuscript stands in counterpoint to Knight and Ohlgren's abbreviated treatment, so Dobson and Taylor's brief observation about class (the ballad's "flatter[ing] the aspirations of the lesser craftsmen") is offset by Knight and Ohlgren's extended paragraph on the ballad's "suspicion of towns and business practices" as well as the way in which "the world of mercantile values is mocked and dismissed" (58). Venturing further into a part of the contemporary critical forest left unexplored by Dobson and Taylor, Knight and Ohlgren assert that Robin and the sheriff "fought in part on the terrain of masculinity" noting that "the only text that shows Robin in relation to any woman (except the Virgin Mary and the treacherous Prioress)" (58).

Finally, experienced campers will know that in the woods, whether Barnesdale or Sherwood, equipment, as well as attitude, often makes the difference in the quality of the campout, and these two Robin Hoods are differently outfitted. In keeping with their interests in historical context and textual transmission, Dobson and Taylor provide a very helpful map of "Robin Hood Country" along with a valuable set of appendices, including "Titles and First Lines of Robin Hood Ballads," "A Note on the Sloane Manuscript Life of Robin Hood," "A Selection of Proverbs of Robin Hood," "A Select List of Robin Hood Place-Names," and "Principle Printed Editions of the Robin Hood Ballads." The appendix, "Robin Hood in Literature," is simply a treasure, not only useful but essential for study of the history and development of the outlaw legend. Dobson and Taylor also include a number of texts not found in Knight and Ohlgren. In five cases, Dobson and Taylor provide alternate versions of ballads, as well as postmedieval works by Keats, Noyes, Johnson, and Tennyson. There is even a text of the "Ballad of Jesse James." Also impressive is the fact that Dobson and Taylor provide an index.

Readers of Knight and Ohlgren will, no doubt, sorely miss these amenities. For their part, Knight and Ohlgren clearly have the more useful bibliography, the editors having opted for select bibliographies following each individual work, often with specific page citations. In the end, this approach is probably more useful than the Dobson and Taylor method of simply appending forty-one titles published since the compilation of their 1976 bibliography. By placing line-keyed textual and explanatory notes after works, Knight and Ohlgren are able to provide more glosses and general information than do Dobson and Taylor, whose annotations are limited by their placement at the bottom of the page.

Finally, in the matter of form, Dobson and Taylor opt for double-column layout and, at least to these tired eyes, a somewhat small typeface. Knight and Ohlgren instead have chosen a single-column, larger-print for-

mat, thereby providing ample room for side glosses and plenty of space for readers' annotations. The result of this divergence in format is that the Dobson-Taylor edition (which contains more material) runs 332 pages while Knight-Ohlgren comes in at a whopping 723. While both volumes are illustrated, the Knight-Ohlgren text has 44 to Dobson and Taylor's 17.

One of the most notable features of this most recent Robin Hood revival has been its emphasis on pedagogy, including as it has teaching sessions and the distribution of sample syllabi. No doubt this revival will lead to a wealth of new courses entering the curriculum. In our rush to teach Robin Hood, each of us must decide what type of courses we are teaching: Advanced courses in which manuscript issues are appropriate, or courses where students come with little, or even no, background in the Middle Ages. Are they to be exclusively or primarily medieval courses or modern ones? Should the primary focus be on Robin Hood in particular or on the outlaw genre in general? Do we stress historical particulars or anthropological/folklore universals? Should such courses be modeled on those treating Arthurian literature which are favorites with nonmajors? The answers to these questions will most likely dictate the choice of text. What is obvious is that Robin Hood studies are richer for the choice.

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Anna Battigelli. *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

In an address to the reader of her *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666), Margaret Cavendish, duchess of Newcastle (1623–1673) remarks that her philosophy, being new, is not yet understood, but that posterity might regard her ideas more highly. Margaret Cavendish's time has come. For three centuries or so, Cavendish's life and writings were all but forgotten. Today, most of Cavendish's texts are (or soon will be) readily available in print or on-line. Many undergraduates, as well as graduate students, are now studying and enjoying her books, especially *Description of a New...Blazing World*. During the past two decades, the patient labor of feminist scholars has not only transformed our understanding of the early modern context in which Cavendish wrote, but has also articulated interpretative strategies by which her writings might be read with profit and pleasure. The Margaret Cavendish Society (established in 1997) is a lively international community, which has met twice, in Oxford (1997) and Paris (1999), and will meet again, in 2001, at

Wheaton College, Massachusetts. Its members disseminate new research by means of a list-serve, web-page, and newsletter. The time is indeed ripe for the publication of a wide range of new assessments of Margaret Cavendish's unique place in intellectual history.

Anna Battigelli's *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* is a new and substantial study of "the life of the mind" of Margaret Cavendish, which demonstrates why Cavendish is now considered an important seventeenth-century thinker, who both responded to the main ideas of her time and anticipated many of the trends to come. As the book's title indicates, Battigelli's Cavendish is an intellectual exile, a subject-position that shaped both her writings and her natural philosophy (84). Her identity as an exile emerged out of her life experiences. Not only did Cavendish live in exile in France and Holland during the 1640s and 1650s, but after the Restoration, she and her husband were excluded from the centers of power in London, and so retreated to their estates at Welbeck and Bolsover. Battigelli goes as far as claiming that, after 1660, Cavendish "had begun to live in the written worlds of her texts rather than in the external world" (88). As a woman, Cavendish was also barred from intellectual circles, and her writings often articulate a deep alienation from "mode-philosophy," especially as promoted by the Royal Society (established 1662). Taken as a whole, *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* sheds considerable light on Cavendish's repeated attempts to negotiate access to the early modern intellectual system, and to find a small measure of collaboration in the life of the mind. In the end, as Battigelli points out, Cavendish turned her position as an exile to advantage and "explored interiority more openly and more publicly than any other writer of her time" (85).

Battigelli's other declared objective is to correct the impression—certainly created by Cavendish herself, as well as by her husband (called "Newcastle," for clarity's sake)—that Cavendish was an entirely original and isolated thinker. At first glance, this objective may seem at variance with the depiction of Cavendish as exile, but Battigelli's book reveals the very process by which Cavendish became an exile through her lived experience of negotiating various intellectual options. Each of Battigelli's four well-researched chapters teases out one significant strand of Cavendish's reactions to contemporary philosophical currents: (1) her response to the Platonic-love ideology of Queen Henrietta Maria; (2) her views on the new atomism; (3) her implementation and criticism of Hobbesian ideas; and (4) her critiques of the new science and the Royal Society. One of the primary virtues of *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* is that, because of Battigelli's careful reconstructions of the *specific* contexts for specific texts, she is able to suggest exciting new ways to read a number of Cavendish's works.

Chapter 2, "A Strange Enchantment: 'The Wooing of the Mind' at the Court of Henrietta Maria," is a fine synthesis of an impressive range of sources, showing that Queen Henrietta Maria influenced the "life of the mind" of Margaret Cavendish during the 1640s. Battigelli does an admirable job of reconstructing Henrietta Maria's intellectual contributions to Caroline court life, while speculating on how the queen's ideas on Platonic love might have been received by the young Margaret Lucas, who became a lady-in-waiting in 1643 and later went into exile in France with her queen. As Battigelli shows, Henrietta Maria's influence on Margaret Cavendish went well beyond Cavendish's well-known penchant for creating her own fantastical fashions, such as were worn by the queen and her ladies during the Caroline court masques. According to Battigelli, throughout her life, Cavendish and her husband Newcastle remained "conscious symbols of a past order" (11). In light of her findings regarding the Henrietta Maria/Cavendish connection, Battigelli is able to provide an exciting rereading of Cavendish's drama, demonstrating that the plays not only re-create, but also test, the Platonic love ideals which were propagated and performed by the queen in the court masques of the 1630s.

The third chapter, "World and Mind in Conflict: Cavendish's Review of the New Atomism," argues that Cavendish's highly original writings on atomism, notably *Poems and Fancies* (1653), reveal the traumatized state of her mind during the early years of her exile. It is Battigelli's contention that the theory of atomism, which was "the rage in Paris" at the time, appealed to Cavendish precisely because her personal world was disintegrating. Margaret Lucas was psychologically scarred by a series of events that started with going into forced exile with Henrietta Maria in 1644. In 1647, her beloved mother and sister died. In 1648, after an unsuccessful attempt to defend Colchester from Parliamentary forces under General Thomas Fairfax, her brother Charles Lucas was court-martialled and summarily shot. Afterwards, a mob desecrated the Lucas family plot, scattering the remains of her mother and sister. Even the happiness of the early years of her marriage to William Cavendish, viscount of Newcastle, was marred by vicious court gossip and by continuing financial difficulties, especially after 1649, when Parliament declared Newcastle an enemy to the English state and confiscated his lands. Battigelli suggests that Cavendish's life-long melancholia may have dated from this period. At the same time, however, Cavendish's early years of marriage brought her the intellectual stimulation of her husband's company and, until his early death, that of Charles Cavendish, Newcastle's learned brother. Both brothers acted as tutors to the young bride, and also introduced her to the Cavendish circle in Paris, which, at times, included such luminaries as Gassendi, Hobbes, and Descartes. But doesn't Battigelli exaggerate when she asserts that

Cavendish found herself “at the center of a scientific salon”? Cavendish often depicted herself, or a textual surrogate, as being too bashful to speak in company, as not knowing French, and as being on the outskirts of conversation, even within her own family. Other stray comments indicate that Battigelli sometimes tries too hard to place Cavendish within the well-entrenched contours of Western thought. On rare occasion, Battigelli lets slip a depreciating remark: “[Cavendish] returned to England promoting an idiosyncratic version of Cartesian rationalism” (89).

In Battigelli’s view, Cavendish’s atomism is a metaphor for her personal and political problems of the late 1640s and the 1650s; it is “a metaphor that might account for the conflict that governed her mind and her world” (58). This contention leads Battigelli to a bold rereading of the *Poems and Fancies* which not only reiterates Cavendish’s well-known skepticism regarding experimental philosophy, but also argues that the atomistic universe that Cavendish depicts is profoundly pessimistic and Hobbesian. Battigelli concludes that Cavendish “read a Hobbesian state of nature into the very fabric of the universe by using the language of war to describe the actions of atoms” (57). While this claim works well in the reading of such poems as “A Warr with Atomes,” other poems do not confirm that Cavendish’s vision in *Poems and Fancies* is “Hobbesian.” Taken as a whole, *Poems and Fancies* presents a wide range of witty and outrageous thought-experiments about alternative realities at the subatomic level, including fairy realms, thriving commonwealths, and a little world in an earring where, though battles may be fought, birds may also sing.

In the fourth chapter, “No House but My Mind,” Battigelli seems determined to establish Thomas Hobbes as a *looming* presence behind Cavendish’s work (63). At one point, Battigelli even insists: “she was more of a Hobbesian than Hobbes” (83). Is it fruitful to frame Cavendish’s work in this way? Admittedly, Cavendish’s well-known claim to be an absolutely original thinker cannot be taken at face value. And who could object to saying that Cavendish and Hobbes are similar in their determination to be speculative philosophers; they both rejected the systems of scholasticism and experimental philosophy in order—in Hobbes’s words—“to prove everything in my own way” (68). And Battigelli locates lots of resonances in their writings; they are said to share everything from concerns with the problem of public order and ethical relativism to a pessimistic view of human nature. But then many of their contemporaries shared similar ideas. To set up a compelling argument for Hobbes’s influence on Margaret Cavendish, Battigelli goes to some length to prove the “intimacy” between Hobbes and Newcastle: Hobbes is called a “deeply valued friend”; Newcastle is said to have been “intensely engaged with Hobbes’s thought” (64–65). Doubtless, Hobbes had a long-standing relationship with Newcastle; he was the tutor and a member of the house-

hold of Newcastle's cousin, the second earl of Devonshire. Hobbes no doubt appreciated and acknowledged Newcastle's patronage. And, arguably, Newcastle may have been influenced by Hobbesian ideas of statesmanship when he wrote his letter of advice to Charles II. But whatever we grant in the case of a relationship between Newcastle and Hobbes, the evidence that Hobbes had a profound influence on Margaret Cavendish remains questionable. Even if Newcastle schooled her in Hobbes's thought—and there is little evidence that he did—I wonder how those ideas might have been played out in their conversations, given the wonderful quirkiness of Newcastle's wit and Cavendish's too.

As Battigelli reminds us, we have evidence for only two direct communications between Cavendish and Hobbes (65). In the first instance, when they met accidentally in London in 1653, Hobbes refused a dinner engagement—as Cavendish reports in *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*—“with great civility” (sig. B3v.). The second piece of evidence is a letter Hobbes wrote to Cavendish, in 1662, thanking her for the copy of her *Plays* that Cavendish sent him. Based on the slight evidence of Hobbes's letter, Battigelli says that Cavendish was attempting to insinuate herself into a relationship with Hobbes, and even resorts to calling Cavendish “a would-be disciple” (65). The letter in question appears in *Letters and Poems in Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Dutchess of Newcastle* (1676), published by her husband after her death. Like so many of the letters in that collection addressed to Cavendish by famous men, Hobbes's letter is characterized by equivocal phraseology, poised somewhere between a compliment to “your Excellence” and barely veiled condescension to a scribbling woman. Battigelli describes Hobbes's two cool responses to Cavendish as keeping his “distance” (65). At the very least, his rebuffs show that, whatever Hobbes's relationship with Newcastle was, it was not easily transferable to his young wife.

The final chapter, “Rationalism versus Experimentalism: Cavendish's Satires of the Royal Society,” is more balanced in mapping possible influences and in seeking to identify Margaret Cavendish's “place among the theorists of the new science” (98). It presents a fine analysis of the commonalities between *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* and *Description of a New Blazing World*, which were published as companion pieces in 1666 and again in 1668. Whatever misgivings I have about Battigelli's claim in earlier chapters for a looming Hobbesian influence, here I enjoyed her more nuanced treatment of *Blazing World* as a utopian experiment in statescraft that both deploys and assesses Hobbesian ideas on political stability. Among the jewels in this chapter is Battigelli's review of Cavendish's extended attack on the Royal Society and, in particular, of Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* in *Observations*. Nor does Battigelli take Pepys's word for it that, during her famous visit to the Royal Society in

1667, Cavendish was reduced to “admiring silence” when viewing the experimental entertainments (112). In her analysis of *Philosophical Letters* (1664), Battigelli admits that Henry More, Descartes, and Jan Baptista Van Helmont—as well as Hobbes—were the targets of Cavendish’s critical pen. Cavendish uses these four figures, negatively, as indicators of what her natural philosophy was not. The picture of Cavendish presented in the final chapter is of a woman engaged in an effort—not to become anyone’s disciple—but to gain some measure of intellectual conversation and recognition, beyond her own family circle. She attempted a correspondence not only with Hobbes, but also with a number of leading lights, including Huygens, Henry More, and Joseph Glanvill; she sent beautifully bound presentation copies of her writings to Oxford and Cambridge Universities and to many individuals, and she finagled an invitation to view experiments at the Royal Society.

Battigelli writes well, handling diverse, interdisciplinary sources with admirable grace and clarity. Her notes are rich in scholarly detail and contain many insights in their own right. Appendix A provides a good review of the evidence for considering 1623 as the birth year for Margaret Lucas. Appendix B transcribes twenty-one letters written by Margaret Lucas to Newcastle during their courtship in 1645 [British Library, MS Additional 70499 fols. 259-97]. Before concluding, however, I need to lament that Battigelli’s study omits any serious consideration of the girlhood of Margaret Lucas. *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* is a slim volume, in which the introduction and chapter 1 are conflated into one unit of only ten pages. Despite Battigelli’s admission that Cavendish started writing well before she went to court, Cavendish’s early life is dealt with in a perfunctory paragraph in the introduction/chapter 1. Thus, the book gives the odd impression that Cavendish’s “life of the mind” began only when she entered Henrietta Maria’s service in 1643. The omission is all the more glaring given that Cavendish’s own account of her upbringing, found in her autobiographical *True Relation*, stresses the early influence of her family, especially of her mother, Elizabeth Lucas. I also would have welcomed a section that speculated on Cavendish’s intellectual connections while she was in Antwerp during the 1650s.

Chief among Battigelli’s accomplishments is her bold and detailed study of how Cavendish’s concept of mind is manifested in her writings. According to Battigelli, both Cavendish’s natural philosophy and her writing experiments were calculated to capture the conflicted nature of thinking. In my view, Battigelli overuses the phrase “the disputatious nature of the human mind” to characterize Cavendish’s understanding of the mind (79 twice, 83, 149). This characterization works for some texts, such as “An Argumentative Discourse,” the preface to *Observation on Experimental Philosophy*, in which Cavendish deliberately represents

new and old thoughts as being at war in her mind. Generally, though, in Cavendish's writings, the mind is likened to Nature, which, though various and wild, is not necessarily in conflict with herself. Nature enjoys exercising herself in multiple ways, sometimes to delude ambitious seekers after her truths. Likewise, Cavendish herself enjoys playing with diversity, letting herself be hard to follow, and tricking crabbed readers. Her sense of humor is yet to be fully understood. At its best, Battigelli's *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* reminds us of Cavendish's unique ability to represent—in both her natural philosophy and in her writing style—the fascinating workings of one human mind at a particular moment in history. It is to Battigelli's great credit that, while showing the influences of other thinkers, she honors the Cavendish whose writings openly acknowledge the changeable and elusive qualities of the mind. Battigelli puts it this way: "Her candour in displaying the chaotic activity of the thinking life is no doubt one of the most striking and unsettling characteristics of her work" (58).

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Susanne Woods. *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. xvi + 198 pp.

The object of this excellent full-length treatment of Aemilia Lanyer's life and poetry is clearly stated by Susanne Woods at the end of her first chapter: to "[situate] the first self-proclaimed public woman poet in English among the equally ambitious men of her time" (41). To this end, Wood marshals her considerable archival skills and critical expertise to, first, shape the biography of this woman writer who lived "on the margins" of power during the last years of Elizabeth's reign and almost the first fifty years of the next century, and second, to position this writer's self-representation and literary works in a dialogue with generically similar works by several of the best known male writers of the age. In her book, Woods provides us an exemplary model for the feminist enterprise of recovering neglected women writers and for reassessing and rewriting literary history.

The skeleton facts of Aemilia Bassano Lanyer's life are generally well known: the daughter of a Venetian-born court musician and his English common-law wife, she was born in 1569. For a brief time in the early 1590s, she was the mistress of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon. When she became pregnant with his child, she was married to another musician,

Alfonso Lanyer; her son, Henry, was born in March 1593. She visited the astrologer, Simon Forman, several times in 1597; published a book of religious verse, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, in 1611; was widowed in 1613; ran a school for two years in 1618–20; took over the care of her grandchildren in 1633 when her son died; and died herself in 1645. A. L. Rowse has identified her as Shakespeare's Dark Lady of the Sonnets, although the attribution is extremely doubtful; Woods reviews thoroughly this attribution in her third chapter, finally asserting that such an attribution "is a matter of faith" (98).

Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, Lanyer's only extant work, is an eclectic book. It opens with eleven poem and prose dedications, nine to powerful women at court, including most significantly Margaret, countess of Cumberland, who is Lanyer's chief dedicatee. The 1840-line poem which follows is a meditation on Christ's passion from a woman's perspective that has the defense of good women as part of its structuring. The book's final piece is "The Description of Cooke-Ham," a country house poem which predates the publication of Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" by five years, and which provides an elegiac picture of an English country home as well as a celebration of a community of women.

Woods contextualizes Lanyer's work by looking at strategies of representation and of poetics in selected texts by writers with whom Lanyer might have been familiar: specifically, Spenser, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne; in her final chapter, after examining Lanyer alongside Donne's poetic strategies, Woods draws some correspondences between Herbert and Milton's religious poetry and Lanyer's. Such a comparative strategy, on the one hand, prevents Lanyer from assuming the role of unique and anomalous "woman" poet, and on the other hand, demonstrates how gender is a useful tool for literary analysis. For example, we see Lanyer in a position similar to Spenser, of the court but not in it, and suing for patronage from afar. We see Jonson "learning" from Lanyer how to modify the Augustan convention of contrasting an idyllic world with a fallen human civilization, so that place and domicile can celebrate a patron and a social system. And we see Milton, recognizing as does Lanyer, the fatal attraction of beauty, but assessing responsibility for the paradisaic fall and giving Eve a voice in a very different way from Lanyer.

Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet is a valuable contribution to the study of early modern literature for several reasons. First, in its comprehensive first chapter, Woods brings together the known facts of Lanyer's life, dispels the numerous myths that have received currency, and shapes the facts into a writer's biography. Second, in her literary analysis of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, Woods demonstrates both the aesthetic and historical importance of the poetry, showing how Lanyer participates in the tradition of religious poetics of her time, and how she is resistant to it. And

finally, in its balance of archival and theoretical scholarship, *Lanyer* is a model of the literary biography genre.

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Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity. Ed. John D. Niles and Allen J. Frantzen. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997.

This collection of nine essays, most of which began as papers delivered at Berkeley's Old English Colloquium in 1994, extends the research program envisioned by Allen Frantzen in *Desire for Origins* (1990). In that book Frantzen downplayed philological approaches to Old English works in favor of exploring the shifting cultural contexts of Anglo-Saxon studies. Like its precursor, this work focuses on the history of Anglo-Saxonism as an idea and cultural force. It is especially interested in how Anglo-Saxonism has been used over the centuries to sponsor various and sometimes surprising notions of political, religious, and racial identity. As several of these essays demonstrate, this "series of purposeful appropriations"—the editors' working definition of culture—was well underway even during the Anglo-Saxon period. This point alone disables the predictable criticism that the contributors have forsaken the investigation of Anglo-Saxon language and literature in favor of trendier cultural studies. It is more useful, perhaps, to regard this collection as a thoughtful analysis of an elusive but persistent desire for an unmediated encounter with the past and its literature.

The Reformation provides the backdrop for the first study, in which Frantzen shows how a particular notion of Anglo-Saxonism emerges from John Bale's sixteenth-century commentary on Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. In one episode of Bede's work, itself a strong statement of eighth-century Anglo-Saxonism, Gregory the Great notices a group of boys at the marketplace in Rome. Told that they are called "Angli," or English, Gregory puns on the Latin word for angel. Following the established anti-Roman rhetorical strategies of his day, Bale implies that Gregory's interest in the boys was sexual. By doing so, Frantzen claims, Bale "queers" Bede by calling attention to the possibility of homosexual relations in the episode. At least one of Bale's contemporaries took the bait; in 1565, Thomas Stapleton's translation of Bede's *History* calls Bale a "venimous spider being filthy and uncleane himself" who deliberately injected Bede's account with "poisonned sence and meaning." Rather than vilifying Bale for this rhetorical strategy, Frantzen argues that Bale's anti-Roman diatribe "must be understood in the context of his idealization of

marriage and his ardent defense of women's position" (27). Frantzen concludes the essay by contrasting two versions of Anglo-Saxonism: Bede's, which emphasizes the lasting conversion of the English by the Roman church, and Bale's, which emerges as a response to Roman domination.

The next two essays examine the role of Anglo-Saxon kingly literature in shaping an English national identity. Mary P. Richards notes that the structure of the Anglo-Saxon law-codes resembles that of their Germanic counterparts on the Continent, though the Anglo-Saxons' use of the vernacular is distinctive. She argues that the codes of Ine and Alfred in particular "reinforce the social structure, values, and sense of nationhood that appear as elements in the earlier royal codes" (45). Drawing their authority from both oral tradition and Christian ideology, these codes both reflected and helped to forge a self-conscious nationalism. They also provide a splendid example of culture as a complex series of purposeful appropriations. Janet Thormann treats the poems of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, paying rather more attention than Richards to the performative quality of such literature. Viewing nationhood as a symbolic product, Thormann asserts that power must be reconfigured in discourse for a nation to emerge. Not just any discourse will do. According to Thormann, the chronicle's list of events must be supplemented by narrative: "History takes form as a discursive production when chronological succession is motivated and directed by law, by the imposition of an arbitrary rule governing human relations, a rule which, in turn, depends on power" (61–62). Furthermore, Thormann argues, the traditional language of heroic poetry was especially suited to this task: "The prestige and traditionality of the verse language sponsor West-Saxon power as a national identity. In this sense, the poems are performances: they reactivate poetic tradition in order to assert a new discourse of history" (65).

Most of the subsequent essays focus on the reception of Anglo-Saxon literature. Suzanne Hagedorn's discussion of Alfred's preface to *Pastoral Care* supports her thesis that a single reception history allows us "to see in microcosm the larger cultural forces that have informed the discipline of Anglo-Saxon studies as a whole" (87). After tracking Alfred's preface through its various incarnations, Hagedorn offers the following conclusion:

The reception history of Alfred's preface may serve as a capsule history of Old English scholarship as a whole, as the text appears in the context of sixteenth-century religious controversies, seventeenth-century political propaganda, eighteenth-century encyclopedic scholarship, and nineteenth-century nationalist and racialist ideas. (101)

Robert Bjork's review of nineteenth-century Scandinavian scholarship, which he characterizes as remarkably vigorous despite its current obscu-

rity, offers ample proof of Hagedorn's comments on the role of nationalism in Anglo-Saxon studies. J. R. Hall's piece on Anglo-Saxon studies in nineteenth-century America also provides a case study of that process and reveals two contradictory views of Anglo-Saxons, each exaggerated: on the one hand, a noble people whose institutions and laws prefigured liberal democracy, and on the other, "a mere handfull of hardy and desperate Barbarian banditti, without letters, arts, property, moral or social institutions, or any other possession to make their own homes worth living at" (143). Gregory VanHoosier-Carey argues that postbellum Southerners identified with the post-Norman Conquest English as the defenders of a democratic society robbed of their political freedoms by an invading force, who preserved their language and eventually reclaimed their distinctive culture. Velma Bourgeois Richards shows how Edwardian historical novels, especially juvenile literature, enshrined "Anglo-Saxon" values that, she claims, "should be recognized as one key factor in the emergence of attitudes that produced, among many glorious achievements, a war of unparalleled proportions" (195).

The volume concludes with John D. Niles's sometimes playful reflections on culture as appropriation. After outlining five "laws" governing this process, Niles notes that "people appropriate what they will, from wherever they can get it, as part of an effort—whether conscious or unconscious, implicit or explicit, successful or unsuccessful—to shape the ground on which the historical present lies" (220). This claim is undoubtedly true. As we know from recent and painful experience, however, not all appropriations are intellectually or morally equal. (The introductory essay mentions, but the volume does not treat, the Nazi appropriation of Anglo-Saxon literature.) This book successfully depicts the persistence and plasticity of our desire for origins, but it also suggests how pernicious that desire can be if left unchecked by a critical historical imagination.

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David Wallace. *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. xix + 555 pp.

In this massive and densely argued book, David Wallace proposes to study Chaucer through the great Italian writers of the fourteenth century (Boccaccio and Petrarch in particular). Wallace does not, however, attempt another source and influence study; he sees the influence of Tre-

cento Italy as being far more pervasive than one of providing serviceable plots. Indeed, he begins with the contention that “Chaucer’s encounters with the great Trecento authors offer extraordinary opportunities for the reading, testing, and dismantling of time-honored terms such as ‘medieval,’ ‘Renaissance,’ and ‘humanism’” (1). Chaucer’s travels to Florence and Milan gave him direct experience not only of Petrarch’s nascent humanism but also of the crucial political and ideological conflict of fourteenth-century Italy, that between the liberty of the Florentine republic and the despotic rule of the Visconti in Milan. Wallace uses this fundamental split as a way of exploring the politics of Chaucer’s texts (that is, their “specific envisioning of possible social relations” [3]), and of challenging our general notion that “Renaissance” Italy of the fourteenth century has little to do with the “medieval” England of the same time.

Wallace begins with a detailed examination of the Florence and Milan that Chaucer knew. Through the methods of what he calls a “literary-historiographical criticism” (xvii), he explores the associational forms of the Florentine republic and their competition with the despotism of the Visconti regime in Milan and, paradoxically, with the nascent individualism that such despotism allowed to flourish, most notably in the case of Petrarch. Wallace finds a similar bifurcation of political possibilities in Chaucer’s England, exemplified by the pervasiveness of guilds on the one hand and of the increasingly despotic behavior of Richard II (especially following the death of Queen Anne in 1394) on the other, and he argues that Chaucer would have interpreted Boccaccio and Petrarch in terms of the political contexts in which the two writers flourished.

The rest of the book examines the ways in which Chaucer, primarily in the *Canterbury Tales* but also in some of his other works, particularly *The Legend of Good Women*, imagines and portrays social relations, veering between the associational polity exemplified by the *General Prologue*—a *felaweshipe* that brings together individuals from virtually every conceivable class and occupation, both male and female, and portrays their associating together as a voluntary act, without any external authority or sanction—to the despotic states portrayed in *The Knight’s Tale* and in the tales set in Lombardy. In each of these chapters he notes Boccaccian and Petrarchan subtexts and explores Chaucer’s relation to them as one way of understanding the political force of his poetry.

Due to space constraints and the density and richness of Wallace’s arguments, I will concentrate my attention on only one chapter, the tenth, in which Wallace reads the *Clerk’s Tale* against both Boccaccio’s original version of the tale in the *Decameron* and Petrarch’s Latin rewriting of it. The *Clerk’s Tale* belongs to the fourth fragment of the *Tales*, a group situated in “Lumbardye” and devoted to an exploration of tyrannical statecraft. Petrarch’s humanism and poetics, which Chaucer experienced as

part of Lombard political discourse, must be located within this political context. The chapter thus begins with Wallace's determined attempt to "rehistoricize Petrarch," a valuable effort (if an unfortunate way of phrasing it) given the common propensity to treat him as the first "Renaissance" or "modern" man, so essential to the development of the modern world that he seems to exist outside of his own historical moment in a timeless realm of his own making. And indeed, Petrarch repeatedly expressed the desire to escape from history, and this very desire allowed Petrarch to accept Visconti patronage and to serve the Visconti politically, to permit his fame to be employed in their project of tyrannical self-legitimation, a fact not lost on Petrarch's friends and admirers, Boccaccio in particular, who was outraged by Petrarch's place in the Milanese state.

The political differences between the two authors can be illustrated through their two versions of the Griselda story. Boccaccio's version is located as the final tale on the final day of storytelling in the *Decameron*, and presents a Walter who perverts "magnificence," the subject of the final day's tales. As Walter's faithful Christian subject and spouse, Griselda must absorb her lord and husband's tyrannical behavior until—through her steadfastness—she induces a change and his tyranny ends, to be replaced by a more equal and conjugal notion of marriage (and political rule), an ending that coincides with the return of Boccaccio's *brigata* to Florence, where the plague is finally coming to an end and republican order can be restored. Petrarch's translation of the tale into Latin seeks to remove the story from its original context and transform it into a timeless allegory of God's trying of human souls. But his elevation of Walter to Godlike status can also be read as a justification of the despotic rulers Petrarch served; we must all become Griseldas not only before God but before the Godlike rulers of the absolutist state. Indeed, Walter's behavior toward Griselda is analogous to Petrarch's humanist behavior to Boccaccio's tale, and Petrarch's humanism seems all too well suited to the service of political absolutism.

Chaucer's translation of the Griselda story into his own vernacular forms a critique of Petrarch by restoring "Griselda to the movement of history" (283) and by emphasizing once again the tyrannical nature of Walter's behavior. His tearing away of Griselda's children reminds the reader of Nero's violation of his mother's womb (discussed in the *Monk's Tale* at 7.2483–85) and associates Walter with that archetypal tyrant. Ultimately, Walter's tyranny excludes him from any human community, a situation that only changes when he restores his children to their mother. The mention of the Wife of Bath in the concluding frame of the tale points to another tale of female forbearance and eloquence that absorbs and eventually reverses male tyranny. Thus, whereas Petrarch views marriage as an absolutist institution with the husband dominating over his wife, Chau-

cer here and throughout the *Tales* imagines marriage—an illustration of Chaucerian polity—as an associational union, where dialogue is essential. Wallace ends the chapter by suggesting that the *Clerk's Tale* and the *Merchant's Tale* (also set in Lombardy) form a narrative pair analogous to the *Knight's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale*, in which the second tale parodistically recapitulates and humorously critiques the first. Thus, the “somber, claustrophobic, courtly societies of Theseus and Walter yield to the cheerful, mobile market economies of Alisoun and May” (294). These Chaucerian meditations on marriage and the political state, Wallace ultimately suggests, speak to the increasingly despotic behavior of Richard II in the 1390s.

I have tried to summarize Wallace's lengthy argument in this chapter as fairly as possible, and one aspect of it that may surprise the readers of this review is the space allocated to the Italian authors, a proportion that is generally characteristic of the entire book. *Chaucerian Polity* is a genuinely comparatist work, which treats Trecento Italian authors and history seriously on their own terms before moving on to examine Chaucer's use of them, and it should thus interest Italianists as well as comparatists and English scholars. His treatment of Chaucer is also most often compelling and perceptive, and one in which he treats many of the less commonly discussed tales (such as the *Monk's Tale*, the *Tale of Melibee*, and the *Cook's Tale*). At times, however, Wallace's desire to make an overarching argument regarding “Chaucerian polity” leads him into difficulty, especially when he tries to bring tales into his analysis that do not form the primary focus of a chapter, and he is thus forced to treat them briefly, as he does with the *Merchant's Tale* in chapter 10. I am intrigued by the notion that we should consider this tale against the *Clerk's*, but I cannot see how we can read it as an illustration of a “cheerful, mobile market” economy. His brief treatment of the tale mentions neither its pervasively bitter and caustic tone nor the crudity of Damyan's “wooing” of May and of the consummation scene, features that should undermine any sense we have of May as a positive heroine on the order of the wyf in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* or even analogous to Alisoun of the *Miller's Tale*.

Another questionable reading that Wallace makes toward the beginning of his study (in the second chapter), but which forms a centerpiece of his argument, concerns the Wife of Bath. Recalling that at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer had claimed that he could now take his place as the sixth of six great poets, the first five being classical *auctores*, Wallace links this “sixth of six *topos*” to Chaucer's mention of himself in the *General Prologue* (see l. 542–44), where Chaucer names himself as the sixth of six outsiders. Wallace then ties these two uses of the *topos* to the Wife of Bath, who has, of course, been married five times and is now waiting for her sixth husband. He contends that Chaucer intends to identify himself

as this sixth: "Within the broad parameters of a literary tradition that genders literary text as feminine and the operations done to texts—inventing, glossing, compiling—as masculine, the meeting of Chaucer and the Wife represent that union out of which the *Canterbury Tales* will come to fruition" (82). And while Wallace makes a convincing case for Chaucer's positive portrayal of female eloquence, and wifely eloquence in particular, it seems to me that this piling up of sixes represents far too tenuous a textual link on which to build a theory of sexual poetic production.

On the whole, however, the strengths of this book far outweigh its weaknesses. It takes the political dimensions of Chaucer's work seriously while avoiding the oversimplification of both history and literary text that all too often characterizes the work of the so-called "new historicists." His work opens up new ways of looking at both Chaucer and the Italian Trecento, and makes a compelling argument for Wallace's brand of "literary-historiographical criticism" as well as his broader claims for the artificiality and arbitrariness of our traditional terms and concepts of medieval and Renaissance.

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