Gender and Collaboration in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry: Philip and Mary Sidney, Aemilia Lanyer, Katherine Philips and Mary, Lady Chudleigh

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English in the Graduate School of Duke University

2019
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the collaborative poetry and poetics of four early modern women writers: Mary Sidney Herbert (1561-1621), Aemilia Lanyer (1569–1645), Katherine Philips (1631-1664) and Mary, Lady Chudleigh (1656 – 1710). It critically recovers women’s poetry and their different modes of literary collaboration at the same time as it explores their unique manuscript and print practices. The critical methods employed are primarily historicist and formal and founded on close reading of revision processes, literary source materials and formal poetics. Additionally, each chapter argues that the contexts of relationship and community are integral to understanding how women writers employed collaborative writing practices as well as the significance of collaboration as an alternative to competition. I conclude that, across the long seventeenth century, the intellectual social agency of women writers grows through their collaborative writing practices, evidenced by publication and print.
Dedication

To all women writers, collaborators, laborers, poets.
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Introduction

“Tis zealous love, love which hath never done, / Nor can enough in world of words unfold,” confesses Mary Sidney Herbert in “To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Philip Sidney,” a dedication poem in which Herbert simultaneously presents the Sidney psalms to her brother’s spirit and asks pardon for completing them. I first discovered Herbert’s poetry in J.C.A. Rathmell’s edition of the Sidney psalms. Rathmell divides the psalms between their respective sibling authors, allocating psalms 1-43 to Sidney and psalms 44-150 to Herbert. The first psalm, in Sidney’s half, Rathmell takes from the Woodford manuscript—a manuscript revised, edited and curated by Herbert. The Woodford manuscript’s psalm 1 is actually a collaboration between Sidney and Herbert—ten lines cut and six lines written and added by the Countess of Pembroke. This collaborative process is lost to the casual reader of Sidney’s psalm 1—smoothed over, ironed out; erased. Recovering the collaborative writing of Sidney and Herbert’s psalm—the manuscript history and the poetic revisions made—challenged me to consider other seventeenth-century poetry engaging collaborative writing and reading practices.

In hindsight, Herbert’s offering of “zealous love, love which hath never done” figures heavily in the work I chose for this project on collaborative poetry. Each poet whose work appears in my chapters—Mary Sidney Herbert, Aemilia Lanyer, Katherine Philips and Lady, Mary Chudleigh—situates her writing practice in specific
relationships and community. Not only do these women write for particular audiences, their poetic forms are often generated through the occasion of their relationships: Aemilia Lanyer’s dedication poems, Katherine Philips’ retreat poems and Mary, Lady Chudleigh’s dialogue poem “The Ladies Defence” arise out of naming and implicating others in the occasion of the work itself. In this way, and perhaps against the generous and captivating scholarship of Ilona Bell on Elizabethan courtship poetry, I see the poetry covered in this project as set against the voice of the lyric poem, centered on the “lyric I.” Rather, the poetry of Herbert, Lanyer, Philips and Chudleigh is explicitly and warmly interested in the other: the intreated, honored, invited and (sometimes) lovingly corrected reader. These are texts taking place in and through relationship and political interdependencies, texts whose generation and form is owed to such relationship and dependency. In their different ways, the poetry of each one of these women asserts collaboration rather than competition—or controversy.

My research examines a gendered company of women poets—a focus that inflects the nature of the manuscript and print collaboration taking place. Early modern print culture looked different for women writers—they often needed sacred or devotional reasons to write, or a classical text to translate. A narrative thread throughout my chapters is that Herbert, Lanyer, Philips and Chudleigh’s poetry does not merely resist, challenge or subvert male patriarchy networks, but that their poetries enact an engagement with them that creates literary and social spaces for women readers and
writers. Like their male publishing counterparts, these women poets first imaginatively created their readership and their patrons. Herbert addresses the spirit of her brother Philip, the figure of Queen Elizabeth I, and all psalm-singing, English persons. In Lanyer and Philips, such readers and patrons are ideally figured as women of good birth and courtly, political connections. Lady Chudleigh writes for women of serious intelligence (and a dissenting minister). The very forms of these poems—their audience and occasion—demonstrate how collaborative writing is a mode of community making and maintaining. From Herbert’s revision and composition made in “zealous love” to Lanyer’s language of the gift, from Philips’ poetry of friendship and retreat to Lady Chudleigh’s dialectic mode of “reciprocal esteem,” the work of these four women poets acknowledges social bonds and community and, in fact, sees these practices as essential to the writing of poetry itself.
Chapter 1. ‘Love which hath never done’: Gender, Revision and Collaboration in The Sidney Psalter

In writing their psalm verse paraphrases in the late sixteenth century, courtier siblings Philip and Mary Sidney carefully positioned themselves within a reformed, Huguenot tradition, drawing heavily on the metrical and formal variety of Marot and Beza’s French psalter, the 1560 Geneva Bible, and the psalm commentaries of John Calvin and Anthony Beza. As historical biographer and Sidney scholar Margaret Hannay argues, for the Sidneys to model their psalm compositions on the Genevan Psalter was an inherently political act: “The Sidneys’ use of these particular psalms constitutes not merely a logical choice of the most accurate translations and the most poetic model, but also a passionate involvement in the religious struggle symbolized by the Huguenot Psalms.” Yet, the psalms themselves, through their wide linguistic and formal variety, offered early modern translators and paraphrasers a supple, religious-poetic discourse—one open to a collaborative literary project between educated brother and sister. Hannay summarizes the psalm-writing scene in the Sidneys’ time:

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1 Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan’s prefer the technical term metaphrase, meaning a literal, word for word translation of a text, as opposed to a paraphrase, or restatement of a text. *Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, ed. Michael G. Brennan, Margaret P. Hannay, and Noel J. Kinnamon (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

2 Translated by mutual friends of the Sidneys, Arthur Golding and Anthony Gilby, respectively.

Psalm paraphrase was a genre that rivaled the Petrarchan lyric in sixteenth-century Europe...the choice of Hebrew, Latin, or vernacular versions of the Psalms could be a religious marker, and congregational singing of vernacular Psalms became a distinctively Protestant form of worship, but the Psalms themselves were embraced by all Jews, Catholics, and Protestants as a divinely inspired expression of human experience...Psalms were a sanctioned form of discourse for both men and women, for both Catholics and Protestants. The choice of a particular Psalm might make a strong political or personal statement, but the Psalms remained the words of David and the words of God. Using Psalm discourse was thus, in a sense, the ultimate strategy of indirection, whether the censorship to be countered was externalized state censorship or internalized gender restrictions.4

Together, as poets and Protestant intellectuals, the Sidneys entered into this vibrant discourse of sacred poetry, prose, and song,5 completing 150 psalm paraphrases that circulated widely in manuscript form among their social peers. At the writing of this article, at least eighteen manuscript copies have been found in archives—a number that continues to slowly, steadily grow, testifying to the popularity of the Sidney Psalter. The 1618 line engraving of Mary Sidney by Simon van de Passe (Figure 1) affirms the reputation of the Sidney psalter, depicting Mary holding “David’s Psalms” in her right hand as, at the engraving’s apex, a laurel wreath sits above a coronet resting on the Sidney pheon (the heraldic arrow head which Mary Sidney continued to use throughout

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4 Margaret P. Hannay, “‘So May I With the Psalmist Truly Say’: Early Modern Englishwomen’s Psalm Discourse,” in Write or Be Written, ed. Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt (Ashgate, 2001).
5 In discussing Mary Sidney’s dedicatory poem to Queen Elizabeth, “Euen Now That Care,” Hannay argues that the poem’s lines addressing its senders, “which once in two, now in one Subject goe, / The poorer left, the richer reft awaye,” indicate that Mary had worked with Philip on the Psalms since the beginning: “once there had been two authors; now there is only one,” Philip’s Phoenix, 90.
her married life, in wax seals and otherwise, as Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke⁶).

Figure 1: Simon de Passe, *Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*. 1618. Line engraving, 179 mm x 111 mm. The National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁶ Hannay: “Mary’s letter to the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury…dated 29 September 1604…still bears Mary Sidney’s wax seal, the Sidney pheon surmounted by a coronet and the Sidney crest, the porcupine; she did not adopt the Herbert lions or griffin, choosing instead to emphasize her identity as a Sidney,” *Philip’s Phoenix*, 182-3.
English literature also shows a powerful influence radiating from the *Sidney Psalter*, e.g. Sir John Harrington asks repeatedly for its print publication and sends copies to Lucy, Countess of Bedford; Aemilia Lanyer looks to Mary Sidney’s literary example as inspiration for her long poem *Salve Deus Rex Judæorum*; John Donne praises Philip and Mary Sidney’s work in his poem “Upon the Translation of the Psalms…”; and Herbert’s *The Temple* owes a debt of lyric to the Sidneys’ psalms’ variety of English verse forms.7

At the same time as a contemporary reader reconstructs the popularity of the Sidney psalter among English poets and writers, they should hold in equal balance and importance the fact that the Sidneys’ poetry found its inspiration and impetus in the scholarship of Geneva and the Reformation. In addition to the Sidneys’ central use of Marot and Beza’s French psalter, the company of reformed texts and influences the Sidneys reference creates a powerful and uniquely-inflected English, Protestant psalter. I want to consider what Hannay terms “the interlocked Huguenot and English Genevan communities”8 resonating throughout *the Sidney Psalter*. Not for themselves alone—scholars such as Margaret Hannay have done this work already—but in order to see how Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1 diverges from the language of other reformed texts on the psalms. Giving attention to the unique language of Sidney’s Psalm 1 can then illuminate


Mary Sidney’s revisions of her brother’s Psalm 1 and show the Sidney Psalter in its most true light: as a shared, collaborative work between two Protestant, poet siblings.

While scholars have written close readings of particular psalms considered as belonging more strictly to either Philip Sidney (Psalms 1-43) or Mary Sidney’s authorship (44-150), little has been done with Mary Sidney’s revisions of Philip’s psalms, other than to note that she more fully revised the partial final stanzas of seven of her brother’s psalms. Even the description of “partial,” however, reflects an editorial reading of Mary Sidney’s revisions, in that Philip Sidney’s psalms themselves were not partially written, but complete, i.e. Mary Sidney revised what to her looked, and sounded, partial. Before reading her stanza revisions of Philip Sidney’s psalms, then, we already know that Mary Sidney’s poetic practice, if not her poetic vision, differed from that of her brother Philip—the texts of the psalms themselves will show us how and why.

I have three reasons for focusing this chapter on Philip Sidney’s metaphrase of Psalm 1 and Mary Sidney’s revisions. First, I am interested in Philip Sidney’s reformation source material and how his version of Psalm 1 works with—and against—

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9 Cf. the writings of Gary Waller, Margaret Hannay, Michael Brennan, Rivkah Zim.
10 Cf. the brief “Major Revisions of Psalms 1-43” in The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Vol II, 358-61. Rathmell and Ringler also mention these seven revisions of psalms 1, 16, 22, 23, 26, 29, and 31.
11 At the end of this chapter I will consider Gavin Alexander’s reading of these specific revisions of Mary Sidney, in his text tracing Sidney’s influence, Writing After Sidney.
such sources, specifically as regards concepts of community and gender. My second reason for considering the Sidneys’ ultimately collaborative Psalm 1 is that out of the seven psalms with partial stanzas that Mary Sidney revised, her revisions of Psalm 1 are her most dramatic: she simultaneously cuts the most lines from (ten lines, comprising a full stanza as well as a “partial” end stanza) and writes the longest and most number of lines to complete Psalm 1. How do Mary’s revisions reflect upon Philip Sidney’s original psalm? To what purpose are her revisions, both in terms of poetic craft but also in terms of reading scripture, the Genevan gloss, and ultimately Sidney himself? Third, to Philip’s use of source texts and Mary’s substantial revision, I add the importance of Psalm 1 in the Hebrew and Christian book of Psalms. Generically speaking, can Psalm 1, as a psalm of “preface” and “doctrine,” offer us any clues to the inflection of Sidney’s Protestantism?13 Before turning to the Sidneys’ Psalm 1, I will begin with a brief overview of the textual positioning of Psalm 1 in the 1560 Geneva Bible.

The Geneva Bible’s “Argument” for The Psalmes of David encourages its reader to see in the Psalms of David “a moste precious treasure, wherein all things are conteined that apperteine to true felicitie,” and not in a limited, temporal sense but, “aswel in this

life present as in the life to come.” The Psalms contain the “brightness” of God’s majesty and the “schole of the same profession” as God’s incomprehensible wisdom. Importantly for the Sidneys’ work, the sacred poetry of the psalms also renders God’s beauty into tangible experience for the psalm reader: “If we wolde comprehend his inestimable boûtie, and approche nere thereunto, and fil your hands with that treasure, here we may haue a moste liuely, and comfortable taste therof.” The Geneva’s editors use of “most liuely” is directly echoed in Golding’s translation of Calvin’s Psalms commentary, where the psalms’ treasure is a compendium of priceless knowledge:

Not without cause am I wont to term this book the Anatomy of all the partes of the Soule, inasmuch as a man shall not find any affection in himself, wherof the Image appeareth not in this glasse. Yea rather, the holy Ghost hath here lyuely set out before our eyes, all the grieves, sorrowes, feares, doutes, hopes, cares, anguishes, and finally all the trublesome motions wherewith mennes minds are wont to be turmoyled.

The psalms offer their readers a “liuely” experience—living, animate—a collection of songs whereby all human affections appear in visible form, “set out before our eyes.” Where there are human affections in such abundance and liveliness, it is little wonder that the texts of the psalms contain many characters: speakers, singers, criers, praisers,

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15 Ibid.
16 “Lyuely” is an adjective also used in the Geneva’s “Argument” description of the Psalms.
petitioners. It is also little wonder that a psalm reader might have questions regarding human felicity, and their own felicity—which returns us to the Geneva’s “Argument.”

According to the Genevan editors, the “true felicity” found in the Psalms is available to all psalm readers, answerable to (rather than regardless of) their wealth or station: the rich man “may learn the true use of his riches” and the poor man “fynde ful contentation.” The psalms are equally helpful to individuals characterized by a specific emotion, temperament, or spiritual states:

He that wil reioyce, shal knowe the true ioe, and how to kepe measure therein. They that are afflicted and oppressed, shal se wherein standeth their comforte, and how they oght to praise God when he sendeth them deliuerance. The wicked and the persecuters of the children of God shal se how the hand of God is euer against them: and thogh he suffer them to prosper for a while, yet he brideleth them, in so muche as they can not touche an heer of ones head, except he permit them, and how in the end their destruction is most miserable. Briefly, here we haue moste presernt remedies against all tentations, and troubles of minde and conscience, so that being wel practisedit herein, we may be assured against all dangers in this life, liue in the true feare, and loue of God, and at length attein to that incorruptibile crowne of glorie, which is laid up for all them that loue the comming of our Lord Iesus Christ.18

In praising the Psalms as a text “wherein all things are conteined that apperteine to true felicitie,” a text equally instructive to persecuted innocents as well as to the “wicked and persecuters of the children of God,” the language of the Geneva’s “Argument” prepares Psalm 1 to be an immediate illustration and image of the entire book of Psalms—true felicity and the fate of the wicked are the subject of this first psalm. We also hear a

18 Calvin, The Psalms of David and Others, *.v2v.
repetition of the *Geneva’s* “Argument” for the book of Psalms in Anthony Gilby’s translation of Theodore Beza’s “Argument” for Psalm 1, where Gilby terms Psalm 1 “a declaration of mans chief felicitie.” One encounters multiple such shared expressions across the texts that the Sidneys worked with in writing their psalms. The *Geneva Bible*, Marot and Beza’s psalter, Anthony Gilby’s translation of Theodore Beza’s psalm “paraphrasis,” Arthur Golding’s translation of John Calvin’s psalm commentary, Sternhold and Hopkins’ psalter share terms and descriptors with each other— influencing each other, introducing shared concepts (e.g. “felicitie,” the “difference” of the godly and ungodly) that then take on different inflections within an author’s more particular commentary or creative work. Looking closely at the text and paratexts of *The Geneva Bible* reveals the intentionality with which Mary and Philip Sidney approached their work and writing. It also shows us how they entered into an already existing conversation on the psalms happening among texts of reformed scholarship.

Psalm 1 was also an important psalm in terms of early modern religious practice: it might have been the first of several morning prayers an early modern Protestant prayed, and repeated each month, whether they followed *The Book of Common Prayer’s*
psalter or simply read the psalms on their own.20 The Geneva’s headnote to Psalm 1 addresses the preface-quality—directive, map-like for the Christian believer—at the same time as it recognizes the possibility of different or multiple psalm editors “that gathered the Psalms into a boke.”21 The idea that the Psalms have been collated and arranged in specific order “into a boke” puts narrative pressure on Psalm 1, in that how one reads Psalm 1 directs how one reads the subsequent 149 Psalms.22 It also directs, and reflects, how one reads one’s life. As the Geneva’s “Argument” points out, the Psalms of David contain all that “apperteine” to true felicity, but it is Psalm 1, known by its first Latin words, “Beatus Vir,” that supplies the psalter reader with the directing image of an ideal reader of the law: the man (“vir”) whose life is bound to blessing (“beatus”). In offering readers an illustrative “preface” comprising a dramatic example of a psalm reader, Psalm 1 also offers reformed commentators an opportunity to read Psalm 1 as Christian doctrine.23 What makes the man of Psalm 1 to be called blessed? Each reformation writer has a different reply.

The Geneva’s headnote to Psalm 1 appears throughout the Sidneys’ source texts: both Sternhold and Hopkins’ *The Whole Book of Psalms* (1562) and Arthur Golding’s

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21 A scriptural precedent for Mary and Philip Sidneys’ collaborative psalter.

22 To quote the 1568 Bishop’s Bible: “The first psalm seemeth to be a preface to the residue.”

23 Anthony Gilby’s index to the *Psalmes of Dauid*, as well as the accompanying commentary and English paraphrase translated from Theodore Beza, echo Arthur Golding’s psalm commentary, with Psalm 1 listed under the first kind of Psalm: “Doctrine onelie, as Psalme,” to be compared with “Political, Ecclesiastical, or Domestical” doctrine, or the psalms containing both “Doctrine and Prophesie,” Gilby, a.5.5r.
translation of Calvin’s *The Psalms of David and others* (1571) repeat it with small variation:

> Whether it was Esdras, or anie other that gathered the Psalmes into a boke, it semeth he did set this Psalme first in maner of a preface, to exorte all godlie men to studie, and meditate the heauenlie wisdom. For the effect hereof is, That they be blessed, which giue them selues wholy all their life to the holy Scriptures. And that the wicked contemners of God, thogh they seme for a while happie, yet at length shal come to miserable destruction.\(^\text{24}\)

The presence of Calvin’s Genevan gloss among the Sidneys’ theological and liturgical psalm sources show the Sidneys working in a specific, focused vein of theological scholarship—Calvinism. At a minimum, Mary and Philip Sidney would have encountered the above headnote in several of their sources—such a repetition of a text affirming the uniqueness of Psalm 1 as preface and doctrine would not have been missed by them. Psalm 1’s emphasis on study and meditation, both exhortations included the *Geneva* headnote, are in fact the familiar activities of many reformation scholars such as the Sidneys closely associated with (e.g. Philippe de Mornay, Arthur Golding, Hugh Languet)—thus the *Geneva* headnote would have resonated with the Sidneys’ lives as well as the literary task of their psalter.

At first glance, the formal aspects of Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1 could not be more different from its English language metrical predecessors, such as Sternhold and

\(^{24}\) *The Geneva Bible* (1560), 235.
Hopkins' *The Whole Book of Psalms*. The difference between the ballad measure of Sternhold and Hopkins' and Sidney's Psalm 1's heroic stanza owes a great deal to line length—Sidney writes an iambic pentameter line that extends a few metrical feet past Sternhold and Hopkins' ballad meter. Although Sidney's heroic couplets keep his rhymes closer together (aabbcc) than the ballad meter (abcbdefe), the length of his lines supply greater metrical and sonic variety for his reader's ear, as do his two-syllable end-rhymes occurring at the center of each stanza (e.g. waiteth/seateth). The first stanza of each Psalm 1 illustrates their different effects. Sternhold and Hopkins:

The man is blest that hath not lent  
to wicked men his ear:  
Nor led his life as sinners do,  
nor sat in scorners’s chair,  
But in the law of God the Lord  
doth set his whole delight:  
And in that law doth exercise  
himself both day and night.  

And Sidney:

He blessed is, who neither loosely treads  
The straying stepps as wicked Counsel leades;  
Ne for bad mates in way of sinning waiteth,  
Nor yet himself with idle scorners seateth:

Although considered as a collection, the Sidney psalter and Sternhold and Hopkins could not be more different. As Hannibal Hamlin writes in *Psalm Culture and Early Modern Literature*, “Since they were also songs, especially songs intended in part for congregational singing in church, the ‘Sternhold and Hopkins’ psalms cannot be analyzed or judged on purely literary grounds. Poets and critics have long been puzzled and frustrated by the popularity of the *Whole Booke*, but the explanation of its lasting popularity undoubtedly depends to a great extent on the power of the tunes to which they were commonly sung.” 43.

But on God’s law his heart’s delight doth bind,  
Which night and day he calls to marking mind.27

The Sternhold and Hopkins’ version of Psalm 1, with its popular (and mnemonic) ballad meter and rhyme, is formally and practically meant as a substitute for “all ungodly Songes and Ballades, which tende only to the norishing of vyce, and corrupting of youth.”28 Sternhold and Hopkins sought to replace destructive delight, such as Arthur Golding mentions in his preface to Calvin’s psalm commentary,29 with the delight that teaches, such as Philip Sidney advocates in his Defense of Poetry.30 Such delight is not only “to be used of all sortes of people priuately for their solace & comfort,” as the first edition’s title page in 1562 recommends, but also “to be song in of all the people together, in all Churches, before and after Mornyng and Euening prayer: as also before & after the Sermons, and moreouer in private houses,”31 as the psalter’s 1566 edition amends and augments. The Sidney psalms are a different project, both formally as English literary psalms,32 and in terms of their scribal/manuscript publication among the

28 Sternhold and Hopkins, The Whole Booke of Psalms, 1562.
29 Golding, The Epistle Dedicatrie: “the maer of Panthers and Mermaides, astonne the senses with a deadly sweetness & work destruction by delighting.”
30 Philip Sidney, “A Defense of Poetry,” in Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. J. A. van Dorsten and Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 81: “delight, to move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger, and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved—which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed.”
31 Golding, 1697.
32 Work traced in Rivkah Zim’s English Metrical Psalms and Hannibal Hamlin’s Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature.
Sidney’s intellectual peers and companions. In contrast, Sternhold and Hopkins’ *Whole Booke of Psalms* underwent 600 editions in total, averaging a printing every fortnight between the late sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.33

Still, for the most part, the first stanza of Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1 appears to echo other psalm translations by focusing on the doctrinal aspect of Psalm 1: the centrality of the law and the necessity of delight that the blessed person has in it. We do see several diction choices, however, that alert us to the special work of Sidney’s psalm. Consider Sidney’s opening line: although the psalm immediately presents the blessed “he” as subject, the noun “man” is remarkably absent, unlike the language of every other English Bible translation and English metrical psalter contemporary with Sidney. From the first word of his psalm metaphrase, while using what would seem to be a specifically gendered pronoun to talk about the blessed person, Sidney’s psalm obscures the gender made more explicit by the blessed “man” occurring in all the English Bibles of the sixteenth century. Since the Sidney psalter would ultimately become one of the (arguably) greatest collaborative literary projects between a man and a woman in the late sixteenth century, this does not seem an insignificant quality of Sidney’s Psalm 1’s opening stanza. Consider, too, how the title page of Sternhold and Hopkins’ *The Whole Booke of Psalms* notes them to be “very mete” material “to be used of all sortes of people,”

and also Arthur Golding’s dedication to his psalm commentary when he notes that the things of sacred scripture “belong indifferently unto all men, of what estate, degree, sex, age, or calling so euer they be without exception.”

Sternhold and Hopkins’ and Golding’s recommendations were not abstractions, but about singing and reading practices—“all sortes of people” actually did sing and recite and pray these psalms in early modern England, in private as well as public settings. Perhaps the grammar of Sidney’s Psalm 1’s first line responds to this recognition of psalm practitioners as “all sortes of people.” We know from his dedication to The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia that his sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke, was his prime audience for (in the least) that work, so it is a distinct possibility. Perhaps, though, Sidney wanted to write a version of Psalm 1 more sonically (i.e. iambically) his own, rather than the more common variations of the opening line “blessed is the man” with its strong, double accentual beats. The fact remains, though, that despite Sidney using “man” and “men” in

34 Golding, The Epistle Dedicatourie, 1571.
35 E.g. Outside St. Paul’s Cross, after a sermon on March 17, 1560 (Hannay, 94; Beth Quitslund The Reformation in Rhyme, Chapter 5; Torrance Kirby’s Persuasion and Conversion, Chapter 4, “Public Preaching: Paul’s Cross and the Culture of Persuasion.”)
36 Writes Sidney in “To My Dear Lady and Sister The Countess of Pembroke,” The Old Arcadia: “Now it is done only for you, only to you…Your dear self can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done,” 3. It is an ideal time to remember, as Margaret Hannay writes in her beautiful biography of Mary Sidney, Philip’s Phoenix, that Mary had three central roles in the Sidney literary legend: writer, editor, and patron (Hannay, 60); Danielle Clarke: “The 1593 Arcadia…deliberately bifurcates and obfuscates the notion of singular authorship, elevating instead the dyadic sibling relationship and its collaborative underpinnings. Mary Sidney is positioned here as the ideal reader, as primary audience, and as having authority over the text,” 298-9.
subsequent stanzas, his Psalm 1 notably diverges from other psalm translations with its iambic opening line absent of “man”: “Hee blessed is who neither loosely treads.”

In terms of the poetic constants of Psalm 1 that appear in its paraphrases and metaphrases, one typically encounters the blessed person and the wicked counsel, sinners and scorners, delight and the law. But Philip Sidney continues to alter the psalm’s language, and instead of simply “sinners” found in the psalm’s first verse, we have “bad mates”—an especially early modern and Anglo-Saxon expression, but also a descriptor that links the blessed person in community with the sinners. These sinners are not abstract or unknown, but (at least potentially) people easily associated with, and made one’s “mates.” All the blessed person has to do is linger in the sinning “way” for them. And although the movement of the psalm’s opening images: walking, standing, and sitting with sinners and the ungodly, offers crisp physical progression, Sidney blurs the verbs of sinful participation, and instead substitutes “treads,” “leads,” “waiteth” and “seateth.” The effect is a poetic deepening of the life entangled in community with others, and reflects Golding/Calvin’s meditation on the difficulty of disentangling oneself from (or even avoiding) social engagement with “ungodly persons”:

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37 Ringle notes an interesting, related revision of Mary Sidney’s: Mary altered Philip’s Psalm 32, which opened “Blessed is the man,” to “Blessed is he” (Ringler, 504). Although Ringler notes simply that this revision demonstrates how some of Mary’s revisions function as “mechanically collating Sidney’s text with the prose Psalter,” we perhaps can read more into a revision that echoes Sidney’s own opening line to Psalm 1, “He blessed is, who neither loosely treads.”

38 Reminiscent of Golding’s translation of Calvin’s names for his enemies, to include: “trencherslaues” “licktrenchers” and “clawbacks,” Calvin, *The Psalms of David and Others*, **ij.1r.*
But clean contrarywise the Prophete teacheth here, that no man can be rightly minded to the feare & worshipping of God and to the study of his law, until he bee fully persuaded, that all ungodly men are wretched, & that all those shal be wrapped in the same mischief, that depart not a great way fro their company. But bycause it is a hard matter, in such wise to shunne the ungodly with who we are intermedled, as that we may be altogether estraged from them: the prophet to augment the force of his exhortation, useth a plentifulnesse of woords.\textsuperscript{39}

Here Golding/Calvin’s commentary approvingly notes the force of the psalmist’s repetition of physical images for withdrawing from the company of the ungodly—not walking in their counsel, standing in their way, or sitting in the seat of scorners. It justifies such poetic “augmentation” and “plentifulnesse of woords” by tying it to the difficulty of the task at hand: avoiding the ungodly with whom readers are “intermedled” in their daily life. But lest the reader grows comfortable with the idea of simply withdrawing from the ungodly to private devotions and the study of God’s law, the commentary turns the idea of shunning “noysome feloshippe” and bad example back upon the reader:

And yet the Prophete not only commandeth the faithful to draw backe fro the ungodly, least their infection shold atteint them But also his werning extendeth thus farre, that noman should be a scholemaster of ungolinesse to himselfe. For it mau fall out, that he which hath taken no blemish by euill example, may notwithstanding become like unto the euill by counterfeting of his owne accorde.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Calvin, \textit{The Psalms of David}, A.1r and A.2v.  
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., A.2v.
Severing, shunning, and withdrawing become difficult verbs when the object of separation is the reader’s own, internal and external, “evil example.” In Sidney’s paraphrase of Psalm 1, the verbs “treads,” “leads,” “waiteth” and “seateth,” grammatically depict the “loose treads” and “straying steps” of the life not well “framed,” even as the psalm’s opening stanza illustrates an ideal character who eschews such living for a life of blessing and piety.

Stanza two contains Philip Sidney’s most striking departure from both the scriptural and metrical paraphrases the Sidneys worked from when composing their psalms and reveals a debt to Aristotle’s Ethics. Historical biographer Alan Stewart (among others) draws attention to Aristotle as an educational and intellectual presence in his biography of Sidney, citing Philip’s possible early translations of Aristotle’s Rhetoric, his epistolary conversation with his tutor Hugh Languet about wanting to learn “enough Greek to read Aristotle in the original, particularly the Politics,” and Sidney’s letter of advice to his younger brother Robert (before beginning his own world tour under the supervision of Hugh Languet) in which he warmly recommends the Ethics. The second stanza of Sidney’s Psalm 1 reads:

He shall be lyke a freshly planted tree,  
To which sweet springs of waters neighbors be,

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43 Ibid., 109.  
44 Ibid., 47.  
45 The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney, Volume 2, 878.
Whose branches fail not timely fruit to nourish,
Nor withered leaf shall make ye fail to flourish.
So all the things whereto that man doth bend,
Shall prosper still, with well succeeding end. 46

Considering the different versions of community (and abstaining from community)
present in Golding’s translation of Calvin’s psalm commentary, as well as the
commentaries of Theodore Beza and Philippe Melanchthon, we should expect to find
some kind of response on Sidney’s behalf to the ideas of community formation set forth
in Psalm 1’s “doctrine.” Sidney does not disappoint: he gives the blessed person in
Psalm 1 neighbors. In a psalm where the blessed are categorically separated from the
wicked, where the life of delighting in the law stands in stark contrast to a life lived
outside the law, the presence of neighbors leaps off the page as a third, new category.
The neighbors are not simply defined as more of the blessed, but have a unique
relationship to the blessed person: they sustain him, they are the “sweet springs.”

Because Sidney was a young, cosmopolitan humanist steeped in translations, teachings
and interpretations of Aristotle, 47 from his personal letters to his Arcadias and his Defense
of Poetry, we cannot simply skip over such a conceptually rich word as “neighbors.”

Even if we were to think that “neighbors be” functions most strongly as a metaphor for
the sweet springs’ proximity to the tree, in a psalm about living the Christian life and in

study of Philip Sidney’s participation in the Protestant reformer Philippe Melanchthon’s biblicals humanism
as a “Phillipist.”
conjunction with a discussion of community and flourishing, it’s a task to ignore the
importance of the modifier “neighbors.” Isn’t that part of the role of neighbors—to
modify? Considered in an Aristotelian light, neighbors are inherently about our
relationships with and to each other and our dependencies on each other—a dependence
heightened poetically by Sidney naming the sweet springs as neighbors to the planted
tree. Sidney also emphasizes that the blessed person “shall be lyke a freshly planted
tree”—newly planted. This is an existential state unseen in the Geneva and Coverdale’s
respective Psalm 1, which both have “like a tree planted,” or the Sternhold and Hopkins’
psalter Psalm 1, which simply has a tree “that grows / near to the river’s side.” Sidney’s
“freshly planted tree” also suggests it is a young tree—there is no “freshly plante[d]” of
an old tree with developed roots. Sidney’s tree is young and moveable; a favorable plot,
one “to which sweet springs of waters neighbours be,” is a promise of its future
fruitfulness and health. In his Psalm 1’s diction, especially this second stanza, Sidney
draws on both the language of Aristotle and Calvin: we have neighbors, “flourishing,”
and “well succeeding end,” the language of Aristotle’s Ethics and Politics, alongside a
glimpse of Calvin’s theology of predestination and the secret care of providence as
translated by Golding: “God’s children flourishe continually, and are alwayes watred
with the secrete Grace of God, so as whatsoeuer happeneth to them is a furtheraunce to
their welfare.”\footnote{Calvin, The Psalms of David, A.ij.1r.} In Golding’s translation, the flourishing and the (secret) watering of
God’s children is an ever-present act, in and despite “whatsoever happeneth,” an inclusive phrase that makes theological room for all the vicariousness and suffering of human life to exist in the presence of God’s providence and care. In contrast with Golding/Calvin’s “secret Grace of God,” the refreshing waters in Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1 take on the particularized, and practical, social function of neighbors.

In Philip Sidney’s 1579 letter to his younger brother Robert, we see Sidney employ similar ethical language and concepts as he considers the work of his life. Sidney writes,

My good Brother...you thinke that my experience [of travelling] growes of the good thinges I haue learned, but I knowe the only experience I haue gotten is to finde howe much I might have learned, and howe muche indeed I haue myssed for want of hauinge directed my course to the right endes and by the right meanes. I thincke you haue redd Aristotles Ethickes, yf you haue you knowe it is the beginninge and foundation of all his worke, the good ende to whiche euerye man doth or ought to bende his smaleste and greatest actions. I am sure you haue imprinted in your mynde the scope and marke you meane by your paines to shoote at.”

Sidney does not simply reference a text (the Ethics) he thinks his brother should know but deploys Aristotelian terms to describe and measure the course of his life—"right ends" and “right means.” These are Sidney’s touchstone concepts as he seeks to advise his younger brother and direct his life experiences, goals, and desires regarding “the good ende.” The Oxford editors of Sidney’s Correspondence note that, “The Nichomachean

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49 The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney, Volume 2, 878.
Ethics were the principle classical text of moral education at European universities throughout the Renaissance, and had been made the basis of Protestant moral education by Melanchthon.” Although such a footnote is in need of clarification, especially in reference to Melanchthon’s treatment of philosophy in Loci Communes as well as his changing relationship to Aristotle, it does serve to link early modern Aristotelianism to the reformed community and the prevalence of biblical humanism among Melanchthon and his students. To be fluent in the language of the Ethics as well as the language of the Institutes was hardly to be an anomaly among Philip Sidney and his fellow reformed intellectuals. Rather, the blending of Aristotelian and theological concepts that we see in Sidney’s Psalm 1 act as a statement of community identification.

The tree’s flourishing and “well succeeding end” in Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1 happen in and despite contradictory visual indicators, such as withered leaves—an image of temporal vagaries and misfortunes that take us back to Calvin’s discussion of what blessedness looks like. “Nor withered leafe shall make yt faile to flourish,” reads line 10 of Sidney’s Psalm 1. The Geneva has “whose leafe shall not fade,” and the Coverdale “His leaf also shall not wither” while the Sternhold and Hopkins expands a

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50 The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney, Volume 2, 878, footnote 4.
52 Cf. Robert Stillman’s Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism for an in-depth study of Melanchthon, the Christian humanists known as the “Phillipists,” and Philip Sidney.
53 The Geneva Bible (1560), Psalm 1:3.
little with “Whose leaf shall never fade nor fall / but flourish still and stand.” The Coverdale’s “wither” and Sternhold and Hopkins’ “flourish” and also the sound of the Geneva’s “fade” (as “fail”) make it into Sidney’s version of Psalm 1. But if we can trace pieces of Sidney’s Psalm 1’s sound and image to these scriptural and English metrical sources, the imagination itself is all Sidney’s, and the image takes on a very different agency than what we see in the source psalms he read. In the Geneva, Coverdale and Sternhold and Hopkins, what the reader sees are green and healthy leaves, leaves not withering, not fading and not falling, but remaining on the tree, a picture of verdant health. But there is the poetic possibility that the withered leaves on Sidney’s “freshly planted tree” are actually present, and yet cannot affect the flourishing of the tree itself. “Nor withered leafe shall make yt faile to flourish” is an odd line, because withered leaves on a plant are typically a symptom rather than the cause of the plant’s poor health. Thus it seems possible that the withered leaves are able to be present without ultimately effecting the tree’s health, and why the stanza can conclude, “So all the things whereto that man doth bend / Shall prosper still, with well succeeding end.” Calvin, in his commentary on Psalm 1, discusses how all things contribute to the blessed person’s good, despite the visual disjunction of blessing. Someone can look happy, and be deeply guilty in their heart. Someone else can appear to be suffering, but be comforted with the

55 The Whole Booke of Psalms, 1562.
inward good of their conscience. Despite the withered leaves, the tree flourishes. Like Sidney’s tree, in Golding’s translation of Calvin the children of God “flourishe continually... whatsoever happeneth to them.” The central difference is that in Calvin’s commentary there is no room made for the concept of neighbors—a communal absence strengthened by his preface to his psalm commentary, where the supporting community of the children of God are marked by their failures in community rather than their nourishing qualities. “The secret Grace of God” in Golding’s translation functions as a theological placeholder for any nourishing facet of a person’s life—quite different from Sidney’s Psalm 1, where the waters take on the specific and concrete, nourishing dependency of neighbors.

The psalm’s final stanzas—stanza three and the abbreviated fourth—comprise the ten lines that Mary Sidney eliminated and revised. Not only can we now ask why Mary Sidney drastically revised the psalm’s ending, but we have distinct, formal replies provided by a comparison of Philip and Mary’s two versions. For readers interested in (especially collaborative) poetic process, this opportunity is uniquely exciting. Here we have Philip Sidney’s third full and fourth “partial” stanza:

Such blessings shall not wycked wretches see:
   But lyke vyle chaffe with wind shal scattred be.
For neither shall the men in sin delighted
   Consist, when they to highest doome are cited,
Ne yet shall suffred be a place to take,
   Wher godly men do their assembly make.

   For God doth know, and knowing doth approve
The trade of them, that just proceeding love;
But they that sinne, in sinfull breast do cherish;
The way they go shall be their way to perish.57

In Philip Sidney’s version, we see a blend of language from the Sidneys’ primary source materials: the Coverdale uses “scattered” as the verb blasting away the wicked chaff, and the Coverdale, Geneva, and Bishop’s Bible translations all close Psalm 1 on the verb “perish.”58 Furthermore, Philip Sidney draws on the Geneva’s gloss for his final stanza: “For God doth know, and knowing doth approve”—the Geneva’s editors gloss verse six with the comment, “Doeth approve and prosper, like as not to knowe, is to reproue and reiect.”59 Not knowing and rejection might in fact be a formal argument for why Sidney foreshortens the psalm’s fourth stanza: the stanza itself ends before its time and full line count, at the moment the wicked perish.

The rich Aristotelian language present in Philip Sidney’s second stanza, “neighbours,” “flourish,” “end,” however, seems to disappear into the Genevan rigor of his third and fourth stanzas. In fact, even when an opportunity to gloss “the way of the righteous” with the more Aristotelian language of “the just” arises, Sidney’s diction elides the ethical language of Aristotle as well as the English scriptural translations.

Whereas the Sternhold and Hopkins’ has “godly men”60 and Beza “good men,”61 Sidney

58 An argument for why Melanchthon chooses to reaffirm the comforting aspect of Psalm 1.
59 *The Geneva Bible* (1560), Psalm 1, 235.
60 Sternhold and Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, 1562.
writes the more circumspect lines, “For God doth know, and knowing doth approue / The trade of them that iust proceedings loue.” Sidney resists here the Psalm’s original parallelism, “For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked shal perish,” choosing instead “the trade” of those “that iust proceedings love” (note again the elision of “men” and “man”). But if Philip Sidney seems to be quieting the Aristotelian tenor of his Psalm 1, the etymology of the word “trade” shows otherwise. First, the poetic outcome of such a choice is a repetition and parallelism unique to Sidney’s own Psalm 1, found in the first line, “He blessed is who neither loosely treads.” “Trade” is etymologically related to “tread,” its first definition being “a path, course, way of life” followed by the definition, “the track or trail left by a person or animal; footprints.” There is yet some Aristotelian language of habit lurking in “trade,” however, inasmuch as it means “a way, course, or manner of living (sometimes more fully trade of life); a course of action; a mode of proceeding, a method” and more explicitly, “a regular or habitual course of action; a custom or habit.” Even more interesting are two examples the OED gives for this last usage of trade: Isabella to her brother Claudio in Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure, “Thy sinn’s not accidentall, but a

64 In fact the OED records an instance of it in Edmund Spenser’s 1590 Faerie Queene: “As Shepheardes curre, that…Hath tracted forth some salvage beastes trade,” ii. vi. 39.
Trade”66 and Mary Sidney’s Psalm 59: “Saue me from those / Who make a trade of cursed wrong.”67 These two textual examples employ “trade” as meaning a habitual and repetitious practice, both of them in reference to a practice of habitual sin.68 Perhaps these usages reveal why Philip Sidney qualifies the agents of such “trade” in a way that also defines the trade itself: “the trade of them that just proceedings loue.” These are those people who make a life practice of just proceedings, who love to perform justice. The final stanza’s closing lines affirm the habits and practices informing the contemplative end of Sidney’s first stanza: “But on God’s lawe his harte’s delight doth binde / Which, night and daie, he calls to marking minde.” This is a psalm about “doctrine” and good habits, just habits—“the trade of them that just proceedings loue.” Although it is nearly second nature for a twenty-first century reader of the Sidneys to bring the language of capitalism and market to such a word as “trade,” the language of habit and way of life is embedded in its sixteenth century usage. As we saw with Philip Sidney’s revision of “sinners” to “bad mates,” here the language of his Psalm is once again richer and more steeped in early modern life practices than the more abstract language of the English Bible translations. These were psalms both “Englished” and written especially for the

66 Ibid., a1616 Shakespeare Measure for Measure (1623) iii. i. 151.
67 Ibid., c1595 Countess of Pembroke Psalme lix. 5 in Coll. Wks. (1998) II. 63
68 And in Claudio’s case, the trade/profession of pimp. Thanks to Professor Sarah Beckwith for this reminder.
English, as Donne remarked when he wrote of Philip and Mary Sidney, “They shew us Ilanders our joy, our King / They tell us why, and teach us how to sing.”  

A closer look at Philip Sidney’s diction reveals, then, that his Psalm 1 retains its Aristotelian vocabulary at the same time as it retains its close association with Calvin’s theological commentary. There is a distinctly Calvin note to Sidney’s last two lines, “But they that sinne in sinnfull breast do cherish / The way they go shalbe their waie to perish.” In Golding’s translation of Calvin’s commentary on Psalm 1:6, “happynesse is one of the inwarde goodes of the conscience…but the ungodly are appointed to mischiefe, bycause they are giltie in their owne consciences.” To close his psalm with a couplet meditating upon inward goods and desires, as Calvin closes his own commentary on Psalm 1, seems more than coincidental. “Cherish” and “perish” also seem a distinctly Calvin-like closing rhyme regarding the life practices of ungodly folk, like Calvin’s example of robbers in the woods and caves, who seem to live out of sight of the judge.

If the abrupt and violent end of the wicked was poetic motivation for the shortened number of lines in Philip Sidney’s Psalm 1’s final stanza, Mary Sidney possibly saw such

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71 Calvin, Psalms, A.ii.2v.
72 Ibid.
impetus and sharpened it—for her stanza supplies six lines in place of Philip’s ten: fewer lines to the fate of the wicked and remarkably more succinct, concise poetry for her reader:

Not soe the wicked; Butt like chaff with wind
scatt’red, shall neither stay in Judgment find
nor with the uist, bee in their meetings placed:
for good mens waies by God are knowne & graced.
Butt who from Iustice sinnfully doe stray,
the way they goe, shall by their ruins way.\textsuperscript{73}

One immediately notices Mary’s deftness with enjambment: where Sidney had three enjambments in the space of ten lines, Mary has four in the space of six.\textsuperscript{74} The metrical effect is to capture the rupture of the wicked’s fortune in the breaking of the psalm’s lines. The midline caesuras also have the effect of counterpointing Mary’s end rhymes, so that the rhymes work against the metrical pauses and add to the chaotic syntax of the wicked, scattered like chaff: “Not soe the wicked; Butt like chaff with wind / scatt’red, shall neither stay in Judgment find / nor with the iust, bee in their meetings place.” From these lines of intentional disjunction, the fourth line of Mary’s stanza opens onto a full, unbroken line: “for good mens waies by God are knowne & graced.” “Known and graced,” in replacing Philip’s “and knowing doth approue,” looks at first glance to erase the language of the Geneva’s gloss on verse six from the psalm. This is both the case and not—Mary does remove this language, but she finds her replacement diction in the

\textsuperscript{73} William Ringler, \textit{The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney}, 271, fn xx.
\textsuperscript{74} Hannibal Hamlin, in \textit{Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature}, while discussing the stanzaic variety of the Mary Sidney’s psalms, opens his discussion of John Milton’s psalms translations by noting that “The most noted practitioner of enjambment in the period is Milton, whose \textit{Paradise Lost} famously excels in ‘the sense variously drawn out from one Verse to another,’” 139.
Geneva’s gloss on verse three: “God’s children are so moystened euer with his grace, that whatsoeuer cometh unto them, tendeth to their saluation.” I would argue that the ultimate effect is to move away from the specific language of the Genevan editors (e.g. “known” and “approve”) into a more expansive theological vocabulary of grace. Her heroic rhymes here are also ideally coupled: wind/find, placed/graced, and stray/way. Like Philip, her rhymes themselves contain a poetic homily.

But there is something else significant that Mary does in her revision of Psalm 1: she intensifies the strengths of Philip’s own language. Mary Sidney eliminates the word “trade” and the more circumspect, “them that iust proceedings loue,” instead tuning her revision to overt language of the just person and the virtue of justice. She clearly saw how Philip’s Psalm 1 inclined towards the language of Aristotelian virtue, and chose to augment and clarify the work of her brother’s original. She returns the comparison of the righteous and the wicked to the original parallelism of “ways,” while including the “good men” that appear in Gilby’s translation of Beza’s paraphrasis: “For God approoueth and aloweth the life of good men, but the life of the ungodlie leadeth them to perdition.” Mary’s lines read, “For good mens waies by God are knowne and graced / Butt who from Justice sinnfully doe stray / The way they goe, shall be their ruins way.” I think an argument resides here that Mary Sidney shared in Philip’s poetic vision: she

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75 The Geneva Bible (1560), Psalm 1, 235.
76 Beza, The Psalmes of David, 1581.
saw the language of virtue that he translated into his Psalm 1, and she brings that language to the foreground in her revisions of the psalm’s close, even while working attentively with the Geneva translation, gloss and Beza’s commentary.

I began this chapter by commenting on the wealth of Huguenot and reformed resources that the Sidneys employed in their psalm verse paraphrases. But Philip Sidney’s innovation of “sweet springs that neighbors be” and his inclusion of Aristotelian language of ends, flourishing, and “trade” of those “that just proceedings love” function powerfully in a psalm that might otherwise be read as an illustration of Calvin’s doctrines of predestination and providence. The Sidneys certainly knew Calvin’s work and psalm commentary through their relationship with his translator Arthur Golding, and yet we see Philip Sidney writing a psalm that blends Aristotle’s language of virtue and reformed commentaries of Psalm 1. Additionally, we see Mary Sidney honoring the language of virtue and justice residing in Philip’s original version of Psalm 1 as she revises. If, as Anne Lake Prescott comments, “Sidney knew how much Europe needed harmonizing,” Mary Sidney saw the harmonizing work taking place in her brother’s Psalm 1, and amplified, rather than erased, its Aristotelian-inclined voice. We have some reason, then, to be persuaded by one theory of why the Sidney Psalter remained unprinted—as Gavin Alexander writes: “because they were not the safe and

simple translations readers were used to seeing in print, and because they needed to
tread a careful line between public and private devotional conventions.”

Gavin Alexander is one of the few Sidney scholars to discuss Philip Sidney’s
half-stanza endings, noting the similarity to form found in Marot and Beza’s psalms. He
writes of the “closural effect” of such endings, and seems not a little piqued that Mary
Sidney chose to revise them, writing, “it is an extraordinary and significant fact that the
Countess of Pembroke identified each such case and worked hard to regularize them.”
Although he makes this comment referring to Mary Sidney’s revision of Psalm 23, one
senses Alexander feels this way about all her revisions of Philip’s half-stanzas. He
writes, “Mary Sidney does not understand that asymmetry can give greater poetic
closure. The condensation awkwardly conveys the feeling that meaning and not only
form has been swallowed up…Pembroke’s cup does not run over. By removing what
she sees as an abruptness of poetic form she causes abruptness of meaning; addition to
Sidney is here subtraction from him.” I would argue that Psalm 1 shows Mary Sidney’s
revisions to be otherwise, to be in the spirit of collaboration rather than domination,

78 Gavin Alexander, Writing After Sidney, 85. See also Debra Rienstra and Noel Kinnamon’s “(Re)visioning the Sacred Text” and Kinnamon’s “The Circulation of the Sidney Psalter” and Michael Brennan’s “The Queen’s Proposed Visit to Wilton House in 1599 and the ‘Sidney Psalms,” which considers that Mary Sidney kept the psalms in manuscript circulation since she had a presentation copy prepared for Elizabeth I for the Queen’s visit which never did take place, perhaps due to the ill health of her husband William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke, who died in 1601.
79 Ibid., 92.
80 Alexander, Writing After Sidney, 93-4.
cooperation rather than competition. Harold Love, in *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, offers us this reminder,

> While the later versions [of the Sidney psalms] are certainly tauter and more polished than the earlier ones, much variation is of the gratuitous kind that could just as well be unmade or further varied. It is a mistake in such cases to assume that revision is the consequence of a Platonic impulse towards the perfected, unalterable text. No doubt in some cases it was, but one should never overlook Ong’s insight that this ideal is itself a function of print culture. The model for such revision may well be closer to that of a musician playing variations on a favourite theme.\(^{81}\)

I find this not only helpful to remember when thinking about how a poet revises a poem, and how collaborative writing can function, but also as gentle criticism of Alexander’s reading of Mary Sidney’s revisions as appended to the embellished, privately commissioned Penshurst manuscript. Because Mary Sidney’s final revisions of Philip’s psalms were added last, “three…added in after gilding; a fourth…pasted in even later,” Alexander concludes that “She places herself before him; she inverts chronology, and influence. And by having his poems head to her endings Sidney is almost forgotten as their originator: she becomes their aim.”\(^{82}\) I do not want to suggest here that Mary Sidney was anything less than brilliant when it came to appending herself to Philip’s literary, historical legacy, as Margaret Hannay compelling demonstrates in her biography *Philip’s Phoenix*. But I do want to say something about the joy of revision as well as note a concerning strain of masculinist criticism found in

\(^{82}\) Ibid., 94.
scholarship on Mary Sidney. A discussion of joy and revision might seem out of place, but it returns us to Love’s comment on scribal revision and variation as “closer to that of a musician playing variations on a favourite theme.” Write the editors of The Selected Works, “These metrical paraphrases fully engaged Pembroke as a Christian, as a scholar, and as a poet. The work was a joy for her.” The relationships of the eighteen Sidney Psalter manuscripts currently extant are complex because Mary not only revised her brother’s psalms but extensively revised her own, often writing multiple, completely new metaphrases of one Psalm. She kept a master copy manuscript in her London residence and another at her country estate in Wilton, and ferried her revisions between the two for at least 14 years. Mary Sidney’ revisions were intricately bound up in practices of devotion, poetic craft, and her articulation of her self in a form of life writing. Hannay, Kinnamon and Brennan note how psalm writing became “a foundational discourse for early modern women…women could use those words to undertake a teaching role not unlike that of published sermons.” It seems wrong, then, to approach Mary Sidney’s revisions of Philip’s psalms as though she interferes with poems already set as verbal artifacts—I hope close-reading Psalm 1 has shown the care and attention she brought to Philip’s vision for Psalm 1 and how she strengthens and intensifies the language already present in Philip’s psalm.

83 The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, 184.
84 Between Sidney’s death in 1586 and her husband the Earle of Pembroke’s death in 1601.
85 “To the Angel Spirit,” The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, 182.
One voice not to be elided from a discussion of Mary Sidney’s revisions of Philip’s psalms is Mary’s own voice, sounding clearly in her dedication poem, “To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney.” A major tension of Mary’s dedication poem rests in the unfinished/finished state of both her brother’s life and his creative work, as well as the paradox that “To the Angel Spirit” gives Mary back her brother even as she acknowledges his death and writes his death wounds into her poem. The variant version of “To the Angel Spirit,” from Samuel Daniel’s Works (1623), contains the lines “But ah, wide festered wounds that never shall / Nor must be closed, unto fresh bleeding fall: / Ah, memory, what needs this new arrest?” The Tixall manuscript version, the longer of the two, reads “Deep wounds enlarged, long festered in their gall, / Fresh bleeding smart; not eye—but heart—tears fall. / Ah, memory, what needs this new arrest?” That her second version revisits and extends these lines meditating on her brother’s painful death makes the poem itself “fresh bleeding smart.” Philip’s wound opens in the poem and will not, cannot, be closed—the memory of which makes “new arrest” on the writer and speaker. Against this remembrance of Philip’s suffering that then triggers Mary’s (a affective relationship often present in contemplative poetry on the suffering of Christ), Mary Sidney presents the psalms of David:

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86 Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix, 88-90.
87 “To the Angel Spirit,” The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, 172, 19-21.
88 Ibid.
89 From musket-shot caused gangrene in his thigh from which he suffered forty days before death.
Yet here behold (oh, wert thou to behold!)
This finished now, thy matchless Muse begun,
The rest but pieced, as left by thee undone.
Pardon (O blest soul) presumption too, too bold,
If love and zeal such error ill become:
’Tis zealous love, love which hath never done,
Nor can enough in world of words unfold.90

If Philip Sidney can be figured as the pagan, mythical phoenix,91 uniquely immortal, here he becomes something greater: a blessed soul, a saint glorified among a community of saints—an “Angel Spirit.” As his journey to spiritual community is complete, Mary returns to him the psalms as complete, as “finished now,” as though the psalms themselves are a stay against that wound that opens up each time Mary contemplates her brother’s unfinished life and work. The poem offers a powerful invocation of the act of revision and composition through which Mary Sidney remembers her brother: “’Tis zealous love, love which hath never done, / Nor can enough in world of words unfold.” Harold Love’s analogy of musical variation seems particularly apt here—only the music is love, and love is the poetic revision that is never done. It is the counterbalance to a life that is not complete, to a death that, spectre-like, appears “fresh bleeding smart” to beloved memory. To call Mary Sidney an “inveterate tinkerer”92 is to miss the love

90 “To the Angel Spirit,” The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, 168, 22-8.
91 Ibid., 169, 38.
92 Originally William Ringler’s epithet for Mary Sidney (in The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, 502) it is repeated by many critics such as Gary Waller, Harold Love, J.C.A Rathmell, et al. Ringler’s fuller comment on Mary’s revision reads like an indictment of poetic revision itself: “Evidently the Countess of Pembroke was an inveterate tinkerer who found it difficult to make up her mind. In composing her first draft she groped for words and made many false starts…even after the Countess had completed her first draft, she returned to her work time and again and made numerous further changes.”
bound into her acts of poetic revision and composition that she shares with Philip in the
project of the Sidney Psalter. She revises in the void left by her brother’s body and
“Angel Spirit,” but the language of mourning, suffering, wounds and blood throughout
“To the Angel Spirit” link Philip Sidney’s death and Mary’s response to a Christological
identification of passion and human loss. Philip’s presence is invoked by Mary’s psalm
writing and “Angel Spirit.” Several poets and writers who relied on Mary Sidney’s
patronage expressed their praise to her and respect for her grief for Sidney by using the
tropes of weeping Mary Magdalene and the passion of Mary. In “To the Angel Spirit,”
we have an image of such passion:

Oh, when to this account, this cast-up sum,
This reckoning made, this audit of my woe,
I call my thoughts, whence so strange passions flow,
How works my heart, my senses stricken dumb,
That would thee more than ever heart could show,
And all too short!94

In a poem addressing Philip Sidney as a Protestant saint, adored through “zealous” love,
one feels certain that to read the above lines as an admission of incest’s “strange
passions,” as Gary Waller does, falls short of the poem’s experience of religious passion
and suffering.95 As Danielle Clarke notes, part of the difficulty of reception for Mary
Sidney’s poetry today is that “We read too little poetry. We certainly read too little

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93 E.g. Nicolas Breton, “The Countesse of Penbrooke’s Passion” and “A Diuine Poeme, diuided into two
Partes: The Rauisht Soule, and the Blessed Weeper” (Mary Magdalene is the blessed weeper) Hannay 137-8.
See Hannay 135-140 for more devotional works dedicated to Mary Sidney.
94 “To the Angel Spirit,” The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, 169, 43-8.
95 Gary Waller, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, 283.
religious poetry…most modern readers have to engage in an artificial process of contextual reconstruction for the nuances and verbal music of the poems to bridge the distances created by our secular and individual bias.”96 This brings us to Mary Sidney’s Magdalene moment in “To the Angel Spirit,” when she realizes she is looking for the living among the dead: “But ah, such loss!” her poem exclaims, “Hath this world aught / Can equal it, or which like grievance brought?” She finds her answer in the reply that Sidney’s name, “ever praised,” lives on, and then recognizes that the completed psalms of David participate in this praise,

Yet there will live thy ever praised name,

To which these dearest off’ring of my heart,
   Dissolved to ink while pen’s impressions move
   The bleeding veins of never dying love,
I render here: these wounding lines of smart,
   Sad characters indeed of simple love,
   Not art nor skill which abler wits do prove,
Of my full soul receive the meanest part,
Receive these hymns, these obsequies receive97

The image of blending lines of ink merge with the “bleeding veins of never-dying love” so that ink and blood become the same offering: “these dearest off’ring of my heart.”

The mixed metaphor of ink and blood combines Sidney’s past death and Mary’s present love, the finished Psalms of David and the ultimately unfinished (because undying) work

97 “To the Angel Spirit,” The Selected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, 170-1, 78-85.
of love, ever in revision. “To the Angel Spirit” thus shows the readers of the Sidney psalter the spirit in which to read this collection of poetry. It is a spirit of loving collaboration and memorial, demonstrable by way of Mary Sidney’s revisions of Philip’s Psalm 1, which reveal her attention and care like stigmata: “these wounding lines of smart.” Should her reader be tempted to forget the blending of her ink and blood with Philip’s, Mary Sidney signs her poem, “By the sister of that incomparable Sidney.”

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96 Ibid., 171.
Chapter 2. ‘Your Excellence can Grace both It and Mee’: Defect, Collaboration and Gift in Aemilia Lanyer’s Dedication Poems

Barbara Lewalski observed, Aemilia Lanyer’s Salve Deus Rex Judæorum (1611), “promises, somewhat misleadingly, a collection of religious poetry, a genre thought appropriate for women writers.”

What we encounter in the collection instead are “several kinds of poems,” to include Lanyer’s nine dedication poems to women which, Lewalski argues, “re-write the institution of patronage in female terms, transforming the relationships assumed in the male patronage system into an ideal community.”

Lanyer’s dedication poems to an audience of aristocratic women are as surprising a formation in early modern publishing as they are rare, and Salve Deus is a unique composition of texts in terms of both the community it creates and for whom it speaks.

Foremost among the women Lanyer selects as her addressees are Queen Anne of Denmark, The Countess of Cumberland Margaret Clifford, and Mary Sidney Herbert. In this chapter, I consider how the collaborative labor of women readers, invited explicitly by Lanyer in her dedication poems, and Lanyer’s language of gift exchange affirm her

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100 Ibid.
101 More on this later regarding literacy and women reading aloud and in community.
authority as a woman poet “writing of divinest things” by centering her work in a functioning gift economy of women. While scholars have examined the concept of spiritual or priestly gifts in Lanyer’s Salve Deus as it regards authority and gender, my chapter primarily considers the poem as gift in Lanyer’s first dedication poem to Queen Anne of Denmark—a queen whose presence inversely marks the death and absence of Queen Elizabeth I as much as it does the socio-political reality of a male-centric Jacobean court.

I would like to begin considering the function of Lanyer’s dedication poems by orienting my reader towards the collaborative nature of gift-exchange. In The Power of Gifts, Felicity Heal brings anthropological theories of gift to her study of gift exchange in early modern England, drawing on Marcel Mauss’s study The Gift to discuss the spirit of the gift and its opposition to the concept of the commodity. Heal notes, “The spirit of the gift had to be, or appear to be, disinterested and free, though in fact it was part of a three-fold obligation: to give, to receive, and to repay. In archaic societies Mauss saw the potlatch as crucial evidence of this cycle of giving, for, as he remarks of the final stage of repayment: ‘the obligation of worthy return is imperative. Face is lost forever if it is not made…” Social cohesion and social bond are the conceptual and practical territories of gifts and gift-exchange, and Heal notes how Mauss’s circulation of gifts has been

103 Aemilia Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 4.
104 Cf. Micheline White’s “A Women with Saint Peter’s Keys?: Aemilia Lanyer’s Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611) and the Priestly Gifts of Women.”
paralleled with the image of the Three Graces—a fittingly gendered and divine metaphor for discussing the exchange of gifts taking place among women in Aemilia Lanyer’s poetry. Since Lanyer’s poetry is an ideal textual site for discussions of early modern female patronage networks, gifts and gift-exchange theories help return contemporary readers of Lanyer to pre-capitalistic language of social bond, liberality, and friendship.¹⁰⁷

Early modern women, considered singly or as a monolithic gender—were often framed by male early modern writers in terms of passivity, the private/domestic sphere, and a rhetoric of “defect.” One example: although Sir Philip Sidney found a ready audience for his Old Arcadia and Psalms in his sister Mary Sidney Herbert (and her female peers, in the case of the Arcadia’s authorial asides to “Ladies”), in his Defense of Poetry, Sidney describes the ideal reader as male and possessing masculine virtues. In Sidney’s summary of the third objection leveled at poetry by critics, he employs strictly female-gendered metaphors to describe the “abuses” of poetry:

…[poetry] is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires; with a siren’s sweetness drawing the mind to the serpent’s tail of sinful fancies…how, both in other nations and in ours, before poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike liberty, and not lulled asleep in shady idleness with poets’ pastimes.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ A social support system based on multiple (and sometimes differing) sets of expectations. Cf. Ann Margaret Lange’s Writing the Way Out.
One could go the critical route of attributing these gendered images of poetry’s abuses as nurse, siren, and serpent (recalling Eve’s role in the garden) to the critics of poetry and not to Sidney himself. I suggest instead that Sidney’s readers look to his response to the fourth and greatest objection to poetry: that Plato banishes the poets from the republic. Sidney proposes,

Again, a man might ask out of what commonwealth Plato did banish [the poets]: in sooth, thence where he himself alloweth community of women—so as belike this banishment grew not for effeminate wantonness, since little should poetical sonnets be hurtful when a man might have what woman he listed.109

Sidney’s rhetorical move here casts doubt on the virtue of the composition of Plato’s republic—the fact that it contains “a community of women.” Quite openly, Sidney defends a community of poets by accusing a community of women for the defect of “effiminate wantonness” they inspire in the republic. Sidney’s chiding response raises pertinent questions for the poetry of Aemilia Lanyer, a poetry expressly concerned with acknowledging and creating a community of reading, writing women—a community of women that overlaps with the community of poets. Is the community of women in Lanyer’s dedicatory poems subject to the same defects that Sidney attributes to the community of women in Plato’s republic? Doesn’t a community of women create, in the very least, the opportunity for “effeminate wantonness”? If one wants immediately to remark that Sidney’s criticism of the republic involves a mixing of male and female

109 Ibid., 107.
communities, and that the *mixing* of communities constitutes the real weakness and *not* women considered by themselves, I respond with two reminders: 1) Sidney’s default reader (and citizen of the republic) is male and virtuous, while the default gender reserved for the recitation of poetry’s potential abuses is feminized, and 2) Lanyer’s dedicatory poem to Queen Anne of Denmark is precisely concerned with the gendered values Sidney’s *Defense* advocates. However, I argue that Lanyer’s presentation and performance of the defective textual and authorial presence of a woman is simultaneously remedied by her presentation and performance of a community of women.

Why then go to Sidney’s *Defense*? Bringing Sidney’s *Defense* alongside Lanyer’s poetry allows us to glimpse a gendered shift from a confrontational or competitive model to a collaborative and cooperative one. Jaqueline Pearson offers us this reconstruction of early modern gender dynamics when it comes to reading and writing:

Women read and write texts: in addition, women *are* texts to be read. This is a common, and usually a repressive, concept in male writing of the period, in which a woman is figured as a book to be read or a *tabula rasa* to be written on by men. So Desdemona is a “fair paper, this most goodly book” on which Cassio has allegedly written “whore,” Sidney’s Stella is a “fair text” into which the poet will “ pry,” Alexander Craig’s *Erantina* can be “read” like a “sheet / Of paper fair,” and in Shakespeare’s *The Rape of Lucrece* women are “books” in which their faults can be read, texts so malleable that women cannot be held the “authors” of their own actions, but only the paper on which these are written by men. Lanier, though, reclaims these oppressive images of women as books. Men “boast of Knowledge,” although this was originally obtained by Adam “From Eves faire hand, as from a learned Booke.” The text/woman is no longer passive, unable even to author her self, but is the active generatrix of male
As Pearson demonstrates in her chapter, Lanyer’s poetry is open-eyed and aware of commonplace, misogynist early modern descriptions of women’s bodies and women’s texts. I find the language of defect in Sidney’s *Defense* essential to bring to a discussion of Lanyer’s language of womanly gift-exchange, for the *Defense* allows us to see how the gifts being offered and exchanged in Lanyer’s text are a reply to charges laid against women, and respond to a lack early modern women were told they possessed by theological and social necessity. Lanyer’s poetry acknowledge the physical and moral lack put to women’s persons, and then uses that criticism to step into an unfilled space and create a gendered community and gendered grace.

The first dedicatory poem to appear in *Salve Deus* is “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” or Queen Anne of Denmark, married to James I of England. The title page to *Salve Deus* notes that it is “Written by Mistris Æmilia Lanyer, Wife to Captaine Alfonso Lanyer Servant to the Kings Majestie.” This is the only occasion a man’s name appears on the manuscript, acting as an initially-authorizing citation for Aemilia Lanyer’s publication and authorship. The specific nature of Alfonso Lanyer’s


service to Queen Anne was as an occasional court musician. Ann Margaret Lange argues that in writing her dedication to Queen Anne, Lanyer “calculated to appeal to a woman who was endeavoring to establish her own dignity and power in the face of her husband’s patriarchal ideals and homosexual leanings, the latter of which replaced her in his life with a series of male ‘favorites.’” Continuing this reading of royal slighting within a marriage, Lange reads an extra significance in Lanyer dedicating her defense of Eve to Queen Anne within the dedication poem. Theresa DiPasquale, with a slight critical shift, also reads Lanyer writing, “in self-conscious reaction to Stuart court culture as she sees it—that is, in condemnation of a society that centers itself upon praise of a male monarch and relegates women to ancillary and subservient roles.”113 That Lanyer’s petition to Queen Anne’s royal patronage potentially doubles as a critique of James I’s court’s culture allows us to see how Lanyer’s first dedicatory poem might have posed a high stakes challenge for the entreatiing poet.

Leeds Barroll, in “Looking for Patrons,” addresses the race and class gulf existing between Lanyer and her potential patrons. Barroll describes Lanyer’s tenuous position in London Society:

Lanyer was obviously no male—no Samuel Daniel or Ben Johnson: she enjoyed neither the gendered privilege of wandering London alone without thereby being called “whore,” nor the social background of associations at public school or university that might be parlayed into

112 Ann Margaret Lange, Writing the Way Out, 52.
access to male or female nobles who sponsored learning. Rather, from what seems to be known about her, Lanyer was, in 1610, a female Londoner, probably a Jew, married to a gentile instrumentalist associated with the production of royal music...she was a Londoner living perhaps in the middle of the income scale of those citizens who owned houses...She thus seems, significantly, as far from the nobility of the persons invoked in her volume as from the moon.\textsuperscript{114}

In his article, Barroll discusses the economic exigencies of Lanyer’s life and her husband Alfonso’s connections. His historical analysis assesses the social challenges Lanyer faced in writing and aims to demonstrate the heights to which Lanyer’s poetry, and patronage, aspire. In his conclusion, Barroll reminds contemporary readers that, “As a female poet with a nonaristocratic social and educational background Aemilia Lanyer was seriously handicapped as a player in the Court game, yet one could argue that these are the very factors that make her Court failures understandable, and her presumed relationships with Kent, Cumberland, Hunsdon, and perhaps other nobles, so remarkable.”\textsuperscript{115} Here Barroll references the fact that the English aristocracy experienced a dramatic change during Lanyer’s lifetime, and the court of Elizabeth I was now the court of James I. Whereas Mary Sidney could dedicate a poem to both England’s Queen and sovereign,\textsuperscript{116} Lanyer chooses to write a dedication to the Queen, Anne of Denmark, and not the sovereign, James I. Barroll’s article is an interesting one, because it views Lanyer as


\textsuperscript{115} Barroll, 42.

\textsuperscript{116} A task with unique difficulties, as Hannay discusses in her article, “‘Doo What Men May Sing’: Mary Sidney and the Tradition of Admonitory Dedication,” \textit{Silent But for the Word}, 1985.
operating on a gendered and “handicapped” (to acknowledge the ableist language Barroll employs) level of existence. Again we have the language of defect and lack applied to women, Lanyer specifically—but this time by a 20th century scholar. Barroll’s criticism continues to align Lanyer with a competitive and confrontational paradigm of writing and publication—a paradigm out of which Jaqueline Pearson’s writing (among others) helps us to lift Lanyer’s work. Lanyer is not, after all, competing with Queen Anne of Denmark, but inviting the queen into her poetry as a fellow reader and woman.

The first stanza of Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne wastes no time in broaching its most important and pressing subjects:

Renowned Empresse, and great Britaines Queene,  
Most gratious Mother of succeeding Kings;  
Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene,  
A Womans writing of divinest things:  
Reade it faire Queene, though it defective be,  
Your excellency can grace both It and Me.117

Lanyer elevates Queen Anne to Empress, describes royal genealogy in matrilineal terms, and offers the queen a wonder: “a Womans writing of divinest things.” This line, appearing quickly (almost breathlessly) at the beginning of Salve Deus’s first dedicatory poem, enacts all the gendered emphasis Lanyer intends. It also affirms DiPasquale’s view of Lanyer’s anti-Jacobean interests in women and their vocations, and Lange’s discussion of Queen Anne’s interests in arts patronage and court culture. As Barroll and

117 Lanyer, “To the Queene’s most Excellent Majestie,” 1-5.
Lange discuss, the scene at James I’s court was one of male writers and male favorites, and Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne is quick to center her gender as materially important to the work at hand: writing of divinest things. As Micheline White discusses in “A Woman With Saint Peter’s Keys,” and DiPasquale in Refiguring the Sacred Feminine, women as the inheritors of the one true Church’s role is an explicit poetic theme throughout Lanyer’s poetry—and indeed, Lanyer’s first line of defense is that she is a woman writing a text centered on sacred subject matter. Hence her argument for following in the footsteps of Mary Sidney Herbert, collaborative author of the Sidney Psalms.

Lanyer’s second line of defense is her rhetorical move to immediately admit defectiveness. Lanyer steals the wind from her potential, male critics’ sails (or female, considering the societal misogyny directed towards female authors), and by admitting defect, makes room for the queen’s presence and participation in the text. Lanyer eagerly includes the Queen in the process of the poem, and ends her first stanza with the words, “Read it faire Queene, though it defective be / Your excellence can grace both It and Me.” Lanyer’s invitation, offered as grammatical imperative to the queen to both “read” and “grace” her poem entails an expectation, if not an outright bid, for the queen’s patronage. That is certainty one way to view the work of Lanyer’s poem. I am more persuaded by Pearson’s line of argument—that what Lanyer’s readers experience in her poem is a framework of cooperation and collaboration that allows Lanyer to cross class
boundaries. Pearson also helpfully addresses the significant political difference in a man addressing a woman reader, or a woman addressing a male, versus a woman addressing another woman. Pearson notes the rhetorical humility and language of defect Lanyer employs in her poem to Queen Anne, and against such ostensible power dynamics argues: “But at the same time the activities of reading and writing, the generation of literary texts, which [Lanyer] shares with her patrons work to equalize them and to begin to obliterate the rift of class that separates them.” Lanyer adeptly draws her royal reader in by inviting her to participate in the work of the poem. The queen’s excellence can grace both poem and author by first reading the poem; the act of reading can then repair any “defects” the queen might find therein. As we shall see, whenever Lanyer writes the humility topos into her poems, she acknowledges its presence only to authorially see it on its way. In this first stanza, we see that as quickly as Lanyer is to admit the possibility of defect in her work, she is equally quick to invite the queen’s “excellence” to grace her work and self. The move is so elegant that one almost misses the imperative “Read it” issued to the queen herself.

I recently heard an early modern professor from Yale speak impatiently regarding the humilitas topos in early modern women’s poetry—she said she could hardly bring herself to read it these days. Yet confronting the humilitas topos in poetry

119 Ibid., 50.
like that of Aemilia Lanyer reminds us that to write from the margins, as Lanyer (one of the first women in print in English) certainly does, is to write from a perspective of self-deprecation and unworthiness. Or at least from a performance of *humilitas*. Lanyer uses the convention of self-deprecation and “humility” to open up a space for grace, gift, and virtue in her poetry, as well cooperation and collaboration, as Pearson argues Lanyer to be doing in *Salve Deus*. Inasmuch as the language of grace and gift participate in the often complex and changing idea of patronage in early modern England, it behooves us to be careful and sensitive readers of Lanyer’s poetry. The temptation seems to be, among criticism on Lanyer but also more widely in feminist criticism, to look for female parallels to male roles in early modern and Jacobean society. But I think what we have happening and enacted in Lanyer’s poetry, and most clearly in her dedicatory poems, is not a parallel practice to men’s writing of the period but something different. A different paradigm with a different aim—the language of gift and grace is integral to the practice itself.

Felicity Heal, early modern historian, discusses the giving of poems in *The Power of Gifts*, and observes, “Words defined as gifts were often the most precious of all the presents contemporary donors could provide.” Heal references the Sidney Psalms and George Herbert’s poetry as examples of how a poem as gift “exists at the highly self-

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aware, and self-fashioning, end of the spectrum of words that could be gifted.”  

Heal’s work argues for the complexity of gift-giving at the individual level of the object given and the relationships involved (or proposed by the gifts), reminding us that objects themselves have biographies. In discussing “Rich Gifts,” Heal cites the example of a poem as one of the “least material gifts” but one with claims to great significance and weight:

As we have seen, the personal labour which went in to the construction of the gift was also a means of fructifying and enlarging the exchange. And, as might be expected, the least material gifts—*the words of the poem*, the advice from father to son—could be claimed to have a value attached to them which was literally priceless. In each case the gift had been given a powerful biography, isolating it from any taint of commodification.  

In the case of Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne, the language of gift applies equally (and relationally) to the poems Lanyer has to offer Queen Anne in “her book” as well as the attention and acknowledgment the queen can offer Lanyer in reading Lanyer’s poetry. And while Lanyer employs the language of *humilitas* and gendered “defec” in her poetry, she quite skillfully ties language of lowliness and “meanness” to the ideal garb of virtue and identification with Christ, who she notes, “tooke our flesh in base and meanest berth / Whose daies were spent in poverty and sorrow / And yet all Kings their wealth of him do borrow.”  

“To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie” is rife with instances of gift-giving

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121 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 48.
122 Ibid., 51 (emphasis added).
123 Ibid., 46-8.
among women. In fact, looking closely at the poem reveals that each of its twenty-seven stanzas contains some kind of gift in the personages and powers it invokes—Christ, Queen Elizabeth I, Queen Anne, Princess Elizabeth, Art and Nature. Queen Anne herself is an exemplar of Nature’s gifts, once possessed by “all the Goddesses.”¹²⁴ Juno, Pallas and Venus relinquish gifts of “State and Dignities,” “Wisdom, Fortitude,” and “all...Excellencies” to Queen Anne—“with their best parts your Highnesse is indu’d,”¹²⁵ Lanyer claims. Lanyer “humbly wishes” that Queen Anne’s beams, like those of Apollo’s, would light on her: “That so these rude unpollisht lines of mine / Graced by you, may seeme the more divine.”¹²⁶ In Lanyer’s formation, Queen Anne becomes the bright sun around which virtues, powers, muses and artists reflect like “glorious stars.” After this positioning of Queen Anne’s impressive, divine riches, Lanyer asks her royal reader,

To virtue yet
Vouchsafe that splendor which my meannesse bars:
Be like faire Phoebe, who doth love to grace
The darkest night with her most beauteous face.¹²⁷

Not enough to have compared the queen to Phoebe, goddess of the moon, Lanyer offers the queen an argument of the sun’s riches poured out upon all creatures:

Apollo’s beames doe comfort every creature,
And shines upon the meanest things that be;

¹²⁴ Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 8.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 13-16.
¹²⁶ Ibid., 35-6.
¹²⁷ Ibid., 27-30.
Since in Estate and Virtue none is greater,
I humbly wish that yours may light on me:
That so these rude unpollisht lines of mine,
Graced by you, may seeme the more divine.

Central to Lanyer’s invitation to Queen Anne is that Anne herself, confessed by Lanyer to have none above her in “Estate and Virtue,” is being asked to bring herself to the text at hand, to participate in the work of the poem. Her reading and attention have the power to change and alter Lanyer’s text, and by extension Lanyer herself—the author.

To return to Pearson’s reminder, by the definitions of male-authored early modern texts: “women are texts to be read,” but it is Lanyer who “reclaims…oppressive images of women as books.” In Lanyer’s repeated invitation to Queen Anne to enter her text as part of the poem itself—the excellent, approving part—we see enacted what Pearson surmises of Lanyer’s work: that in it, “The text/woman is no longer passive, unable even to author her self, but is the active generatrix…a potentially repressive image of literacy is broken open and reused to express female power.”

And although the poet and the poem, in the dedication’s first six stanzas, are below the queen in social station, education, and divinity, stanza seven upsets the previous balance and asks the queen to,

Looke in this mirrour of a worthy Mind,
Where some of your faire virtues will appeare;
Though all it is impossible to find,
Unlesse my Glasse were chrystall, or more cleare:

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128 Pearson, 51.
Which is dym steele, yet full of spotlesse truth,
And for one looke from your faire eyes it su’th.\(^{129}\)

Lange notes the ambiguity of this stanza and Lanyer’s delay to name the possessor of the “worthy Mind.”\(^ {130}\) While the mirror seems to represent the image of the forthcoming poem, *Salve Deus*, the mind reflected in (or, producing it) could be Lanyer’s, or the Queen’s. I read additional slippage as occurring between the values of “some” and “all” of the queen’s virtues in the stanza’s second and third lines. Why is it impossible for the queen to see all her virtues reflected in the mirror? Lanyer begins to answer her reader’s questions by describing what her mirror of “dym steele,” rather than “chrystall,” reflects:

Here may your sacred Majestie behold
That mightie Monarch both of heav’n and earth,
He that all Nations of the world controld,
Yet tooke our flesh in base and meanest berth:
    Whose daies were spent in poverty and sorrow,
    And yet all Kings their wealth of him do borrow.

For he is Crowne and Crowner of all Kings,
The hopefull haven of the meaner sort,
Its he that all our joyfull tidings brings
Of happie raigne within his royall Court:
    Its he that in extremity can give
    Comfort to them that have no time to live.\(^ {131}\)

Lanyer then reveals the “mightie Monarch both of heav’n and earth / He that all Nations of the world controld” as not God the Father, but Christ triumphant who is connected to

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\(^{129}\) Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 37-42.

\(^{130}\) Lange, 55.

\(^{131}\) Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 43-54.
the lowliness of humankind through his incarnation. Lanyer’s reader thus sees Queen Anne’s double-connection to Christ as (human) monarch clothed in human flesh, yet divine. At the same time, one sees here depicted what cannot be the virtues of Queen Anne: Christ’s “base and meanest berth” and “poverty and sorrow.” Humility is a virtuous possibility for Queen Anne, but a humble and “base” position in society is not. As Lanyer emphasizes the difference of societal positions between Christ’s person and Queen Anne, she centers the idea of a gift economy through which the sovereigns of England receive their divine right to rule, commenting: “And yet all Kings their wealth of him do borrow.” This is coming immediately after the stanza with Apollo’s beams comforting “every creature”—a dually natural and divine image of common grace in creation.

Meanwhile, in Lanyer’s mirror, the scales of human estate and virtue are replaced by the image of Christ—grace itself. Nations, sovereignty, wealth—Christ possesses these things that James I and Queen Ann but borrow; he is “Crowne and Crowner of all Kings,” a line that neatly ties both the image and action of coronation (and the materiality and divinity of kingship) to Christ alone. These stanzas describe the subject of Salve Deus to their royal reader, but they also introduce a sacred set of values that supersedes, rather than competes with, England’s earthly court. Kari McBride notes how Lanyer “altered the context in which patron-client relationships were supposed to
have functioned, substituting a religious sphere for the courtly one."\textsuperscript{132} Having presented Christ and “his royall Court,” Lanyer explains to the queen,

\begin{quote}
And since my wealth within his Region stands
And that his Crosse my chiefest comfort is,
Yea in his kingdome onely rests my lands,
Of honour there I hope I shall not misse:
Though I on earth doe live unfortunate,
Yet there I may attaine a better state.\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

Lanyer’s claim here is one of piety and heavenly citizenship—but her ownership of “lands” and wealth “within his Region,” is the language of courtly favor, reward, and inheritance, language that seems of special importance, given that Lanyer’s mother and daughter patrons, Margaret Clifford and her daughter Anne Clifford, were at this time in disputation with James I regarding the inheritance of the Clifford lands. This was an affair involving multiple audiences with the king in which he proceeded to pressure Margaret and Anne Clifford to cease their petitioning—Queen Anne would most likely have been privy the Clifford’s legal suit, via one source or another. Lanyer’s heavenly land, by comparison, is a sure thing, a “better state” that is certain as only spiritual states can be.

Turning from contemplation of her heavenly hopes, in stanza eleven Lanyer again offers the queen her work, only this time the adjective she applies is “holy” rather

\textsuperscript{132} Kari McBride, “Sacred Celebration: The Patronage Poems,” Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon, 60.
\textsuperscript{133} Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 55-60.
than “defective”: “This holy worke, Virtue presents to you / In poore apparell.” Poor doubles as a synonym for poverty and humility—the Christian virtue embodied by Christ’s incarnation. A virtue such as humility needs no outward ornament, Lanyer argues: “But that faire Virtue, though in meane attire / All Princes of the world doe most desire.” Lanyer acknowledges that the queen, possessor of all royal virtue (a blend of “Naturall…Morall…Divine” virtues) will “accept even of the meanest line / Faire Virtue yeelds; by whose rare gifts you are / So highly grac’d, t’exceed the fairest faire.” After describing the poor garments of Virtue Lanyer dedicates “fair Eves Apologie” to Queen Anne, “in honour of your sexe / And doe referre unto your Majestie / To judge if it agree not with the Text.” In soliciting Queen Anne to be a reader of her poem and a comparative reader of Scripture, Lanyer asks the Queen to arbitrate the genders as well: “And if it doe [agree],” Lanyer asks, “why are poore Women blam’d / Or by more faultie Men so much defam’d?” As she poses the question to her royal reader, Lanyer embeds the answers: “poor women” and “faultie men” comprising the defamation of the female sex.

Having rhetorically prepared her reader with her conceptions of gender, sovereignty, and Christ’s humility, Lanyer presents Eve to Queen Anne in her richest

134 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 62-3.
135 Ibid., 68.
137 Ibid., 74-6.
138 Ibid., 77-8.
display of invitation yet:

And this great Lady I have here attired,
In all her richest ornaments of Honour,
That you faire Queene, of all the world admired,
May take the more delight to looke upon her:
   For she must entertaine you to this Feast,
   To which your Highnesse is the welcom’st guest.

For here I have prepar’d my Paschal Lambe,
The figure of that living Sacrifice;
Who dying, all th’Infernall powres orecame,
That we with him t’Eternitie might rise:
   This pretious Passeover feed upon, O Queene,
   Let your faire Virtues in my Glasse be seene.

And she that is the patterne of all Beautie,
The very modell of your Majestie,
Whose rarest parts enforceth Love and Duty,
The perfect patterne of all Pietie:
   O let my Booke by her faire eies be blest,
   In whose pure thoughts all Innocency rests.\(^{139}\)

In these richly crafted stanzas, Lanyer layers agency and invitation into her dedicatory poem. Queen Anne is the guest invited to be entertained by Eve, who is also in the role of honored guest at the poem’s “Feast.” The image of Lanyer’s “Paschal Lambe” incorporates her poem and poem’s subject—Christ—into the feast the reader is invited to. Queen Anne, told first to “Read” in the dedication’s opening, Lanyer now asks to “look” and “feed upon” Christ/Salve Deus, but also to look and see herself as collaborative participant in the text at hand: “Let your faire Virtues in my Glasse be


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seene.” Lanyer is the indisputable host, and she employs the possessive to show her reader the feast, “my Paschal Lambe,” and “glasse.” In the third stanza above, Lanyer next carefully extends her invitation to Queen Anne’s daughter, the Princess Elizabeth: “she that is the patterne of all Beautie / The very modell of your Majestie.” In doing so, Lanyer makes her invitation multi-generational, emphasizing matrilineal genealogy and the poem’s suitability for “virtuous” women readers. At this point, contemplating the invitation of both Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth, Lanyer imagines her poem’s “mirror” as the heavens: “Then shall I thinke my Glasse a glorious Skie / When two such glittring Suns at once appeare.” Lanyer justifies the elevation of the image figuring her poem by the virtues of her poem’s guests: Queen mother and royal daughter, two “glittring Suns.” Again, we see the readers become participants in the poetic process and value of the poem itself—their presence, like honored guests at a feast, transform and elevate the value of the poem. Lanyer’s poem deepens and broadens to a “glorious Skie” by analogy to the guests it contains. The greatest guest of all is, of course, the “Paschal Lambe” of Christ. Thus, although Lanyer does perform conventional language belonging to the humilitas or modesty topos, the royalty and divinity of her poem’s subjects suggest the real worth, and high value of her poem.

This returns us to Heal’s description of the “powerful biography” of a gift such

140 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 99-100.
as a poem. Neither is Lanyer shy about expressing ownership and authority over her poem’s figure of Christ: “For here I have prepar’d my Paschal Lambe / The figure of that living Sacrifice.” The tone of *noblesse oblige* in these lines inviting Queen Anne and Elizabeth to Lanyer’s feast is striking, and Ann Margaret Lange remarks,

For Lanyer to invite her potential patron to this feast, served by her acting, it would seem, in an almost priestly capacity, and presided over by Eve as hostess suggests not only the rehabilitation and exaltation of Eve, but also invokes Lanyer’s unusual authority as both a member of God’s originally chosen and blessed nation, Israel, and as one whose name is written in the Book of Life because of her faith in the risen Christ…Indeed, the invitation is phrased almost as a command: not ‘please come to my Passover feast’ but the imperative ‘This pretious Passeover feed upon, O Queene.’ The authority is further extended by the fact that Lanyer is implicitly claiming that, rather like the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, her poem becomes the Passover feast to its readers, and also the mirror in which her patron’s virtues are truly reflected.

What most interests me in Lange’s reading is how she highlights the language of sacred authority and agency in Lanyer’s poem: the imperatives that function as both commands and invitation, Lanyer’s role as hostess, and the way in which Lanyer’s language, inviting Queen Anne to her “Pascal feasts,” blends with the language of Christian communion and the Eucharist and issues from a priestly role and perspective.

Other dedicatory poems included in the 1611 *Salve Deus* join in inviting women

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142 See Micheline White’s “A Woman With Saint Peter’s Keys?,” DiPasquale’s *Refiguring the Sacred Feminine* and Bennett’s *Women Writing of Divinest Things* as confirmation that, yes, this is precisely what Lanyer’s priestly language is doing in Salve Deus and her dedicatory poems.
143 Lange, 58.
to Lanyer’s feast. In “To the Lady Elizabeths Grace,” Lanyer explicitly and actively invites Queen Anne’s daughter in the first person: “Even you faire Princesse next our famous Queene / I doe invite unto this wholesome feast.”\(^\text{144}\) Lanyer’s dedicatory poem “To all vertuous Ladies in generall” also resonates with the dedication poem to Queen Anne, inviting women to attend the same feast as Queen Anne and be her virtuous consorts:

Each blessed Lady that in Virtue spends
Your pretious time to beautifie your soules;
Come wait on hir whom winged Fame attends
And in her hand the Booke where she inroules
Those high deserts that Majestie commends:
    Let this faire Queene not unattended bee,
    When in my Glasse she daines her self to see.\(^\text{145}\)

What qualifies a woman to attend the feast is the spending of her “pretious time” to “beautifie” her “soule,” a qualification that raises questions of gendered literacy and devotional leisure, but also that reveals Lanyer’s work as written for more than aristocratic women of a certain high (or royal) social standing. Lanyer invites these other lady guests to her feast to “wait on hir,” Queen Anne, and strengthens her invitation by offering her virtuous lady readers Christ’s parable of the wise and foolish virgins\(^\text{146}\) as metaphorical frame:

Put on your wedding garments every one,
The Bridegroome stayes to entertaie you all;

\(^{144}\) Lanyer, “To the Lady Elizabeth’s Grace,” 8-9.
\(^{145}\) Ibid., “To all vertuous Ladies in generall,” 1-7.
\(^{146}\) Matthew 25:1-1.
Let Virtue be your guide, for she alone
Can leade you right that you can never fall;
And make no stay for feare he should be gone:
But fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale,
That to your Faith he may his Truth reveale.147

Again, the invitation is made available to “vertuous ladies in generall,” and Lanyer tells “every one” to put their wedding garments on, assuring the ladies that Christ the bridegroom “stayes to entertain you all.” Virtue again makes the appearance as the ultimate cloth for a woman to wear (recall that Lanyer herself is clothed “poorly” in virtue, a dress fit to be acknowledged by princes). The oil filling the lamps is not physical oil but “burning zeale” and “Virtue” is the guide for these potential women readers. The parable framework, as Lanyer relays it, is less like the telling of the “wise and foolish virgins” and more like a gendered telling of the parable of the wedding feast, where the hostess sends out her invitations to all who will give of their “pretious time to beautifie [their] soules” and respond to an invitation to the feast.

Against or among her poem’s lavish hospitality and beckoning towards her feast, Lanyer introduces themes of sorrow and affliction that thematically enrich the language of womanly “defect.” The double-suns that Lanyer imagines representing Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth reflect comfort on the poet’s low spirits:

Then shall I thinke my Glasse a glorious Skie,
When two such glittring Suns at once appeare;
The one repleat with Sov’raigne Majestie,

147 Lanyer, “To all vertuous Ladies in generall,” 8-14.
Both shining brighter than the clearest cleare:
   And both reflecting comfort to my spirits,
   To find their grace so much above my merits

Whose untun’d voyce the dolefull notes doth sing
Of sad Affliction in an humble straine;
Much like unto a Bird that wants a wing,
And cannot flie, but warbles forth her paine:
   Or he that barred from the Suns bright light,
   Wanting daies comfort, doth comend the night.\textsuperscript{148}

Queen Anne and her daughter, in the theologically and mythically rich symbols of suns, reflect a nurturing light onto the poet and her poem. Queen Anne and her daughter’s attention and reading, Lanyer makes clear, raise up the lowly and troubled and nurture poetry. Lanyer describes her poetic skill and subject as an “untuned voyce” with “dolefull notes” that sings “of sad Affliction in an humble strain.” These humble descriptions clarify by way of simile, “Much like unto a Bird that wants a wing / And cannot flie, but warbles forth her paine.”\textsuperscript{149} Joined to the image of a person barred from the sun and “commending the night” in the stanza’s closing lines, Lanyer’s bird resonates as a Philomel/Nightingale-like figure—a similarity strengthened by Lanyer’s reference to her muse as sorrowing bird again in \textit{Salve Deus} and her explicit naming of Philomel in “Description to Cooke-Ham.” In Lanyer’s Philomel-like explanation of poetry as a “warbl[ing] forth” of pain, the bird’s loss is imaged as a wing, a deprivation that nonetheless turns complaint to song in her mouth.

\textsuperscript{148} Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 103-108.
\textsuperscript{149} My emphasis.
Lanyer figures her intellectual, material and social afflictions as a wounded bird deprived of a wing, and her poetry as the bird’s lyrical pain—or, as her second simile supplies: she is like a man in prison who desires the sun’s light but, deprived, commends the night. The fluidity with which Lanyer moves between gender in these two similes, in a grouping of poems where the poet pays exceptional attention to gender and agency, is telling. It speaks to, as Lange discusses, a mode of gendered appropriation in Lanyer’s poetry; the gender switch between the female, sorrowing bird and the man in the cell grants Lanyer’s sorrow an authority not equally given to women as to men in early modern England. In “Prophecy and Gendered Mourning,” Elizabeth Hodgson discusses how “the cultural value of grief in this period often plays a complex and troubled role in literary texts on grief and mourning. These categories were often highly vexed, constrained by scriptural and ecclesiastical edicts, and debated in sermons, pamphlets, and parliamentary acts.” Hodgson also addresses the conflation of grieving women with “excessive or improper mourning,” as well as improper objects of mourning. “Lanyer,” writes Hodgson, “is…aware…of the troubling association [of the grieving woman] with excess, error, effeminacy, and a loss of Christian will and discipline.” The masculine gender of the person in the cell thus tempers conditions that might be applied too readily to women: excessive sorrowing

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150 Hodgson, “Prophecy and Gendered Mourning,” 105.
and a benighted physical (or spiritual) state. Why, though, does the man in the cell “commend the night” when denied the light of the sun? Is Lanyer praising the person who responds to an enforced night in this way? The next stanza offers reply.

Having employed two images of gendered sorrow, Lanyer introduces her own enclosure in “Sorrowes Cell,” and her release by way of Christ’s example:

So that I live clos’d up in Sorrowes Cell,
Since great Elizaes favour blessed my youth;
And in the confines of all cares doe dwell,
Whose grieved eyes no pleasure ever view’th:
   But in Christs suffrings, such sweet taste they have,
   As makes me praise pale Sorrow and the Grave.\(^{154}\)

Rather than excess or overindulgent grief, Lanyer here confesses that sorrow closed her up like a jail cell—she even names the times: since childhood and the favor she found in Elizabeth I’s court. Since then, she has resided in the “confines” and limits of grief.

“But,” she continues, “in Christs suffrings, such sweet taste they have / As makes me praise pale Sorrow and the Grave.” Christ’s sufferings and grief are able to translate Lanyer’s to sweetness. His sufferings make her own a feast—“such sweet taste they have”—and once again the overtones carry the significance of communion for Lanyer. Christ’s sufferings also transform Lanyer’s to poetic good—“as makes me praise pale Sorrow and the Grave.” In contemplation of Christ’s sorrow and suffering, Lanyer is better able to understand her own and to write her experiences as poetry. What becomes

\(^{154}\) Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 109-114.
inseparable here is Lanyer’s sorrow (the bird of sorrow) and the grieving woman from the personhood and divinity of Christ. To criticize her sorrow is to critique a meditative piety focused on the “living Sacrifice” of Christ. And this is without having broached the arguments of *Salve Deus*, in which Lanyer describes, as Hodgson writes: “the special position Christ afforded (and affords) women…[the] contract of shared grief and sympathy between women and Jesus.”

Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne extends the language of grace and gift to include the person of Christ, and by doing so creates a trinity of giving between Christ, Lanyer, and Queen Anne. The gift-exchange Lanyer’s poetry proposes now includes multiple-persons, both earthly and heavenly authorities (and afflictions), and the only representation of masculine gender central to Lanyer’s project: the divine Christ, whose ministry can be seen as especially concerned with and compassionate towards women. The gifts themselves range from attention, comfort and praise to “favour,” “grace,” and heavenly lands/citizenship. Aside from what we might consider the obvious reason for Lanyer to solicit the attention and support of Queen Anne (namely, as a bid for royal patronage), why are these “gifts” and “graces” that Lanyer repeatedly names in her dedicatory poems important as gifts given and

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155 Hodgson, 106.
156 See Lanyer’s prose dedication “To the Vertuous Reader”: “As also it pleased our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, without the assistance of man, being free from original and all other sinnes, from the time of conception, till the houre of his death, to be begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman; and that he healed woman, pardoned women, comforted women: yea, even when he was in his greatest agony and bloodie sweat, going to be crucified, and also in the last houre of his death, toke care to dispose of a woman: after his resurrection, appeared first to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his Disciples,” 49-50.
received among a community of women?

The spiritual, physical, emotional enclosure of “Sorrowes Cell” that Lanyer names in stanza 19 of her dedication to Queen Anne is the context for this gift-giving among women. In fact, this stanza suggests that a withdrawal of “favour” and royal blessing constitutes a significant part of the poet’s subsequent depressed enclosure in sorrow—or at least was part of the event that began such a period for Lanyer. When Lanyer publishes Salve Deus in 1611, Queen Elizabeth I’s court has been gone for eight years, and with it the favor and support of a woman sovereign. Enter Lanyer’s petition for the favor of Queen Anne:

Whose powre may raise my sad dejected Muse,  
From this lowe Mansion of a troubled mind;  
Whose princely favour may such grace infuse,  
That I may spread Her Virtues in like kind:  
But in this triall of my slender skill,  
I wanted knowledge to performe my will.157

As suggested previously, each stanza in Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne contains some variation of a gift given—here, the gift is Queen Anne’s “princely favour,” the agent of “grace infus[ed].” Felicity Heal discusses how often the context of a gift given is supposed to be one of a right or appreciative “spirit,” and Lanyer’s spirit is one of acknowledgment of her own need and depression in the face of Queen Anne’s support and attention. But the notion of gift-exchange is also present, and Lanyer tells Queen

157 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 127-132.
Anne that her royal grace will enable Lanyer to "spread Her Virtues in like kind." It's interesting that Lanyer here speaks of Queen Anne in the third person, the grammatical antecedent being "A Glorious Queene" named at line 126, the line closing the previous stanza 21. Lanyer’s grammar softens her address to that of an indirect naming of the gift-exchange she is proposing between herself and Queen Anne.

The couplet closing the stanza, “But in this triall of my slender skill / I wanted knowledge to performe my will,” introduces a problem into Lanyer’s gift-exchange proposition. If the poet cannot perform the spreading of her majesty’s virtues, what is the point of the previous twenty-some stanzas building to and proposing exactly this endeavor? Lanyer’s elegantly posed problem of “want[ing] knowledge” to perform her “will” is the set-up for her closing argument, where she will complete her demonstration of her poetic aptitude and justify the source of her abilities as a woman writer. Lanyer begins to do so first by comparing herself to someone gazing at the stars:

> For even as they that doe behold the Starres,  
> Not with the eie of Learning, but of Sight,  
> To find their motions, want of knowledge barres  
> Although they see them in their brightest light:  
>  
> So, though I see the glory of her State,  
> Its she that must instruct and elevate.158

Lanyer compares herself and her poetry with the gifts of an observer: attention and sight, and Queen Anne to the "eie of Learning" and knowledge, arguing, “Its she that

158 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 133-138.
must instruct and elevate.” We have another invitation to gift-exchange here, as Lanyer notes Queen Anne’s participation and contribution to her poem: instruction and elevation. One of the interesting elements of Lanyer’s argument is the way it highlights the unfinished work of the poem and poet within a finished collection of poems. Queen Anne’s presence and attention are able to do something to an already completed work—her presence is a transformative one for art, with the ability to “instruct” and “elevate.” Lanyer’s insistence that the queen participate in and contribute to her poems suggests that a) Lanyer acknowledges the scope of poetry and art as existing in, and responsive to, a reading community, and b) that the language of gendered imperfection, defect and lack are woven into the very fabric of Lanyer’s work.

Consider how, at her speaker’s most vulnerable point, Lanyer relies upon a combination of her poem’s sacred subject and royal reader to raise and illumine her authorship:

My weake distempred braine and feeble spirits,
Which all unlearned have adventur’d, this
To write of Christ, and of his sacred merits,
Desiring that this Booke Her hands may kisse:
    And though I be unworthy of that grace,
    Yet let her blessed thougghts this book imbrace.159

The gift in this stanza is Lanyer’s book itself, which in a nimble line of double-agency, she desires “that this Booke Her hands may kiss”—the queen’s hands the book, and the

159 Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 139-144.
book the queen’s hands. The book is a proxy for Lanyer’s body as well: “and though I be unworthy of that grace / Yet let her blessed thoughts this book imbrace.” The gift-exchange here is between the book Lanyer offers and the queen’s “blessed thoughts,” but also the sacred merits of Christ. Queen Anne and Christ himself jointly encourage Lanyer in her song and motivate her writing.

What then regarding the problem of knowledge and will that Lanyer earlier confessed to? The perfecting agent in near to hand:

> And pardon me (faire Queene) though I presume,  
> To doe that which so many better can;  
> Not that I learning to my selfe assume,  
> Or that I would compare with any man:  
> But as they are Scholers, and by Art do write,  
> So Nature yeelds my Soule a sad delight.

> And since all Arts at first from Nature came,  
> That goodly Creature, Mother of Perfection,  
> Whom Joves almighty hand at first did frame,  
> Taking both her and hers in his protection:  
> Why should not She now grace my barren Muse,  
> And in a Woman all defect excuse.\(^\text{160}\)

Contrary to her denying rhetoric, Lanyer does indeed invite the queen to compare her to a man—men are scholars, schooled in art, whereas she is a woman writing, by “Nature’s” aid, her soul’s “sad delight.” Writing as a woman from a place of gendered sorrow is intrinsic to Lanyer’s dedication to the queen, as it will be in Salve Deus, a poem gathering and braiding together Christ’s passion and sorrow with the sorrow of

\(^{160}\) Lanyer, “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,” 145-156.
Lanyer’s patron and friend, Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland. Lanyer reminds her reader that Nature is a mother, benefactor, and patron of “all arts” (her offspring). Thus, Nature is ultimately suited to be Lanyer’s greatest inspiration: Nature, mother of arts, can give Lanyer the poem-child and “grace” her “barren Muse.” In terms of a hierarchy of knowledge and art, claiming “Nature” as her muse conveniently places Lanyer’s poetry above that of her male writing counterparts who but “by Art do write.” By direct and invited contrast, Lanyer’s poetry derives from the wellspring of all arts—Nature herself, another example of matrilineal inheritance and matriarchal power.

Naomi Miller sees Lanyer here, at the poem’s close, returning to her poem’s initial “trials of female authorship,” and astutely notes that Nature, the “Mother of Perfection,” is the ultimate resource for restoring and excusing Lanyer’s womanly “defects.” Miller focuses on the context of female relationship and community central to Lanyer’s introduction of “Nature,” and writes: “Lanyer constructs a direct link between the procreative powers of Nature and the creative potential of the Muse, whose temporary barrenness may be transformed into fertile speech as a result of explicitly female ties.” As Miller argues, the “explicitly female ties” seem intrinsic to the excusing of Lanyer (and her poem’s) defects—gifts given among a community of women can answer the misogynistic accusation of a woman’s natural “fault” and “defect.”

Lanyer’s final stanza to Queen Anne gently pokes at the superficiality of the language of faults and defects, playfully suggesting the sometimes inadequacy of
language to the person and subject at hand:

    So peerelesse Princesse humbly I desire,
    That your great wisedome would vouchsafe t’omit
    All faults; and pardon if my spirits retire,
    Leaving to ayme at what they cannot hit:
    To write your worth, which no pen can expresse,
    Were but t’ecclipse your Fame, and make it lesse.

There’s the sense that Lanyer is asking Queen Anne to “omit” the faults of her text while reading—to graciously gloss over them, and pretend they are not there. But in another sense, if faults are something that can be omitted, then there is the suggestions that faults are a presence rather than an absence (or lack, want, deprivation), and it is almost as though Lanyer is asking Queen Anne to omit the idea or notion of faults as existing in her work—and that the repeated language of gift-exchange among women is part of this agreement to read Lanyer’s poem as a text “perfected” by Nature’s tutoring. It seems a woman reader, particularly one in a position of some power and authority, would be attuned to the gendering of faults in Jacobean culture and open towards “omitting” them from a woman’s work. Lanyer’s final lines strengthen this reading by pointing out that any poem is inadequate to the task of writing the queen’s worth—no pen, wielded by man or woman, is up to the task. To write a poem would simply not equal the Queen Anne’s “Fame,” and would “eclipse” the queen’s worth by its shadow-praise. Some faults, Lanyer proposes, are to be attributed to a weakness of mimetic art when confronting a great subject.

    As Barroll’s work reminds us, Lanyer was a woman only tangentially related to
the class and social standing of her aristocratic women readers. Yet, rather than view the poems of *Salve Deus* as a failed but impressive “bid” for patronage, as Barroll does, or conclude with Lewalski that Lanyer’s dedicatory poems failed to change or affect male patriarchy networks, I want to conclude by noting what we can see Lanyer’s poetry as accomplishing—what work her poetry enacts as she writes women readers into relationship with her woman-centric account of Christ’s passion. Close consideration of her dedicatory poem to Queen Anne reveals her dedication poems creating collaborative space where Lanyer is able to meet, talk, and metaphorically “dine” with these women who are her social superiors. In doing so, Lanyer has both primary authority and agency: it is her pascal feast that she invites her “vertuous” and aristocratic women readers to. The metaphor of a feast also implies the interdependency of host and guests, with both parties having a relationship to the central event—a participatory, collaborative event taking place in a community of literate and courtly women readers.

Employing the language of gendered collaboration and gift-exchange allows us to think differently about the paratexts of *Salve Deus*. In the grouping of the dedication poems and the nesting of poems within poems—for example, Eve’s Apology within *Salve Deus* itself—we see a visual performance of women reading together in

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161 Barroll, 29-30.
162 Lewalski, “Re-Writing Patriarchy and Patronage.”
community. Although I’ve noted literacy as being an assumption of Lanyer’s dedications, the fact is that many early modern women participated in literate activities, such as reading in the kitchen (and elsewhere) together, and Lanyer’s grouping of poems visually enacts this gendered reading in community. *Salve Deus*’s material design thus performs gendered community in a time and culture where women were not the court favorites of James I but where the memory of Queen Elizabeth I, a binding presence in *Salve Deus*, was very much alive. In the cultural wake and societal loss of Elizabeth I, we see a space created for new connections among courtly women and new opportunities for female patronage, however women sought to configure such a network of gift-giving and gift-exchange. In the dedication poem immediately following that to Queen Anne, “To the Lady Elizabeths Grace,” her daughter, Lanyer spends the entire first of two stanzas reminding the young princess of her namesake:

Most gratious Ladie, faire ELIZABETH,  
Whose Name and Virtues puts us still in mind,  
Of her, of whom we are depriv’d by death;  
The phoenix of her age, whose worth did bind  
All worthy minds so long as they have breathe,  
In linkes of Admiration, love and zeale,  
To that deare Mother of our Common-weale.\(^{163}\)

This modest dedication poem, smallest of all her dedications, reveals the tie binding Lanyer’s poems together and the motivation for her project. She creates a readership of virtuous women in her dedications, yes, but even more: she creates and gifts her readers

\[^{163}\text{Lanyer, “To the Lady Elizabeth Grace,” 1-7.}\]
a narrative where women have inheritances, and authority, and power. In *Salve Deus*, not discussed in this chapter, Lanyer strikingly rewrites the Christian Gospel according to significant women figures from scripture: Eve, Pilate’s wife, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of Christ, and more. But in her dedication poems, she rewrites the history she and her readers are living, gifting early modern women with their own narrative of womanly power in England. Name and virtues, Lanyer tells the young Princess Elizabeth, remain the lode-star for those women who remember Elizabeth I. Elizabeth I’s “worth did bind,” Lanyer tells the princess, “All worthy minds as long as they have breathe / In linkes of Admiration, love and zeal.” As Lanyer recounts such cultural and social memory to the young Elizabeth, she re-enacts the binding and the links of “admiration, love and zeal.” The image of the Phoenix, mythical bird lonely in its virtue, goes up in ashes only to reveal its rebirth: in terms of royal succession to Elizabeth I, Queen Anne would be the royal model women looked to as the new “Mother of our common-weale.” The “Mother” of England changes, but the weal remains common to the women that Lanyer’s poems invoke. And what better way to cement these ties and binds and links of gendered memory, than to instigate a gift-exchange among virtuous women—an exchange made possibly by a gendered narrative that (recursively) creates its own readership and space to exist in?

Although Lanyer’s dedication to Queen Anne opens with the language of womanly “defect,” her dedication to Princess Elizabeth (“To the Lady Elizabeths
Grace”) is fully concerned with the legacy of virtuous women: queens and subjects, mothers and daughter, reader and writer. Lanyer may begin her dedications with defect, but she ends by appropriating the male-dominated discourse of virtue.\textsuperscript{164} The feast she invites young Elizabeth to she now describes as “this wholesome feast,” all “defects” apparently excused and rectified by Nature herself. Lanyer recommends a habit of reading to Elizabeth and affirms the reading of her poems to be “good workes” in itself:

“[Your] goodly wisedome, though your yeares be greene / By such good workes may daily be increast / Though your faire eyes farre better Bookes have seene.” If there is one thing the princess can learn from Lanyer’s work it is, however, that cultural-historical narratives of evaluative judgments such as “better” or “worse,” “defect” and “virtue” are a matter of how narratives are told and shaped by the author and reader, in addition to the subject.

That Lanyer’s published poetry is of the first of its kind in England could hardly be lost on her reading public—think, for example, of the written opprobrium heaped on Margaret of Cavendish’s published writing, or Lady Mary Sidney Wroth’s \textit{Uranium}. Lanyer counts on the gendered significance of her project, and her final lines to Princess Elizabeth highlight the uniqueness of the gift and perhaps, even, its priceless nature:

“Yet being the first fruits of a womans wit / Vouchsafe your favour in accepting it.”\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} As opposed to, say, an emphasis on “chastity,” Lanyer recommends “wisdom,” “good works,” and reading to the Princess Elizabeth.
\textsuperscript{165} Lanyer, “To the Lady Elizabeths Grace,” 13-14.
Her claim to “first fruits” ties powerfully in with the social narrative of linked women—mothers and daughters—that Lanyer’s dedicatory poems exemplify and name. Here is another woman’s participation in this larger community of historical women—Lanyer herself. Her poems are record of her presence, and testament to the links and bonds existing among early modern women. Such links and bonds supply an alternative account to the dominant, masculine narrative of “defect” attributed to women, taken singly or in community. The ultimate gift of Lanyer’s poems is not, in fact, one of creating a community of women (although it is that), but the gift of giving early modern women an authoritative narrative of virtue resonant with both the historical experiences and biblical accounts of women.
Chapter 3. ‘For man was never made to be alone’: Retreat and Sociability as Political-Poetic Process in Katherine Philip’s Poetry

Justus Lipsius, sixteenth-century Flemish humanist and friend to Philip Sidney, opens his Neo-Stoic text De Constantia with his narrator starting out on a journey, leaving Austria for Vienna. Lipsius’s eponymous narrator tells his friend Charles Languis that his reason for leaving his country regards, “the troubles of the Low Countries…the insolence of the government and soldier.” Soliciting his friend’s sympathy for his plight, the narrator asks:

For…who is of so hard and flinty a heart that can any longer endure these evils? We are tossed, as you see, these many years with the tempest of civil wars: and like sea-faring men are we beaten with sundry blasts of troubles and sedition. If I love quietness and rest, the trumpets and rattling of armor interrupts me. If I take solace in my country gardens and farms, the soldiers and murderers force me into the town. Therefore, Languis, I am resolved, leaving this unfortunate and unhappy Belgica [Flanders]—pardon me my dear country—to change land for land, and to fly into some other part of the world, where I may neither hear of the name, nor facts of a Pelops brood.166

Lipsius’s De Constantia, a philosophical dialogue beginning with his narrator’s flight from the noise of war and religious-political unrest, found sympathetic English readers both at the end of the sixteenth century, when Protestant-Catholic tensions in the Low Countries reached their height, and during the political upheaval of mid-seventeenth

166 Justus Lipsius, De Constantia, 31.
century England. Throughout the English Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration, the concept of Stoic retirement was a resonant trope in English writing, engaged by Royalists and Parliamentarians alike. The poetry of Katherine Philips, often taking the form of dedications and invitations to her Royalist women friends, demonstrates how the concept of Stoic retreat could not only lead its practitioner away from certain political and social contestations but towards new formations of political community through the generation of literature and the practice of publication (or manuscript circulation, in Philips’ case).

Andrew Shifflett, in his re-examination of mid-seventeenth century Stoic engagement, addresses the paradoxical nature of Stoic literary and political concepts and the deployments of Stoic paradox by English writers. Shifflett enlarges and develops the idea of Stoic retirement and retreat through historical and literary analyses of Andrew Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” and “Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-Borow.” Shifflett argues that Stoic retirement “often meant retreat from the state, not from political action...Stoicism in its most powerful forms is not about actual withdrawal from the world but about the meaning of action and the manipulation of anger for

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167 And others, such as insurgents (i.e. James Scott, Duke of Monmouth) and the Puritans, as Penelope Anderson discusses in Friendship’s Shadows. The Duke of Monmouth, when found hiding in a ditch in 1685, had a book on his person in which was copied a rewriting of Philip’s poem, “A retired friendship, to Ardelia,” 158.

168 Shifflett, Stoicism, Literature and Politics, 4. Shifflett is responding in part to the work of Gordon Braden in Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition.
political ends."¹⁶⁹ Scholar Penelope Anderson shares Shifflett’s reading of Stoic retreat in Marvell, and brings Katherine Philips’ poetry to the same conversation, writing: “The language of Neo-Stoicism allows for a retreat from the world in order to reshape that world. This rhetoric of political involvement through retreat enables Philips to turn her provincial residences in Wales and Ireland into a political virtue.”¹⁷⁰ Anderson, as well as Hero Chalmers, has insightfully addressed the presentation of retirement as a form of political power in Royalist and Cavalier poetry, and both Anderson and Chalmers make a case for Stoic retreat as political power in Philips’ poetry (Anderson primarily via the framework of Neo-Stoicism and Chalmers via the concept of Neo-Platonic friendship).

In this chapter, I am specifically interested in how Philips amends the concept of Stoic retreat by making sociability central to its conception as well as central to her writing process. Against the primacy of the self in Stoicism (retirement is the advice Seneca gives in his letters for self-healing and self-discovery) and the privileging of the self’s solitude in Marvell’s retreat poem “The Garden,” in Philips’ poetry we have a centrality of relationship and friendship enacted through the formulation of her poem’s speaker and reader. Despite the fact that Philips’ “Society of Friends” contained both men and women, and that all the members were given pastoral sobriquets, Philips’ invitation and retreat poems address and enact relationships and friendships with other

¹⁶⁹ Shifflett, Stoicism, Literature and Politics, 4.
¹⁷⁰ Anderson, 158.
women—her conception of Stoic retreat involves a pointedly gendered political171 community or “counterpublic.”172 Although Shifflett argues that, “the literature of Stoic retirement was a literature not only of private selves but also of community,”173 his discussion of community, social engagement and “Stoic cosmopolitanism” in relation to Stoic retirement demonstrates a more abstract conception of others and the world than we find in Katherine Philips’ poetry. For example, Shifflett notes how, “Having temporarily retired to the study or garden, the Stoic does not cease acting in the world; the world of retirement is really a much larger world than the one that has been left…The world is a living organism for the Stoic, and each person can serve it wisely and well when they recognize that, as humans, they share the same fate as all other persons.”174 In Katherine Philips’ retreat poetry, the act of retreat has virtue only in and through its specific engagements with solicited others, i.e. her friends, who she calls by name (i.e. pastoral sobriquet)t o her side.

Philips’ engagement with others occurs at the level of poetic form. Similar to Lipsius’s philosophical dialogue De Constantia, Philips’ poetry privileges the modes of dialogue and the presence of interlocutors (or audience), and often assumes the form of dedications, epistles and invitations—forms which integrally depend on a reading other.

171 “Political” used to denote both Philips’ royalist identification and sociability.
172 To employ Catharine Gray’s term from, “The Knowing Few: Katherine Philips and the Courtly Coterie,” 105.
173 Shifflett, 6.
174 Ibid.
Unlike Lipsius’s *De Constantia* however, which imbeds its interlocutor as character in the form of a philosophical dialogue, Philips’ poetry extends its context beyond itself, making the response of the named reader, existing outside the poem’s text, a contributive participant to the text. There is literary precedence for this inclusive (and collaborative) formal engagement in English poetry, as Ilona Bell describes in *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship*. Bell’s research explores the “collaborative role female writers, readers, and interlocutors play in the Elizabethan socio-literary conversation”\(^\text{175}\) by centering the female lyric audience as material to the performance of courtship poetry. Bell’s reading is relevant to a consideration of Katherine Philips’ poetry in that, similar to Elizabethan courtship poetry, in much of Philip’s poetry (and all of her friendship/betrayal poetry) the relationship of the author and reader is intrinsically and formally significant to the writing of the poem. As I have noted, however, one of the great differences is that Philips’ poetry concerns itself with the making and maintaining of women’s friendships.

Philips’ friendship poetry, disregarded by critics as lacking in serious political nature for the better part of the twentieth century, has been found by recent scholars to exhibit complex engagement with mid-seventeenth-century politics and political theories. Penelope Anderson considers the concept of *amicitia* and the language of betrayal in Philips’ poetry—parsing the common law coverture for women’s political

\(^{175}\) Ilona Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship*, 5.
engagement in early modern England as well as the way Philips’ philosophy of friendship engages (and precedes) concepts essential to natural sociability and contract theory. Recent critical readings of Philips’ friendship poetry as overtly and covertly political (in terms of political theory and identification) also reveal the ways in which collaborative texts are political (or, social) at the level of their making—i.e. what relationships, engagements, conversations and friendships provide the contexts for the text’s production. In focusing on the importance of Philips’ conception of retreat as always engaging political-sociability, Philips’ writing practices in turn reflect more broadly on the collaborative textual practices of other seventeenth-century women writers, from the production to the circulation of their texts.

The critical linking of retreat with sociability and the production of socially-engaging texts is even more relevant to the early modern woman writer that her male counterpart. As Hero Chalmers discusses in Royalist Women Writers, while retreat and disenfranchisement during the English Civil War and Interregnum were new experiences for many Royalist men, they were not for many Royalist women. Sociability in retreat has a different valence for someone like Katherine Philips—a young, educated Royalist with a close group of educated, aristocratic woman friends who, nonetheless, understands social retreat differently by being a woman. At 16, Katherine Philips (née Fowler) was married to James Philips—under common law coverture, she became a feme

176 Cf. Penelope Anderson’s Friendship’s Shadows.
covert, her body, property, and actions subsumed by her husband. This was in contrast to the feme sole, who could own property and sign contracts in her own name. Anderson examines one fissure in coverture law—that the wife’s actions were her husband’s to answer for save in one case: treason. The coverture law is critically relevant to Katherine Philips, who, because of her poetry denouncing the execution of Charles I, would find herself defending her husband James both with and against its logic. Anderson notes, “political dissent runs like a fault-line through the unitary fiction of coverture,” observing that Philips, “turns this liability into an occasion for writing.” The legal and political presence of coverture illuminates how retreat and retirement would have had different meanings for a married woman versus a Lord Fairfax or Andrew Marvell; a mid-seventeenth century man of status retired from a different legal reality of social and political engagement than a woman of the same period. This context necessarily puts a different social weight and pressure on Philips’ notion of retirement with her Royalist friends and her prioritizing of sociability. One could argue that, as a married woman in mid-seventeenth century England, Philips was already socially prepared for the political and literary framing of her “retired friendships” during the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration.

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177 Coverture in Anderson, Friendship’s Shadows, 71.
178 Ibid.
The line in this chapter’s title, “For man was never made to be alone,” is itself a candid declaration of sociability’s foundational role for humans, and comes from Philips’ poem “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” a poem addressing the virtuous state of contentment. In this poem, Philips explores the various places and possessions which promise a person contentment by first declaring in her opening stanza that “content” is “the false world’s best disguise / the search, and faction of the wise.”179 In her poem, Philips draws a comparison with the search for contentment and a truth-searching character penned by another poet writing in isolation, far from London—Edmund Spenser’s The Red Cross Knight. “Like that fairy Redcross knight,” Philips advises, “Who treacherous falsehood for clear truth had got / Men think they have it, when they have it not.”180 The language of Stoic paradox and the discord of the exterior versus interior world is at play throughout Philips’ poem; to illustrate the textual presence of paradox, in my library copy of Volume 1 of Philips’ Collected Works, a previous reader underlined the final line of this first stanza and penciled in the marginalia: “people don’t know when they’ve got it” — a gloss that could be read as the opposite of what Philips asserts regarding the experience of contentment.

Philips proceeds, in each stanza, to name and elaborate men’s confusion when it comes to obtaining, purchasing and possessing the virtue of contentment. According to

179 Katherine Philips, “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” 1-2.
180 Ibid., 4-6.
Philips’ poem, contentment is not to be found in thrones and authority, “glittering dress,” mirth, liberty from government, the soldier and victor’s life—not even in “the schools,” where “the most discreet believe” contentment lives. “Thus far true without dispute,” notes Philips, “knowledge is still the sweetest fruit.” Her final couplet of the same stanza turns on knowledge as contentment, however, concluding: “But while men seek for truth they lose their peace / And who heaps knowledge, sorrow doth increase.” After her gentle setting-aside of knowledge as the sweetest fruit, Philips observes of the most cloistered form of living person: the hermit:

But now some sullen hermit smiles
And thinks he all the world beguiles,
And that his cell and dish contain
What all mankind do wish in vain;
But yet his pleasure’s followed with a groan
For man was never made to be alone.

The language of “all men/mankind,” the male gendered hermit, and the echo of the Genesis narrative present in the line, “For man was never made to be alone” plays into the universalizing language of lyric poetry. But Philips’ grammatical emphasis on men, considered singly as the hermit or as a whole (“all mankind”), constitutes the rhetorical set-up for her proposition to her female friend, Lucasia:

181 A rather pointed line for Parliamentarians, but also an illustration of a two-edged accusation in terms of how Royalists and Parliamentarians could deploy their insults and charges against each other.
183 Ibid., 41-2.
184 Another Spenserian figure, one might note, and one not with holy or even positive associations.
Content herself best comprehends
Betwixt two souls and they two friends
Whose either joys in both are fixed
And multiplied by being mixed,
Whose minds and interests are so the same
Their very griefs imparted lose that name.\(^{186}\)

Philips here proposes that friendship’s society and sociability are intrinsic to contentment—intrinsic, too, to the idea of retreat. Philips further highlights sociability in this stanza by portraying friendship as communion between two souls, writing against the popular dicta, attributed to Aristotle, that friendship consists of “a single soul dwelling in two bodies.” Rather, according to Philips’ poem, both contentment and friendship require “two souls and they two friends / Whose either joys in both are fixed / And multiplied by being mixed.” Penelope Anderson discusses the metaphor of mixing substances in Philips’s poems of friendship—to include those she wrote for her husband James Philips. In Anderson’s reading, the metaphor of mixing conceptually skirts common law coverture and the submission of one body to another.\(^{187}\) What we have in Philips’ poem through the metaphorical mixing of two persons, according to Anderson, is a gendered model of female friendship and equality that appropriates a masculine model of Platonic friendship.\(^{188}\)

\(^{186}\) Ibid., 49-54.
\(^{187}\) For the purposes of discussing Philips’ poems of retreat and how they re-vision Stoic retirement, this chapter prioritizes the social and poetic context of friendship rather than Platonism’s influence on Philips, discussed by critics such as Anderson.
\(^{188}\) See Anderson’s Friendship’s Shadows and Hero Chalmers’ Royalist Women Writers.
Reading “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” Philips’ reader might notice tonal similarities to Book XII of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (and *Paradise Regained*). For example, the stanza regarding self-enchainment:

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Others there are that place Content  
In liberty from government,  
But who his passions do deprave  
Though free from shackles is a slave;  
Content and bondage differ only then  
When we are chained by vices, not by men.
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The idea of self-sovereignty (and self-enthrallment) here is resonant with Milton’s political tracts as well as his poetry, a conceptual echo that shows one way Stoicism’s appeal could reach across the politically divided England represented by Philips and Milton’s poetry. There is, additionally, something of Milton’s companionate Paradise in the portrayal of the two friends in Philips’ poem:

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189 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII.88-101:
Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
Immediately inordinate desires,
And upstart passions, catch the government
From reason; and to servitude reduce
Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God, in judgment just,
Subjects him from without to violent lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: Tyranny must be;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,
Deprives them of their outward liberty;
Their inward lost…

These far removed from all bold noise
And—what is worse—all hollow joys,
Who never had a mean design
Whose flame is serious and divine,
And calm and even, must contented be
For they've both union and society.¹⁹¹

The “union and society” that Philips here proposes to Lucasia helps us see the way Stoic
caret could be aligned with a Christian humanist¹⁹² understanding of virtue and
community, a blending of philosophy and theology Philips also had access to through
Justus Lipsius’s *De Constantia*. The prelapsarian overtones of Philips’ stanza—the
seriousness and divinity of the friends “union and society,” is at the heart of the retreat
poem itself: a better world, it tells its reader, is one possible reality of retreat and
retirement. It is not, for Philips, enough to leave the urban, political world and live in
bucolic solitude—as the example of the sullen hermit, whose stanza ends in a groan (and
rhymes with “alone”), illustrates.

Philips’ poem concludes by introducing scorn, a characteristically Stoic response
to worldly vagaries, from the vantage point of retirement:

Then, my Lucasia, we who have
Whatever love can give or crave,
With scorn or pity can survey
The trifles which the most betray.
With innocence and perfect friendship fired,
By virtue joined, and by our choice retired;

¹⁹¹ Philips, “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” 55-60.
¹⁹² I use this term as Robert Stillman outlines in his monograph *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism.*
Whose mirrors are the crystal brooks
Or else each other’s hearts, and looks,
Who cannot wish for other things,
Than privacy and friendship brings,
Whose thought and persons changed and mixed are one
Enjoy content, or else the world has none.\(^{193}\)

Against “the most” who are betrayed by trifles, the two friends Lucasia and Orinda are “fired” by their innocence and perfect friendship, a bond of virtue between them. Their retirement (significantly, for Royalists unwelcome in London) is a choice—the two friends can choose to be removed from war, but also (and, “what is worse,” Philips asserts) absent from empty joys. In place of what they could buy or experience in a more urban setting, the country retirement promises the two friends “the crystal brooks / Or else each other’s hearts, and looks” as mirrors of each other. “Privacy and friendship” are the sum of the proposed contentment, and the context of retreat and the friends’ relationship magnify, and change, each other: “Whose thoughts and persons changed and mixed are one / Enjoy content, or else the world has none.”\(^{194}\) It is sociability here, in the context of retreat, that sustains the persons of the friendship. The answer is not retreat and solitude, as Andrew Marvell proposes in “The Garden,” but retreat and sociability.

In her chapter, “Women, like princes, find no real friends,” Anderson discusses the divergence of critical approaches to Philips’ poetry as mirroring Abraham Cowley’s

\(^{193}\) Philips, “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” 61-72.

\(^{194}\) 71-2.
qualification of the ideal (male) poet as both a Stoic philosopher and Sappho. 

Anderson observes that the separate consideration of Philips’ politics and friendships (as Stoic and Sapphic, respectively),

gives rise to two main traditions deriving from Philips’s writing: an emphasis on Neo-Stoic retirement (in which retreat and moderation of the passions prepare the speaker for public life) and a focus on emotions and attachment (which, variously, foreground an aggressively heterosexualized marital passion, worry about the lesbian aspects of her poems, or treat women’s friendship as a minor distraction before marriage). Thus, Philips’s innovative use of the entangled politics and passions of amicitia becomes illegible. One consequence of this is the characterization of Philips as a minor writer, the well-behaved modest poetess who wrote verse about the inconsequential subject of women’s friendship. The larger consequence is the truncating of the possibilities of political community that Philips imagines through her lyrics: their complicated negotiation of multiple obligations disappears.

Anderson’s re-centering of Philips’ friendship poems as political enables her discussion of the relevance of Philip’s language of betrayal. Through a socio-political reading of Philips’ philosophy of friendship that includes betrayal, Anderson provides a reading of Stoic constancy in Philips’ work. What is germane in Anderson’s work for this chapter are the possibilities of political community that Anderson sees in Philips’ friendship and betrayal poems, particular in light of retreat. These possibilities grow with Philips’ reimagining of the literary trope of the bower in “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia, 23rd August 1651.”

\[195\] Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows*, “He may be in his own practice and disposition a Philosopher, nay a Stoick, and yet speak sometimes with the softness of an amorous Sappho,” 153.

\[196\] Ibid., 154.
Philips’ poem “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia…” is the poem that James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, rewrites as a courtship poem reflecting his own political retreat and retirement to Tedington, the home of Henrietta, Baroness Wentworth and Monmouth’s mistress. As Anderson discusses, in his rewriting, Monmouth cuts Philip’s opening invitation as well as her persuasive, yet direct, invitation. This is a significant revision, and draws attention to the quality of Philips’ speaker’s authority and the rhetorical work the original poem does in soliciting its reader to the bower of “retired friendship”:

> Come, my Ardelia, to this bower  
> Where, kindly mingling souls a while,  
> Let’s innocently spend an hour  
> And at all serious follies smile.198

The poetic trope of the bower, particularly in light of Philips’ reference to the “fairy Redcross knight” in her poem, “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia,” recalls Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*199 and Philip Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella*. Yet Philips’ employment of the bower trope refines the language of retreat and idea of Stoic retirement—this is not a peaceful haunt for “hermits and other recluses,” a form of solitary habitation which Philips roundly scorns in “Content, to my Dearest Lucasia.” Rather, the bower Philips’ speaker invites Ardelia to is a political space, removed from the noise of wars, for two

199 A.C. Hamilton, *The Spenser Encyclopedia*: A.C. Hamilton observes that, in Spenser, a bower is primarily a bedroom or other private chamber (hence the opposition to public rooms, as in “Astrophel’ 28: ‘bowre and hall’); it may also be a cottage, a rural or sylvan retreat, a haunt for hermits and other recluses. In either case, it is a place of intimate habitation…Gardens, covert dales, shady and often murmurous glens are also seen as ‘bowers’ in a related sense when the natural world, rightly or wrongly, is perceived as a safe dwelling place. The sense of being at home in the world is implicit…,” 107.
Royalist women. The invitation is to a political friendship, the bower a place of preservation for such friendships:

Here is no quarrelling for crowns
Nor fear of changes in our fate,
No trembling at the great ones’ frowns
Nor any slavery of state.

Here’s no disguise, nor treachery,
Nor any deep concealed design,
From blood and plots this place is free
And calm as are those looks of thine.200

August 1651, the month which dates Philips’ poem’s proposed “retired friendship” to Ardelia, was a dramatic month for Royalists and Parliamentarians. One August 6, Charles II led the Scots-Royalist army across the border near Carlisle, and was proclaimed sovereign of England, offering free pardon to all who would join him. By August 22, Charles and the Scots-Royalist army occupied Worcester. That same day, the Presbyterian conspirator Christopher Love was executed on Tower Hill. On August 23, the date of “A Retired Friendship,” Charles issued an order to all Englishmen to attend him at Worcester for the defense of the throne and country. It seems historically significant that this is the day Philips dates her poem to Ardelia, complementing her on her calm looks and inviting her to a bower:

Here let us sit, and bless our stars
Who did such happy quiet give,
As that removed from noise of wars,

200 Philips, “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia, 23rd August 1651,” 5-12.
In one another’s hearts we live.\textsuperscript{201}

Spenserian scholar A.C. Hamilton observes that, in Spenser’s \emph{Faerie Queene}, “the invitation to make oneself at home in a fallen world must always be problematic; every dimension of the bower’s enticement demands continuous scrutiny…the enclosure the bower offers may nurture true worth…[but] too often the world’s ‘clasping armes’ are more ambush than embrace, and bowers become prisons where worth is entombed.”\textsuperscript{202} Hamilton also noting that, regarding the Spenserian bower, “the bower’s shade and the drowsiness it inspires are equally ambiguous.” In contrast, Philips’ bower is explicitly and unambiguously a place of “happy quiet” and “retired friendship,” and the invitee (Ardelia) knows the bower’s host. Rather than the poetic bower acting as a geographical invitation to a wanderer or pilgrim, it is a place created by the poem’s invitation and sustained by Ardelia’s implied response. It is also, pointedly, a place of safety, friendship and freedom that even Charles Stuart had no practical access to, and the poem’s speaker assures Ardelia that: “With quiet souls and unconfined” the friends can “Enjoy what princes wish in vain.”\textsuperscript{203} In September 1651, the month following the date of this poem, Parliament would offer £1000 for the capture of Charles Stuart, and on the tenth of September, Charles would travels towards Bristol disguised as the servant of Jane Lane before friends acquired his safe passage to France in mid-October. The

\textsuperscript{201} Philips, “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia, 23rd August 1651,” 13-16.
\textsuperscript{202} A.C. Hamilton, 107.
\textsuperscript{203} Philips, “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia, 23rd August 1651,” 36-7.
uncertainty of England’s government, and the precarity of Charles Stuart’s place in England, August 1651, is the context for the Stoic-inflected voice of Philips’ invitation:

Why should we entertain a fear?
Love cares not how the world is turned;
If crowds of dangers should appear
Yet friendship can be unconcerned.

We wear about us such a charm
No horror can be our offence,
For mischief’s self can do no harm
To friendship and to innocence. 204

Why and how, Philips’ reader might ask, can love confer such physical and psychological benefits to retired friends, particularly when they are Royalist women living in a parliament-controlled state? Anderson offers an astute reading of the oppositional play between innocence and “mischief” in the above stanzas:

The ability to remain impervious, it appears, derives not only from friendship, but also from what it confers: innocence. “For mischief’s self can doe no harme / To friendship and to innocence.” The conjunction of mischief and innocence suggests the two readings of Philips sketched earlier: mischief alludes to political entanglements, innocence to erotic ones. To take the latter first: “innocence” suggests the “chaste femme love” that Traub describes in Philips’s poems; it falls within the tradition of inconsequential lesbian love. “Mischiefs,” in contrast, alludes directly to a Restoration political context through one of Philips’s own poems. Writing of the restoration of Charles II in “To the Queene on her arrivall at Portsmouth,” Philips says that Fortune will requite Charles with “courtships greater then her mischifes were.” In the context of that poem, “mischiefes” forcibly recalls the English people’s culpability for the execution of Charles I. Written during the interregnum, “A retir’d friendship” depicts royalists living with this guilt, in another instance of


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Philips’s recording, rather than covering over, experiences of betrayal. At the same time, “mischief’s” legal meaning pertains to a harm done to an individual, rather than to the commonwealth; as such, it foregrounds the king’s private rather than public personhood as a larger consequence of the Civil Wars.\textsuperscript{205}

Anderson’s larger argument, that Philips’ language of betrayal offers political friendship as response to the vulnerabilities and problems of English politics during the time she wrote, accords with “A Retired Friendship.” The trope of the Spenserian bower can take us even further into Philips’ poem narratively as it offers its visitor a stay or respite alongside a greater journey or quest. Even so, the bower is not a pastoral day spa for friends in Philips’ poem, but a political necessity for Royalist women:

\begin{quote}
In such a scorching age as this,  
Whoever would not seek a shade  
Deserve their happiness to miss,  
As having their own peace betrayed.\textsuperscript{206}
\end{quote}

There is a moral weight attached here to a refusal of the invitation to the bower of retired friendship. It is a “scorching age,” as Philips will record in her poem “On the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of September” (the date of Cromwell’s defeat of Charles Stuart’s forces at the Battle of Worcester), and the streams provided by the pastoral setting of the friends’ potential bower offer not merely a quenching of thirst but a “cool[ing] of heat.”\textsuperscript{207} Anderson argues that, in this stanza,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{205} Anderson, Friendship’s Shadows, 159.  
\textsuperscript{206} Philips, “A Retired Friendship, to Ardelia, 23rd August 1651,” 30-3.  
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., 28.  
\end{quote}
Philips places the responsibility and the blame for the outside world on those who should choose retirement. Friendship models a virtuous peace counter to “the noise of warres” and prepares the friends to oppose that world – whether as royalists, as in Philips’s case, or rebels, as in Monmouth’s. As Shifflett argues and Philips demonstrates, the Neo-Stoic choice of retirement does not provide an escape from politics, but an alternative participation in politics.208

Something missing from Anderson’s analysis of “A Retired Friendship” is an explanation of how the bower of retired friendship prepares the friends for facing the “noise of wars.” After all, the poem centers itself on retirement from the noise of wars and moral responsibility of attaining happy quiet. As Philips concludes her poem, the emphasis primarily falls on the virtue of retirement rather than political responsibility:

But we (of one another’s mind
Assured) the boist’rous world disdain,
With quiet souls and unconfined,
Enjoy what princes wish in vain.209

Paradox is arguably at the heart of Philips’ poem—a figurative problem also vital to the poetic trope of the bower, which can help us to read Philips’ bower of retired friendship. Hamilton notes the potential of the bower to be either contemplative oblivion or the foundation of civil conversation—a discourse the possibility of which is threatened by a country actively engaged in civil war. Notes Anderson:

The shadow and enclosure of bowers are psychological as well as physical. Bowers are places of intensified inwardness, where distinctions between inner feeling and its outward site disappear…at best, the

208 Anderson, Friendship’s Shadows, 159.
bower’s privacy often encourages a dangerous obliviousness to incursions from without. In FQ VI, Spenser is especially concerned with the vulnerability of the ‘contemplative cynosure’ offered by such bowers. But at the same time, he is seeking a true inwardness in which ‘civill conversation’ might be grounded: the hidden bower from which, in a world of trackless wandering and false tokens, both noble behavior and authentic language may flourish.210

As Hamilton also observes, Spenserian bowers tend towards two kinds in The Faerie Queene, ones exemplifying an “accord with the world achieved through an easy fulfillment of desire” and ones “with accord based on abstention and self-control.”211 A bower of retired friendship, as Philips’ poem conceives of it, is a place where friends enjoy the social-political good of each other’s minds and civil conversation. Here, then, is the specific, alternative participation in politics more abstractly discussed by Shifflett and Anderson and noted by the editors of Women Poets of the English Civil War, who discuss the Royalist identification and solidarity expressed by Philips’ “A Retired Friendship.”212 Through their intellectual, political (Royalist) and affectionate union, both the reader and writer of “A Retired Friendship” can prepare themselves for future political engagement through their conversation taking place in rural peace. “A Retired Friendship” is a poem of political survival at the same time as it enacts the formation of political friendship. A retired friendship in Wales for Royalist women could sustain their

210 Hamilton, 107.
211 Ibid., 108.
212 Women Poets of the English Civil War, 155.
political values and alliances threatened by habitation closer to, or in, Parliament-governed London.

Philips’ conception of the bower is inseparable from her conception of sociability—the bower is retired friendship. By constructing her bower as a site of sociability and political friendship, the trope escapes the threat of solipsism and “dangerous obliviousness,” and becomes a place of limited and trusted community, a “kindly mingling” of souls where two woman friends may be both “quiet…and unconfined” (an interesting pairing of adjectives, since quietness carries different connotations when applied to gendered or aged behavior—ie, women, men, or children). Philips removes any trace of quietness as submission to patriarchal hierarchy here by applying “quiet” to both friends (like a masculine model of Platonic friendship) and adding the descriptor “unconfined”—theirs is a quietness in freedom. The implication here is that the retreat itself constitutes freedom for the two women, and that this quietness and freedom constitutes a level of self-sovereignty actual sovereigns can only aspire to—“what princes wish in vain.” This is the kind of quiet where the two women friends might have “civil conversation” together, unconstrained.

Retired friendship and retreat in Katherine Philips’ poetry are not about creating a space in which to abstain from political action and social involvement, and the quietness and unconfinement are also tied to conversation and producing poetry. Similar to Shifflett’s observation regarding the garden in Lipsius’ De Constantia and
Marvell’s poem “The Garden,” Philips’ idea of retreat is, “less important as a pleasant place than as an opportunity for literary and intellectual performance…not only an occasion for reading and writing but a figure for rhetorical contestation in general…what the garden [and in Philips, the retreat] can do well…is encourage one to think and write about one’s proper role in the world.”213 This is part of why sociability is key to Philip’s conception of retreat—performance, rhetorical contestation, and the generation of poetry (as well as letters and translations) are the fruits of her retreats with her Royalist, female friends. We see this idea further developed in Philips’s poem “To (the truly competent Judge of Honour) Lucasia, upon a scandalous libell made by J. Jones”—a poem where Philips calls upon her friend Lucasia to judge honor as “the result of mixed excellence”214 and “its own reward and end.”

Philips’ poem defends her own honor against Jenken Jones’ accusations (“Must then my crimes become thy scandall too?” Philips asks James in the related poem “To Antenor, on a paper of mine wch J. Jones threatens to publish to his prejudice”215). In her poem of defense and petition to Lucasia, Philips carefully separates opinion from “Laws,” and sets honor apart as untouched by gossip: “So honour is its own reward and

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213 Shifflett, 61.
215 Ibid., 116, 1.
end / And satisfyed within, cannot descend / To beg the suffrage of a Vulgar tongue.”

According to Philips, like beauty, honor exists “as truly sweet / Were there no tongue to praise, no eye to see’t.” Honor, like a person in retreat, can exist apart from “vulgar tongue[s],” eyes or ears. It is at this point in the poem where honor becomes concurrently the trace of virtue and the emblem of retreat:

[Honor] is the charter of a noble action,
That the performance gives it satisfaction.
Other things are below it; from a Clown
Would any Conquerour receive his Crown?
‘Tis restless cowardize to be a drudge
To an uncertain and unworthy Judge.
So the Camelion, who lives on Aire,
Is of all creatures most incline’d to feare;
But peaceable reflections on the mind
Will in a silent Shade contentment find.
Honour keeps court at home, and doth not feare
To be condemn’d abroad, if quitted there.
While I have this retreat, ‘tis not the noise
Of slander, though believ’d, can wound my Joys.
There is advantage in’t: for gold uncoyn’d
Had been unusefull, nor with glory shin’d:
This stamp’d my innocence, which lay i’ th’ Oare,
And was as much, but not so bright, before.
Till an Alembique wakes and outward draws,
The strength of sweets ly sleeping in their cause:
So this gave me an opportunity
To feed upon my own integrity.
And though their Judgement I must still disclaine,
Who can nor give, nor take away a fame:

217 Ibid., 33-4.
218 Metonymic tropes for the common people in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar and Timon of Athens, in Philips’ poem “vulgar tongue” refers to Jenkin Jones, anti-Cromwellian puritan.
Yet I’ll appeale unto the knowing few,
Who dare be Just, and rip my hear to you.219

Philips’ poem “To…Lucasia, upon a scandalous libell…” counters a powerful, political threat—the publication of her anti-parliamentarian poetry circulating as coterie manuscript—with an equally strong and direct response. In her poem, Philips separates virtuous action from public approval, “conquerers” from “clowns,” and the “cowardize” of service, “To an uncertain and unworthy Judge.” Philips’ even draws on the animal kingdom to illustrate the vagaries of public opinion: “So the Camelion, who lives on Aire / Is of all creatures most inclin’d to feare.” Philips’ poem recommends that the chameleon, with its airy “meal”220 (an early modern emblem of unrequited love) is “most inclin’d to feare” because it lives on unsubstantial food. What joins grammatically to the chameleon by way of a semi-colon is, for contrast, the Stoic mind and retreat: “But peaceable reflections on the mind / Will in a silent Shade contentment find.” Even before reaching the outright mention of retreat, Philips images retreat through language of shade and shadows, language she similarly employs shortly before her death in a letter to her friend Charles Cotterell. In her letter she comments, by way of defense for her language in her poem, “To the Queen’s Majesty, on her late Sickness and Recovery”: “I know how difficult it is to speak of Princes as we ought; how much more difficult it is then for one born and bred in so rude and dark a Retreat as I have been, to accost them

220 To quote Shakespeare’s Hamlet.
in such a manner as to deserve their Pardon?” Although the nature of retreat in her poem to her friend Ann Owens (Lucasia) is comfort and benefit rather than “rude,” and “shade” rather than “dark,” the change of light for darkness, even if it is shade, signals the difference of worlds between London, or Oxford, and Wales—signals, as Catherine Gray discusses, creation of and participation in a “counterpublic.”

The political context of this poem is Royalist opposition, and Philips steps up to its defense when she situates honor as “keep[ing] court at home”—a relocation of honor from the political public to the political private by way of the metaphor of a monarch in retreat.

This brings us to the “advantage” Philips claims on behalf of such “noise / Of slander”: a metaphoric shining of her innocence and strengthening of her lambent qualities or virtues. Philips employs the poetic images of a coin and a liquor/perfume, one made from purified “Oare” and the other distilled from “sleeping” sweets, to demonstrate the productive benefit of slander. Penelope Anderson reads these metaphors as indicative of “use” in (political) friendships, and writes:

> The conceits of the coin, stamped from gold, and of perfume, drawn out by an alembic, play on the distinction between various publics. The images describe a move from interior to exterior, an extraction of something precious in order to make something useful. It is both powerful – “there is advantage in’t” – and dangerous. For the gold coin, on which is “stamp’d my innocence,” circulates promiscuously, without the guarantees of an older system of gift-giving friendship. It is an especially unstable system of value given that the head usually stamped

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221 Quoted by Andrew Shifflet, 101.
On coins – the king’s – was so recently chopped off. The move from “retreat” into the world rejects the separation of spheres... but it also refuses friends the separate interests Philips asserts in the poem to her husband.223

Manuscript circulation, the only form of publication Philips approved for her poetry during her lifetime, was threatened by print—threatened by a non-coterie audience, and a broader, public readership. Anderson draws attention to the instability of the value system of circulation—a system Philips here engages with her poem’s judgments on honor and the “advantage” of slander’s noise. In Philip’s poem, retreat is central to mediating the slander caused by public circulation, as are “the knowing few” who help the poet negotiate her relationship to the “vulgar tongue.” Philips also provides an argument for virtue’s response to adversity—gold is purified, perfume distilled. The alembic, in addition to being an essence and part of the perfume process, was also an alchemical device in the seventeenth century, so the language of transformation is additionally present. What was “sleeping in [its] cause” wakes when confronted with slander’s noise and a broader circulation. “This gave me opportunity / To feed upon my own integrity,” Philips’ speaker confesses.

Scholar Catharine Gray, on the other hand, reads the audience of “the knowing few” as ultimately more vital to the work of Philip’s poetry and writing than the

223 Anderson, Friendship’s Shadows, 73.
dubious advantages notoriety might bestow on a non-aristocratic, Royalist writer such as Philips. Gray notes,

>This contradictory relation to a wider public presented as both a demeaning, democratic devolution of poetic power and as a minting of texts that are otherwise devoid of use value is partially resolved by Philips’s final appeal to a Royalist readership, embodied by Lucasia, that will vindicate her political poem: “Yet I’ll appeal unto the knowing few, / Who dare be Just, and rip my heart to you.” It is this loose group of ideal writers and readers that Philips’s poetry works to unite.224

Gray’s reading returns us to the importance of audience in Philip’s work—Lucasia, or Ann Owens, is the ideal reader of this poem, named by the poem’s title as “the truly competent Judge of Honour.” Part of the advantage of slander is the “civil conversation” that results from confronting such slander—as Gray comments: “Philips’ manuscript poetry…continues this ideological work, its circulation and poetic repetitions binding together a group of Royalist writers as an elitist counterpublic.”225 Gray further notes that, “As Margaret Ezell has warned, we should read manuscript poetry as an alternate route for public identities, one that complements or competes with print culture.”226 What this particular poem’s carefully structured response to J. Jones (as well as other Royalist writers) highlights is how, as Gray observes: “The coterie, and the intimate sphere of female friendship embedded within it, both do double duty as the means of separation from popular debate, and the grounds for oblique counterpublic engagement

224 Gray, “The Knowing Few: Katherine Philips and the Courtly Coterie,” 130.
225 Gray, 119.
226 Ibid.
of it.”\(^{227}\) The same could be said of Philips’ conception of and use of retreat in her poems—retreat is “the means of separation from popular debate, and the grounds for oblique counterpublic engagement of it”—retreat not an absence of politics or the social, but an alternate engagement with it that creates new conversations via new political formation. As Shifflett comments, the Stoic posed a threat to the political status quo,\(^{228}\) reflected in the style and forms employed by the challengers: “Stoics such as Seneca and Lipsius were interested in a different sort of style from that of Cicero’s ideal orator, one meant not to join groups together but to separate them and keep them so. This style—often explicitly an epistolary style—was appropriate to the politics of dissidence rather than the politics of the forum or court.”\(^{229}\) Shifflet’s argument for a separation of style as well as audience is compelling to bring alongside Philips’ poem to Lucasia regarding J. Jones’ political interference. The poem closes with the confiding couplet: “Yet I’ll appeale unto the knowing few / Who dare be Just, and rip my heart to you.” The verb “rip” is the obsolete use, “to disclose, make known,” and voids the threat of J. Jones’ disclosure with the promise that Philips will make her appeal to a closed and elite community of Royalist friends rather than to the public and “vulgar tongue.” Justice is not ubiquitous, Philips’ poem acknowledges, and as a practice it is only to be trusted when administered by “the knowing few,” e.g. Philips’ sequestered, Royalist readers.

\(^{227}\) Gray, 120.
\(^{228}\) Shifflett, 24.
\(^{229}\) Ibid., 23
A poem bearing a date following Philips’ August 23, 1651 poem to Ardelia, “A Retired Friendship…” is addressed to yet a third female friend: Rosania, Philips’ “oldest coterie friendship”\textsuperscript{230} and her schoolfriend, Mary Aubrey. This poem, “19. Septemb. Rosania shaddow’d whilst Mrs M. Awbrey. 1651,” presents its readers with a passionate character defense of Rosania. In doing so, the poem strains the editorial reading of Philips’ “pastoral sobriquets” as being “useful in avoiding unwanted attention from the censors as well as protests from those of the poet’s subjects who might feel their privacy breached in a manner unbefitting the gentry.”\textsuperscript{231} Editor Patrick Thomas goes so far as to argue that, “Orinda probably found it necessary to shield the individuals she wrote to and about before she required a mask for herself”—a slippage between Orinda, the speaker of Philips’ poems, and the biographical Katherine Philips that is interesting for two reasons: first, that it reveals how natural such a slippage is, particularly since we can identify the majority of coterie names employed in Philips’ poetry. Second, that Philips’ readers, to include her Royalist coterie but probably a manuscript reading circle extending slightly beyond “the knowing few,” would know precisely whose character was being defended in “Rosania shaddow’d.”

The poem opens with Orinda (presumably, although unnamed) declaring,

\begin{quote}
If any could my deare Rosania hate,  
They onely should her character relate.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 8.
Truth shines so bright here, that an enemy
Would be a better Oratour than I.
Love stiffles Language, and I must confesse,
I had said more, if I had loved lesse.\textsuperscript{232}

Here Philips draws a comparison between the speech acts of an Oratour\textsuperscript{233} and that of Orinda, a friend to Rosania. Although the figurative language seems intended to draw a comparison between the (relatively) easy speech an uninvested person might make of her friend versus the way “Love stiffles Language,” it also draws attention to the fact that this is a written defense to a group of coterie readers rather than a speech given to a public crowd. This initial acknowledgment of her poem’s non-oratorial style (and audience) becomes materially important to the poem after line 50, when Orinda’s lines reach their peak of the defense:

Her honour is protected by her eys,
As the old flaming sword kept paradise.
Such constancy, such temper, truth and law,
Guides all her actions, that the world may draw
From her one Soule the noblest president
Of the most safe, wise, vertuous government.
She courts retirement, is her self alone,
Above a Theatre, and beyond a Throne.
So rich a Soule, none can say properly
She hath, but is each noble quality.
And as the highest element is cleare
From all the tempests which disturb the aire:
So shee above the world and its rude noise,
Within a storme a quiet calme enjoys.

\textsuperscript{233} Recollecting Shifflet’s note that the Stoics, against the figure of Cicero’s orator, drew on styles heightening the politics of dissent rather than the rhetoric of assent.
Philips’ Orinda presents Rosania as an ideal Stoic, and represents the “self-keeping” of her honor as both the flaming sword and paradise itself—arguably one of the greatest enclosure narratives (and, here, image of Stoic retirement). Paradise, unlike Marvell’s garden, as a poetic figure contains both retirement and sociability. It is an ideal image for Philips’ defense of Rosania, in that Philips wants to direct her reader’s attention to Rosania’s virtue as considered set apart from friendships and society—Rosania, herself, is morally sufficient. Not only that, but Rosania is a political model to the rest of the world: “the world may draw / From her one Soule the noblest president / Of the most safe wise, vertuous government.” Why, then, the emphasis on her self-government and singularity—her solitude, even? Part of the answer is that Philips’ defense of Rosania depends also on her readers’ literacy with the virtues of Stoic retirement: “She courts retirement, is her self alone / Above a Theatre, and beyond a Throne.” Hero Chalmers discusses how the framing of the female Royalist in retirement in Philips’ work describes a political potency that Royalist men could likewise look to for solace in their own experiences of political disenfranchisement. In describing her friend’s virtues as belonging to her alone, but also conditioned by her position apart from the accoutrements of aristocratic life and monarchy—the court theatre, the throne—Philips describes the greater part of her coterie’s members as Royalists in retirement. Her defense of Rosania thus appeals to Royalist coterie readers while justifying the very

form of their political lives as members of the “counterpublic” and political dissenters. As such, Rosania is a model to “the world,” but also to “the knowing few,” whose lives also model retirement, inner government, and an engagement with the Stoic concept of constancy. When Philips describes Rosania as the clear air above the storms, she describes not only Rosania in relationship to political embroilments, but Rosania’s participation in a Royalist counterpublic. The couplet, “So shee above the world and its rude noise / Within a storme a quiet calme enjoys,” proclaims a defense of her friend as someone not involved in political entanglements at the same time as it signals Rosania’s participation in a specific group of retired Royalists.

Hero Chalmers, in ‘Above a Theatre and Beyond a Throne’: Cavendish, Philips, and the Potency of Feminized Retreat, positions Philips’ retreat poems within a reading of a Royalist optics. Chalmers opens her chapter by suggesting,

that [Philips’ and Margaret Cavendish’s] depictions of feminine withdrawal reflect the interregnum royalist need to represent the space of retirement or interiority as the actual centre of power. As royalists began to be forced into retreat by the sequestration of their estates, ejection from public office, imprisonment, or exile during the 1640s, a rhetoric of paradox emerged in the work of cavalier poets eager to convert withdrawal into self-assertion, disenfranchisement into power, confinement into freedom, and so on.

Chalmer’s work provides historical and political context for thinking about Philips’ retreat poems and mending the critical dividing of Philips’ poetry between Sappho or

236 Ibid., 105.
Philosopher, friendships or politics. As Catharine Gray argues, Philips’ manuscript poetry continues an “ideological work, its circulation and poetic repetitions binding together a group of Royalist writers as an elitist counterpublic.” Gray reads Philips’ inclusion in William Cartwright’s Comedies and Henry Lawes Second Book of Ayres as evidence that “[Philips’] own writing helps to transform this group into a politico-aesthetic community of which she is a central force, one bound by its identification with the Caroline court and universities, but shifted to the post-courtly context of Revolutionary London and, in Philips’ case, Wales.” I bring Gray’s reading alongside Chalmers to show how Philips’ poetry can be read on either side the fault lines of interior/exterior, or private/public. Even when critics acknowledge the primacy of politics in Philips’ work, there still exists a tendency to read Philips’ work as though the poetry itself made nothing happen. As though the poetry is a (re)presentation of something—Royalist power, dissenting political strength, female friendship—and does not itself enact, and create, political power and friendships. For such an active, causal reading of Philips’ poetry to happen, contemporary readers must confront the themes of discord and betrayal in Philips’ work.

For the purpose of this chapter, and the consideration of the concept of retreat as inseparable from sociability, Philip’s poem “Invitation to the Countrey” demonstrates

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237 Gray, 119.
238 Phillips is the only woman included in the volume, and her panegyric poem appears first.
239 Gray, 119.
240 To echo Lewalski’s comments on Aemilia Lanyer’s poetry in “Re-writing the male patronage networks.”
how Philips’ poetry makes things happen in the context of her Royalist coterie. In this poem, Philips invites Rosania—that singular character of virtuous self-government—into retreat and friendship. The poem does not open as a clear eulogy to friendship, however, but demonstrates, as Penelope Anderson argues regarding Philips’ friendship poetry, the possibility for friendship to be a means of navigating political and social upheaval. The opening imperative takes Philips’ reader (although, presumably not her intended audience, Rosania) by surprise, especially as it is followed by a proclamation of penance:

Be kind, my deare Rosania, though ‘tis true
Thy friendship will become thy penance too;
Though there be nothing can reward the paine,
Nothing to satisfy or entertain;
Though all be empty, wild, and like to me,
Who makes new troubles in my company:
Yet is the action more oblieging-great;
‘Tis hardship onely makes desert compleat.241

The opening words, “Be Kind,” are both the language of imperative and petition, and as such, introduce the tension of Philips’ “invitation”—for the poem’s opening does not depict the destination as a perfect, bucolic retreat. Although Philips employs the language of penance and pain to playfully describe friendship’s obligations, nevertheless the poem’s language of invitation is stark as it outlines the landscape and environment the friends will be escaping to in the country. “Though there be nothing

can reward the paine / Nothing to satisfy or entertain,”242 functions as a negative assertion balancing both a description of friendship’s obligations and loyalties as well as the proposed residence in the country. The language of the country’s wilds, in turn, stretches to encompass the speaker’s whole political world: “Though all be empty, wild, and like to me / Who make new troubles in my company.”243 This poem, not included in Women Poets of the English Civil War, and not glossed by editors as far as I have found, presents its reader with a thorny description of both friendship and the country. Critics seem reticent about unpacking this particular Philips’ poem, although Penelope Anderson’s work examines friendship’s troubles in Philips’ poetry. Having supplied lines tinged with some kind of despair regarding the company the poem’s speaker keeps—“Though all be empty, wild, and like to me / Who makes new troubles in my company”—the poem’s opening quatrain resolves on a couplet that, nevertheless, is divided by its grammar: “Yet is the action more obleiging-great; / ’Tis hardship onely makes desert compleat.”244 Here, the poem’s speaker proffers the obligation of friendship via the invitation itself, and reminds her friend of the correlation between hardship and “desert,” between toil and reward. One cannot separate the language of morality from the language of friendship’s invitation, the penance of friendship and the seeming irrelevance of the company (“all be empty, wild, and like to me”) from the

242 Philips, “Invitation to the Countrey,” 3-4.
243 Ibid., 5-6.
244 Ibid., 7-8.
relationship, however, and it is Rosania’s kindness that makes the invitation possible.

Anderson’s argument regarding friendship in Philips’ poetry is helpful to bring to the opening of “Invitation to the Countrey.” In Friendship’s Shadows, Anderson addresses Philips’ philosophical and poetic navigation of the English Civil War, and writes,

The crises of the English Civil Wars undermine the moral basis of [Ciceronian Humanism]—in no small part due to the accumulated evidence of King Charles’s own promise-breaking. Philips responds to this crisis by using the rhetoric of Ciceronian amicitia, with its emphasis on moral faithfulness, to make—and, crucially, remake—alliances in the face of their demonstrated collapse. Philips is Tacitist in the sense that she depicts the breaking of faith, over and over again, but she is Ciceronian in the sense that she shows the reforming of that faith, over and over again, through the circulated texts of humanist rhetoric.245

The breaking of faith that Anderson discusses at the monarchal as well as the social level, pervades the opening of “Invitation to the Countrey,” creating not only ambiguity but even, to use Philips’ own language, “new troubles” where her (contemporary) reader might not expect to find them. Anderson’s discussion of Tacitist and Ciceronian inflections in Philips’ poetry allows a linking of the language of penance (a notably Catholic rite for Philips to employ as metaphor) with the idea of the re-formation of faith between two people. “Invitation to the Countrey” does not simply allow for a breaking of faith, but outlines the reality that such faith has already been broken, and will be broken in the future. It is company itself that has the agency to “make new troubles” for

245 Anderson, 164.
the speaker of the poem, and yet the invitation to sociability and retreat is offered without recourse to an easy metaphor of heaven or spiritual reward. “‘Tis hardship only makes desert compleat” is the closest Philips’ reader gets to reward, and it seems an explicitly earth-bound, political reward, tied to the reality that the speaker names as “empty, wild.” Still, the reward of virtue does seem to be proffered, and Anderson can help us think better about this gesture towards kindness and reconciliation as a reforming of relationship enacted in Philips’ poetry.

The failure of friendship is written into the opening lines of Philips’ “Invitation to the Countrey,” as is the bond of kindness between friends, ubiquitous dissatisfaction with the world and people, and the promise that hardship has meaning in that it, “makes desert compleat.” The invitation to sociable retreat does seem to extend beyond political and social failure—unnamed though they are in this undated poem, most likely written while Philips was residing in Wales. One can also read the concept of clemency and the “reforming of faith” behind the poem’s objections to its own premises and assertions—for example, the introduction is immediately followed with, “But yet, to prove mixtures all things compound / There may in this be some advantage found,” and proceeds to argue that kings have left their crowns for such a situation of retreat in the country. A second major turn in the poem comes after Philips has argued for the real value of the country as compared to the outward show of fortune, opinion and titles:

Thus all the glittering world is but a cheat,
Obtruding on our sense things grosse for great.
But he that can enquire and undisguise,
Will soone perceive the sting that hidden ly’s:
And find no joys merit esteem but those
Whose scene ly’s wholly at our own dispose. 246

Philips here makes the case for agency of place and person in the country, employing
the verb “ly’s” twice to compare the hidden sting of social honors with the joy of agency,
authority and freedom found in the country—the scene that “ly’s wholly at our own
dispose.” Philips’ objections and contradictions build to what, at line forty, becomes the
central force of her invitation’s argument to Rosania:

Man, unconcern’d without, himself may be
His own both prospect and security,
Kings may be slaves by their own passions hurl’d,
But who commands himself commands the World.
A countrey-life assists this study best,
When no distractions doth the soule arrest:
There heav’n and earth ly open to our view,
There we search nature and its author too;
Possess’d with freedome and a reall State
Look down on vice, on vanity, on fate.
There (my Rosania) will we, mingling souls,
Pitty the folly which the world controuls;
And all those Grandeurs which the most do prize
We either can enjoy, or will despise. 247

“The most” are compared, unfavorably, with Philips’ notion of “the knowing few” as
well as Philips’ favorite metaphor: one of mixture, combination, and “mingling souls,”
which circles back to the poem’s first objecting assertion: “But yet, to prove mixtures all

246 Philips, “Invitation to the Countrey,” 31-6.
247 Ibid., 40-50.
things compound / There may in this be some advantage found.” The poem’s third repetition of “ly” gestures once again to the freedom of the country and the friend’s potential experience of “a reall State” — language that describes both physical retreat on an estate and an alternative governance of the self, in comparison with England’s parliament or monarch. The country, argues Philips’ speaker, is the best place for a person to command themselves, and thus the World. Following the echoing of Stoic advice, “Kings may be slaves by their own passions hurl’d / But who commands himself commands the World,” we might ask if Philips successfully reconciles this Stoic emphasis on the self and self-governance with sociability and retreat?

The metaphoric mingling of souls and the formation of political friendship, reflected in Philips’ use of the first person plural, are essential to how Philips answers this question in “Invitation to the Countrey.” Philip’s use of “we” begins at line 44 and continues until the poem’s final line, “We either can enjoy, or will despise.” Through the mutual gaze of the first-person plural, Philips orients her reader towards a look of “pitty” to the world-controlling power of “folly.” This feeling of pity a shared response, and flexible to the feeling of the friends—they can either enjoy or despise the “Grandeurs” that others prize. When thinking about what the poem both claims and rejects for Rosania and the poem’s speaker, it is helpful to turn towards the larger

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248 Located, as the speaker so often is in Philips’ poetry, somewhere between the literary figure of Orinda and the historical-social person of Philips.
philosophical conversations in which Philips’ poetry is participating. As mentioned earlier, Anderson locates the political-philosophical work of Philips’ poetry as prescient of the sociability of natural law theory as well as the agreement of social contract theory. Anderson argues that Philips’ poetry both claims and rejects current ideas circulating in political thought in mid-seventeenth century England, observing: “In her poems addressing the question of multiple friendships and conflicting obligations, Philips finds another answer. By locating political virtue in friendship rather than in patriarchalism, Philips establishes a network of alliances that is both consensual and natural, both made and found.” Anderson’s work on amicitia in Philips’ poetry casts a light on this chapter’s central claim: that for Philips, you cannot have retreat without sociability—you cannot have Eden (as Marvell longingly imagines it in “The Garden”) alone. “Invitation to the Countrey” begins with an invocation to the kindness of friendship, and to the recognition of troubles occurring in community via the allusion to a sin or fault necessitating “penance.” But Philips’ poem offers a capacious mode of political friendship—it embraces the “hardship” of navigating friendship and removal to the country. In acknowledging the difficulty, penance and pain, not to mention the prospect

249 Anderson continues: “The continuance of friendships beyond – and by means of – the poems of friendship’s failures demonstrates clemency, a virtue traditionally reserved to kings but transferred, in the absence of a single monarch, to the royalist group of friends...this consensual basis suggests the model of social contract theory. In the years of the English Civil Wars, both royalists and republicans use the analogy between the marital contract and the political contract to their own ends. Royalists find in it a contract that is both consensual and irrevocable, thus arguing that citizens cannot legitimately overthrow their ruler. Republicans end up arguing that the revocability of the political contract extends to the marriage contract – thus John Milton argues for divorce. Contract theory is unlike amicitia in that it insists upon a single absolute commitment, in contrast to friendship’s totalizing, yet changeable, commitment,”167-8. 
of having “Nothing to satisfy or entertain” the two friends in the country, Philips is able to reflect on the troubles of friendship and political alliance proffered by her invitation. “Invitation to the Countrey” does much more than its title promises—it engages with an unnamed rupture between the friends, acknowledged by the poem’s opening directive and petition to Rosania to “Be kind.” Anderson argues that this kind of betrayal or break in friendship is part of Philips’ reimagining of political power and community, commenting: “Philips's appropriation of amicitia's textual generativity for women disproves patriarchalism more thoroughly because it enables the reforming of bonds after their rupture, constructing political power as process.”250 What for critics of the twentieth century was either a poetry of friendship or politics becomes a generative poetic process whereby the language of betrayal (implied by the language of penance in “Invitation to the Countrey”) is part of the language of friendship as well as how Philips’ navigates her multiple invitations to political formation, alliance and community. Philips’ “Invitation to the Countrey” demonstrates that the practice of friendship—and community—does not mean navigating away from rupture, but engaging it through the language of invitation and sociability.

If it is not paradise to live alone in Philips’ poems of retreat, neither is it a totalizing paradise to live in retirement with others. Yet though retirement, retreat and sociability are not insurance against the betrayal or failure of one’s friends, they can

250 Anderson, Friendship’s Shadows, 168.
potentially result in a shared experience, the outcome of invitation and consent. Living well with others is the (potential) currency of Philips’ poems of invitation and retreat—the country a place of power from which Philips can issue invitations as host and Royalist friend. In calling her women friends to her side through her circulating manuscripts, Philips’ retreat poems make a little world where women are host and guest, lover and beloved, friends. Philips is a pragmatic poet, in the sense that she takes what she needs from Stoic thought and generously amends it to accommodate her own social circle of Royalist, women friends. The concept of retreat becomes, in Philips’ hands, a conceptional-physical cradle that holds friendship, poetry and political calm in the same place at the same time. Against (or perhaps alongside) the language of coterie, Philips’ poetic-political practice reveals how the concepts of retreat and sociability can function in any small community where the aim is the practice of shared values.
Chapter 4. Reciprocal Esteem: Political Engagement as Collaboration in Mary Lady Chudleigh’s “The Ladies Defence”

On May 11, 1699, at Sherborne parish in Dorset, the minister John Sprint preached a wedding sermon entitled The Bride-Womans Counseller. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the men parishioners in attendance received the sermon, a lecture on wifely submission and obedience, more favorably than the women. By Sprint’s own admission, his sermon,

...designed only for the Pulpit, not for the press...is so unhappily represented to the World by some ill-natur’d Females, that I am necessitated to offer it to a Publick View; by means of which, tho’ I shou’d purchase the Character of a Block-head, yet I hope I shall get the advantage of convincing the World that I am not such an impudent Villain as my waspish Accusers have reported me to be. Be it known unto thee Reader, whosoever thou art, that I have not met with one Woman among all my Accusers whose Husband is able to give her the Character of a dutiful and obedient Wife.

Among other points, the “doctrine” espoused by Sprint in his sermon advocates a marital love dependent on the abject (or passive) obedience of the wife, Sprint’s language that of submission and domination rather than companionship. The difference in gendered reactions to the lesson of The Bride-Womans Counseller are noted in both Sprint’s printed sermon and the ensuing printed responses. Writes Mary, Lady

251 Then Dorsetshire.
252 John Sprint, The Bride-Womans Counseller, A1. While the final sentence of this citation is not necessary to include, this reader felt it successfully conveyed the gendered, polemical tone that came so easily to Sprint.
Chudleigh, an educated woman with extensive maternal family in Dorset on the reception of Sprint’s sermon: “I found that some Men were so far from finding fault with his Sermon, that they rather defended it, and express’d an ill-natur’d sort of Joy to see [women] ridicul’d.”253 Another “lady of Quality” noted that, upon receiving a copy of the printed sermon, “I laid aside the Book as a most self-confuting Piece, till I found that Miracles were not ceas’d, and that some People were so charm’d with it, that they thought it worth their while to teeze every poor Woman they met with it.”254 While it is difficult to say with any certainty what responses specifically motivated Sprint to have his sermon printed, one can confidently assert that the delivery of his marriage advice sermon caused a gendered commotion in the parish of Sherborne that rippled outward and into the print world of London, ultimately resulting in the generation of a collaborative, poetic response from a woman reader.

Editors of women’s print and manuscript scholarship note the general confidence with which women published their poetry at the turn of the eighteenth century (as opposed to, for example, the publishing careers of Katherine Philips or Lucy Hutchinson during and after the period of the English Civil War).255 The print response to Sprint’s The Bride-Womans Counsellor, however, to include Lady Chudleigh’s poem “The Ladies Defence,” demonstrate a politically heightened level of women’s print

253 Chudleigh, “To all Ingenious Ladies,” The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh, 3.
254 The Female Advocate, B2L.
255 The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing, 232.
engagement. While early modern women’s poetry would probably not subject women writers to controversy (particularly if it addressed a religious subject or classical translation), Chudleigh’s philosophical dialogue-in-verse, “The Ladies DEFENCE: Or, a Dialogue Between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson,” steps into a collaborative space of political, ecumenical and cultural challenge. Chudleigh did not need to create such a space, however, and both Chudleigh and Sprint acknowledge that she is not the first woman to respond in writing and subsequent publication. A sketch of the print drama surrounding The Bride-Womans Counseller goes as follows: in 1699, Sprint preaches and then has The Bride-Womans Counseller published by H. Hills. That same year, H. Hills also prints a response to Sprint’s sermon, The Female Preacher, attributed to “A Lady of Quality.”

The following year, 1700, The Female Preacher is reprinted as The Female Advocate by the printer Andrew Bell, this time naming the lady writer as one “Eugenia.” Also in 1700, The Bride-Womans Counseller is reprinted by W. Bowyer in London. The next year, 1701, John Deeve publishes Lady Chudleigh’s

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256 Carol Barash, in English Women’s Poetry, 1649-1714, notes “Although there are numerous books with ‘by a Lady’ on the title page by the middle of the 18th cent., in the 17th cent. anonymous publications by women usually do not mark themselves this way. Two crucial exceptions are Judith Drake (?), A Defence of the Female Sex (1697) and Mary, Lady Chudleigh, The Ladies Defence (1701). In 1701 the explicit conflation of class and gender authority under the title ‘lady’ are, as far as I can tell, unique to Finch,” 263-4 fn13.

257 Scholars have thought Chudleigh authored The Female Advocate, although the style of the text and response points to another’s authorship. Cf. Ezell, Introduction, The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh, xxix: “Eugenia[’s]...sharp-edged prose reproof to Spring is very different in tone and tactics from Chudleigh’s verse dialogue...[e.g.] Eugenia claims a small acquaintance with Greek and Latin and to ‘having adventur’d a little abroad into the World, and endeavour’d to understand Men and Manners.”
dialogue poem response, “The Ladies Defence.” In 1702, the well-known publisher Bernard Lintot non-consensually appends (i.e. pirates) a copy of “The Ladies Defence” to the second edition of Mary, Lady Chudleigh’s poems. The several authors and printers involved, the different geographies of the authors and readers (e.g. Dorset, Devon, London) and the confused blend of physical audience at the occasion of Sprint’s sermon and subsequent print-readers makes for a lively and multivocal conversation to reassemble retrospectively—a task scholarship has not, as of yet, taken up.

All authors involved, from John Sprint to the “lady of quality” (Eugenia) and Lady, Mary Chudleigh, note that they felt compelled to write—and publish—their responses. In fact, Sprint and his male readers provoked women responders quite explicitly (if not intentionally) by placing copies of his printed sermon into their capable hands. Chudleigh notes that her copy came directly from Sprint while Eugenia notes that she was, “presented with the Book I am now going to consider, by a Gentleman who I am sure was very far in it from the design of the Author.” What Eugenia and Chudleigh’s responses to Sprint’s sermon demonstrate, as well as Sprint’s preface to his own text, is that the communities of Dorset and Devon were dealing with an enthusiastically gendered response to The Bride-Womans Counseller that threatened

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258 Presumably with Lady Chudleigh’s permission (Cf. The Poems and Prose, 248).
259 As The Female Preacher seems to have been.
260 This says something interested about what women (intelligent, well-born) John Sprint considered his ideal readers to be, and we know for a fact he sought out the readership of Lady Chudleigh.
262 B1.
married households and male-female relationships rather than supported and encouraged them. Chudleigh cites the “ill-natur’d sort of Joy” men took in the ridiculing of women following Sprint’s sermon, and Eugenia the “teezing” of “every poor woman.” In addition to the behavior of male parishioners (some outright mocking women, others “Pretenders to more Generosity and good Humour…yet too proud, too much devoted to their Interest, and too indulgent to their Pleasures, to give themselves the Trouble of saying any thing”), there was the behavior of the minister himself that Chudleigh cites as inciting her poetic response:

Besides it vex’d me to think he should have the Satisfaction of believing, that what by the Malice of some, the Neutrality of others, and the Sacredness of his Character, he was secur’d from all Opposition, and might triumph over [women] at his Pleasure: it also troubl’d me to find that but one of our own Sex had the Courage to enter the Lists with him: I know there are several other Ladies, who, if they wou’d be so kind to themselves, and you, as to undertake the Quarrel, wou’d manage it with more Learning, Eloquence and Address, than I dare pretend to, as being infinitely my Superiours in all the Indowments of the Mind; but since they think fit to decline it, I hope they will permit me to enter the Field, and try my Fortune with our mighty Antagonist.

The battlegrounds, in Chudleigh’s estimation, are those of print and publication—here women can “enter the lists” against a male antagonist on surprisingly equal terms. Chudleigh also frames the endeavor of responding in print in terms of courage rather than intellectual superiority (e.g. “indowments of the Mind”). That Chudleigh employs

[264] Ibid. Perhaps worth noting the overtones of the devil of Satan as “mighty antagonist.”
the metaphor of jousting to describe her response prepares her reader to encounter a highly political and engaged text, and places her poetry in the company of the many prose tract responses authored by men throughout the seventeenth century. Neither is Chudleigh alone in her understanding of print as battlegrounds, and she acknowledges as much when she recognizes the woman author of The Female Preacher and The Female Advocate. In fact, Chudleigh borrows her language of the joust from “Eugenia,” who employs several figures of fighting to explain her authorship to her readers, for example, “Upon [the teasing of women] I began to have some design of taking Arms, and alarming the whole Power of Females against [Sprint]. But upon second thoughts I resolv’d to save ‘em the trouble, and enter into a single Combat with this great Goliah, this man of mighty Fame.”265 It seems that more than several women were, in fact, “alarmed” against John Sprint, since he notes his “Waspish accusers” in plural in the preface to his sermon. Eugenia’s rationale for writing and publishing The Female Advocate seems to be her realization that a single person, even one considered socially insignificant as David the shepherd boy might, through a published response, perform a representative strength for a whole group of persons against the threat of a larger Goliath. Eugenia, like Chudleigh, also takes care to note that she is not the first of her kind:266

265 The Female Advocate, B2l.
266 And perhaps prompts us to consider how women writers must continually make this case.
'Tis not the first time a Woman has appear’d in Public, and ‘twill be hard for any to accuse us for taking up Weapons since they are only defensive, and we are provok’d into the Field by so great and honourable a Champion. Besides, the itch of being in Print which the Men have inflected us with, and the Glory of having but lifted up a Pen against so great a Man, must needs be a sufficient Excuse beyond all Reply.267

Eugenia and Chudleigh’s responses to Sprint’s sermon demonstrate a different valence of reply necessitated by their gender—one that must include a justification for responding (unlike, for example, a volley of political tracts occurring between two men writers where the authorship would not be contested in the same way).268 In the case of early modern women’s authorship, there has to be good reason for it—such as devotional use, a sacred subject or the task of translating a (male) classical author’s text. Eugenia makes the claim of provocation “into the field” of print—her argument is that she is responding self-defensively. Her text would not exist without the challenge, and in that sense it is a fight to which she, as a woman, has been invited to participate. She also argues that men have modelled print practices and infected women with the “itch” of publication; in other words, the phenomena of print culture is a shared one, spreading like a pathogen to women. Yet women responding to men in print is an unusual enough practice that Eugenia notes the “Glory” of responding with publication which constitutes “sufficient Excuse beyond all Reply.” Eugenia’s reference to “glory,” like Chudleigh’s of “courage,” promises women readers (and potential women authors) the

267 The Female Advocate, B2r.
268 Lower class and social status bring male authors closer but not all the way down to the place where a woman’s authorship resides.
virtues and goods usually associated with men’s books and men’s battles—and yet Chudleigh will dramatically redirect the manner of such gendered engagement and the nature of the “contest.”

Chudleigh’s justification for her writing includes, like Eugenia’s, the reasoning of taking up a challenge and “trying” against the women’s “mighty Antagonist.” But Chudleigh, ever thinking towards the self-education of women, also takes the opportunity to address the “kindness” of undertaking “the Quarrel”—ladies who respond to such a challenge are “kind to themselves,” Chudleigh declares. Before taking up her own argument against John Sprint’s The Bride-Womans Counseller, Chudleigh qualifies the kind of engagement her readers are to expect—one anchored, as she explains in her preface, in “a reciprocal Esteem”269 between men and women rather than “passive obedience” or unkindness to the self. Chudleigh’s admittance of emotional provocation to write makes a gendered claim about women’s publishing at the turn of the century: women’s printed texts could be provoked (“vex’d”) by a male author, to whom they could respond in kind—or, women could be angry in print, and politically justified in their anger.270 In other words, women could engage in print culture in the same manner and style as men; but should they? In terms of an arc of early modern women’s agency through collaborative textual practices, Lady Chudleigh’s work marks

270 For more on the instructive anger of Lady, Mary Chudleigh, cf. Marilyn L. Williamson’s Raising Their Voices: British Women Writers, 1650-1750, 90-98.
a significant transformation and growth in women’s political engagement and intellectual agency through writing and publication. The timing and urgency of the printed responses to Sprint’s sermon also demonstrate both the interest and the means (amenable printers, booksellers) that women writers had in satisfying “the itch of being in Print.” What is at stake in Chudleigh’s response to Sprint is the mode of her engagement, what the manner of her response not only recommends but enacts regarding the conversation of men and women.

In Chudleigh’s dedicatory preface to her Essays upon Several Subjects, she reflects on the second edition of “The Ladies Defence” pirated by the publisher Bernard Lintot, spending the second half of her dedication contextualizing her earlier poem which had been stripped of its paratexts (the “Epistle Dedicatory” and “Preface”) by Lintot. According to Chudleigh, the cutting of her paratexts, “left the Reader wholly in the Dark, and expos’d me to Censure.” 271 The context of response and collaboration are essential to how Chudleigh imagined the reading experience of “The Ladies Defence,” and Chudleigh urges her potential readers to recover the responsive context of her writing and to read Sprint’s sermon as well: “I would beg the Favour of all such as are willing to understand my Poem, to give themselves the Trouble of reading the Sermon which occasion’d it; part of it was answered in the Preface, and the whole paraphrased

271 Chudleigh, The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh, 248.
in the Dialogue.” It is an interesting move for Chudleigh to advocate, in her preface to *Essays upon Several Subjects*, the relationship between two texts not included in the present volume: Sprint’s sermon and her own “The Ladies Defence.” It both speaks to and performs Chudleigh’s authorial responsibility by recovering a context removed by the previous publisher of her *Poems on Several Occasions*. Chudleigh goes so far as to tell her reader where to specifically look for her response to specific doctrinal points made by Sprint: her preface and the body of the poem in which, according to Chudleigh, Sprint’s sermon is “whole paraphrased.” The distinction of her poem as a response to Sprint’s *The Bride-Womans Counsellor* versus being a text wholly inspired by Chudleigh herself contextualizes “The Ladies Defence” as a response “and not,” Chudleigh explains, “as some have maliciously reported, for an Invective on Marriage.” The presence of shared or mutual authorship, as Chudleigh here claims for “The Ladies Defence,” outlines an act of collaborative writing growing out of a social practice “reciprocal esteem.”

By knowing that Chudleigh’s “The Ladies Defence” responds explicitly to Sprint’s sermon and even “paraphrases” the minister’s text, Chudleigh’s reader should be able to consider the content of Sprint’s sermon and see reflected there the “vices”.

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272 Chudleigh, *The Poems and Prose of Mary, Lady Chudleigh*, 249.
273 Or characterizations of women, for example Sprint’s analogy of the mirror: “A good Wife, (says one) should be like a Mirrour which hath no Image of its own, but receives its Stamp and Image from the Face that looks into it: So should a good Wife endeavour to frame her outward Deportment, and her inward
that Chudleigh’s poem satirizes. But in fact, the majority of Sprint’s points do not attract
attention as being new or noteworthyly vicious, but rather old misogyny, a regurgitation
of negative views of women and their abilities. For example, Sprint advises that women
be instructed by men like school children and quotes the remonstrances of Isaiah:

“Women have need of Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a Little and there a Little;
and all little enough to make them perfect in their Lesson [of submission and
obedience]”274. Even Sprint’s admonishment of contingent marital love (“the Love of a
Husband does very much depend upon the Obedience of a Wife”) is not unthinkably
removed from the scriptural logic of Ephesians 5:22-27, at least not when the concepts of
wifely submission and husbandly love are extracted from their fuller contexts of mutual
submission and love/self-love.275 Neither, of course, is this to say that educated persons
contemporary with Sprint (men intellectuals, pastors, priests and women such as Lady
Chudleigh) were not actively advocating for mutual respect and reciprocity in the

Affections according to her Husband’s; to rejoice when he rejoiceth, to be sad when he mourns, to grieve
and be troubled when he is offended and vexed,” A4.

274 Sprint, The Bride-Womans Counseller, A31. The italicized phrases are loosely taken from Isaiah 28:10, “For
precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a
little.”

275 Ephesians 5:22-27, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the
husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
Protestant estate of matrimony. Reflective of such an oppositional discursive vein and against Sprint’s subordinate philosophy of matrimonial relations, Lady Chudleigh argues,

I would have [men] look upon [women] as Friends, as Persons fit to be confided in, and trusted with their Designs, as such whose Interest is inseparably united with theirs: by such Methods as these, they would not only win their Love, but preserve it, and engage ‘em to a reciprocal Esteem; and when once they have secur’d their Affection, they need not doubt of their Obedience; the desire to please will render the most difficult Commands easie.277

Lady Chudleigh’s navigation of wifely obedience presented in the preface to “The Ladies Defence” shows a woman author engaging her opponent as she recommends married persons do: reciprocally, through acts of mutual esteem. Chudleigh’s language is the language of friendship, kindness and trust; the concepts she chooses to bring to her response highlight what is lacking from the attitude and style of Sprint’s sermon—omissions which Chudleigh’s reply reveals to be performing not only skepticism but hostility towards relationships between married (and single) men and women.278

Chudleigh’s preface’s language of “reciprocal esteem” finds its rhetorical opponent in the language of colonialism and empire engaged in The Bride-Womans Counsellor through arguments drawing on the metaphors of tyranny, slavery and

276 Henry Bullinger’s The Christian State of Matrimony (1541) is an early and popular example of a text advocating the concept and practice of companionate marriage—mutuality, not equality.
278 If Chudleigh wrote now, in the twenty-first century, she might employ the notion of “bad faith” in her rhetorical reproof of Sprint.
servitude. Examining the shared (yet differently employed) language of colonialism and empire that appears in Eugenia and Lady Chudleigh’s prose responses to Sprint allows Chudleigh’s readers greater access to the contextual drama of “The Ladies Defense” (and Chudleigh’s character Melissa, as an educated English woman in dialogue with a parson and two aristocratic men). But, most importantly, studying both Sprint’s language of servitude and slavery and Eugenia and Chudleigh’s direct prose responses allows the reader “The Ladies Defence” greater access to the dialogue’s language (and practice of) kindness through its enactment of gendered collaboration.

The author Eugenia and Lady Chudleigh share the language of colonialism and empire in their mutual, focused critique of Sprint’s call to wifely “passive obedience,” a pastoral prescription that finds particularly grating expression in Sprint’s example of “The Persian Ladies.” Addressing his parishioners, Sprint explains: “Married Women, in order to please their Husbands, ought to honour them. The Persian Ladies have the resemblance of a Foot worn on the top of their Coronets, in token that the height of their Glory, Top-knot and all, does stoop to their Husbands Feet.” Sprint’s women respondents give swift reply to this Persian fashion advice and Eugenia retorts, “Then he tells us, Married Women are to please their husbands by honouring them (by all means, Honour to whom Honour is due.) But I think he goes a little too far when he makes it a

279 To use Chudleigh’s phrasing.
280 Sprint, The Bride-Womans Counseller, 11.
Woman’s duty to lie like a Spaniel at her Husband’s feet, and suffer her self very civilly to be trampled on.”²⁸¹ Sprint’s striking example of the emblem of a foot, culled from a foreign nation, is more than English women such as Eugenia and Lady Chudleigh can stomach. Eugenia reads such a treatment of women as the treatment of a dog, and pushes Sprint’s example further to reveal its deeper implications:

This he intimates [the civil trampling of women] by the authentic story of the Persian Ladies, who had the similitude of a Foot worn on the top of their Coronets…and by the bold and insolent Comment he makes on it. Now this you know is a most clear and oriental Argument, and proves just as much as the strongest Hieroglyphics of Egypt. Is it impos’d on them, or do they wear it willingly? If the former, where’s the Virtue? If the latter, I can hardly think it proves what he would persuade us, unless the Gentlemen of Persia are very obliging indeed. Here again we see very clearly what this Gentleman would be at: A Woman, when once she is enter’d within the Grates, and the Parson has turn’d the Key upon her, is no longer to look on her self as a Companion, but the highest place she can expect is to be trodden underfoot. This is the height of Glory, this is the Advancement our Sex is to meet with, if all Men were of such wonderful Temper, and noble Principles, as this our trusty and well-beloved Friend is.²⁸²

The language of trampling and bondage latent in Sprint’s description of the “Persian Ladies” develops into a full-blown critique in the printed pages of The Female Advocate. “Is it imposed on them?” Eugenia asks, highlighting the unfamiliarity of the practice to English readers. She also rebukes and decries the foreignness of the practice and practitioners (“a most clear and oriental Argument”) and compares the soundness of Sprint’s argument and conclusion to grammatical sense of a foreign alphabet—the

²⁸¹ The Female Advocate, 39-40.
²⁸² Ibid., 40.
Hieroglyphics of Egypt. The language of companionate marriage comes to the fore as Eugenia illustrates the diminishment of a woman’s personhood through Sprint’s view of subordinate marriage: “A woman when once…the Parson has turn’d the key upon her, is no longer to look on herself as a Companion, but…is to be trodden underfoot.” The indignation present in the tone of Eugenia’s response and scathing sarcasm (“This is the height of Glory, this is the Advancement our Sex is to meet with…”) is a rhetorical pitch written up to and bolstered by language throughout *The Female Advocate*. Earlier in her response, Eugenia concedes,

> Now I own ‘tis true that Woman was made for the Comfort and Benefit of Man: but I think it a much nobler Comfort to have a Companion, a Person in whom a Man can confide, to whom he can communicate his very Soul, and open his Breast and most inward Thoughts, than to have a Slave sitting at his Footstool, and trembling at every word that comes like Thunder and Lightning from the mouth of the domestic Pharaoh.283

To this dramatic scene of enslaved wife and husband-Pharaoh—indicating that Eugenia had the Persian ladies and “oriental argument” on her mind from the start—where the language of the husband booms “like thunder and lightning” down upon the trembling wife, Eugenia adds: “An honourable and noble Companion was doubtless intended by the wise Creator…a social help, not a servile one.”284 To illustrate such mutuality and companionship, Eugenia quotes John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, noting, “The Great Milton, a very grave Author, brings in Adam thus speaking to Eve…O fairest of Creation! last and

283 *The Female Advocate*, 20.
284 Ibid., 20-21.
best / Of all God’s Works.”285 Against Sprint’s logic of matrimonial tyranny, Eugenia argues that women are not slaves or vassals and that original sin “was convey’d alike to both Sexes.”286 Neither Eugenia nor Lady Chudleigh argue for equality in marriage and they both consider wifely submission as compatible with companionate marriage; a wife’s patience, however, not her subjection, suffices in terms of her response to her husband’s abuses: “Methinks it should suffice that the Women don’t contradict their Lords and Masters, that they tamely submit, and bear with Patience what is impos’d on them: No, unless they are enamour’d of their Miseries, and the very Desires of their Hearts brought under, and in subjection, they are threaten’d in our Author’s Preface with Judgment, and Damnation.”287

The tyranny that Eugenia shortly denounces is an internal tyranny of the wife’s thoughts and conscience, which Sprint sought to pastorally discipline in his sermon. While Chudleigh does not invoke the word tyranny explicitly, she does share the language of slavery that Eugenia explicitly employs:

This is a Tyranny, I think, that extends farther than the most absolute Monarchs in the World; for if they can but fill their Gallies with Slaves, and chain them fast to the Oar, they seldom have so large a Conscience to expect they should take any great pleasure in their present Condition, and that the very Desires of their Hearts should strike an Harmony with the clattering Music of their Fetters.288

285 The Female Advocate, 21.
286 Ibid., 22-23.
287 Ibid., 28, emphasis added.
288 Ibid., 28.
Eugenia casts her rhetorical net wide, “extending” her argument against the husband’s rule metaphorically and geographically to include “the World” and the colonial slave trade. The conceptual push is for the reader to link not only a husband’s abused authority to that of “the most absolute Monarch” or tyrant (and here we see how fluid the language becomes between qualified conceptions of “monarch” and “tyrant”), but to open their ears to “the clattering Music” of enslaved’s fetters. Having followed Eugenia’s analogy from tyrant to absolute monarchs, to the unhappy conditions of the enslaved and the ruling of internal states (“the very Desires of their Hearts”), by the time the reader is returned to the discussion of women and their matrimonial relationships with men, whole new geographic territories have been opened to discussion. The “clattering Music of…fetters” chimes continuously and persuasively throughout Eugenia’s discussion, as evidenced by Lady Chudleigh’s reading of The Female Advocate and subsequent assumption of the slavery analogy.

The concepts of companionate marriage and enslavement clash in The Female Advocate yet, as Eugenia points out, only one of these ideas is consonant with The Book of Common Prayer’s “The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony” (1562). Eugenia acknowledges the authorship of the marriage liturgy: “I am not about to quarrel with the Compilers of the Liturgy, only I shall take notice, that they were Men who had a hand in it, and by consequence would not omit the binding our Sex as fast as possible: But ‘tis also to be observed, that those words [with my Body I thee worship] if they have
any meaning in them, can never be applied to such a sort of Creature as is a Slave…”

Eugenia addresses the gender disparity inherent in the argument of Sprint’s sermon that focuses on the love, honor and obedience of the wife as instigative and causal of the husband’s affection. In referencing the husband’s vow as he places the ring on the wife’s finger, Eugenia brings back into focus the mutual declarations of bodily and spiritual service taking place in the marriage service. In Eugenia’s understanding and formation, “With my body I thee worship” cannot be said to the enslaved because the enslaved is not a person but “a sort of Creature” bound to abject obedience—not owed but owing, not served but serving. Eugenia wishes to assert rhetorical difference between the language of the enslaved person and the wife—yet, to do so is to avoid the root of the problem: the ubiquitous language of subjection and power inherent in Sprint’s sermon. Eugenia links the language of slavery to the “oriental Argument” of the “Persian Ladies”—yet in linking, she demonstrates an unwillingness to acknowledge how women’s subjection is bound to that of the enslaved, and to all persons treated as creatures. Instead, Eugenia argues that the enslaved person is unlike a woman, “so excellent a creature” (by the Apostle’s own confession remarks Eugenia). Of course, this argument sounds immediately strange when analyzed using the language of the enslaved person rather than the objectified language of “slave,” as Eugenia does. And

289 The Female Advocate, 36.
290 The Book of Common Prayer: “WITH this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”  
291 The Female Advocate, 40.
yet the more equitable language of the enslaved person comes immediately to Eugenia’s pen when the question of slavery is put to English women and wives. For example, when Eugenia asks of her reader the following rhetorical question, there resides a distinction between the act of enslaving an English woman and the existential state of “slaves” which is what happens to other people in more foreign parts:

And can it be the Glory of a Man to trample upon, and enslave, and render the Life of such an excellent Creature as miserable as he can? And here he insinuates that we take a great deal of freedom in our Thoughts. Certainly if we had not freedom there, we were very Slaves....’tis very hard, and a strange Doctrine indeed, that they must not be allow’d to have contemptible thoughts...²⁹²

Calling out the misplaced “Glory” of marriage emphasized in Sprint’s sermon is the primary work of Eugenia’s The Female Advocate—in returning frequently to the language of “trampling” and the image of the foot on “the Persian Ladies’ coronets,” she confronts the simultaneous misplacement and misreading of married women’s roles in relation to their husbands. She draws a fast line around that which must ultimately be free: conscience and “freedom in our Thoughts,” which to bind is to “enslave.” And yet Eugenia’s recommendation for companionship and kindness is limited to that of the English wife and does not ultimately respond to the language of the enslaved and the servant; Eugenia only seeks to lift one particular kind of person and life out of
subjection. Part of what is necessitated here is a radical change of literary form and engagement, which we find in Chudleigh’s dialogue-in-verse, “The Ladies Defence.”

Lady Chudleigh depends on Eugenia’s discussion of Sprint’s sermon in both her prose dedication and preface to “The Ladies’ Defense.” Yet, while she critiques Sprint’s rough usage of women, Chudleigh is pointed in her confessed motivations for writing her poem, centering the education of her sincere women readers as her text’s aim and naming these women as her chosen audience, observing: “‘Tis for their Sakes alone I have made the following Remarks” (i.e. her preface). She then instructs her women readers as to how the form of her poem works: “I have done it by way of Dialogue, and those Expressions which I thought would be indecent in the Mouth of a Reverend Divine, are spoken by Sir John Brute, who has all the extraordinary Qualifications of an accomplish’d Husband; and to tender his Character compleat, I have given him the Religion of a Wit, and the good Humour of a Critick.” If Chudleigh’s reader should sense some sarcasm or mockery in the Chudleigh’s noting of “all the extraordinary Qualifications of an accomplish’d Husband,” in her later Essays Upon Several Subjects (1710), Chudleigh will further explain that Sprint’s sermon was partly “answer’d in the Preface, and the whole paraphas’d in the Dialogue [“The Ladies Defence”]: Some Expressions I thought too harsh to be spoken by a Divine; for which Reason they are

294 Ibid.
295 Ibid.
repeated by Sir John Brute, who, as I’ve already observ’d, is a complicated Character, a Person in whom are sum’d up all the disagreeable Qualities that are to be found among Mankind.”

This naming of Sir John Brute’s “disagreeable Qualities” and additional contextualizing alerts Chudleigh’s readers as to the truly objectionable parts of Sprint’s sermon, in that Chudleigh tells her readers that she parses the most egregious statements from *The Bride-Woomans Counseller* and from them creates a vicious, “complicated” character: Sir John Brute. In addition to dramatizing the greatest faults of Sprint’s sermon through character, Chudleigh adds what Sprint’s sermon lacks: the participating character and voice of a woman, Melissa. In creating Melissa, Chudleigh creates a gendered conversation where none existed in sermon form.

“The Ladies Defense: Or, a Dialogue Between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson,” opens with Sir John directly addressing the Parson:

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Welcome, thou brave Defender of our Right;
’Till now, I thought you knew not how to Write:
Dull heavy Morals did your Pens imploy;
And all your business was to pall our Joy:
With frightful Tales our Ears you still did grate,
And we with awful Reverence heard you prate;
Heard you declaim on Vice, and blame the Times,
Because we impudently shar’d your Crimes;
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297 Which her contemporary readers would probably have recognized as sharing a name with the brutal husband in Sir John Vanbrugh’s play *The Provoked Wife* (1697).
Till now, none of your Tribe were ever kind,
Good Humour is alone to you confin’d;
You, who against those Terrors of our Lives,
Those worst of Plagues, those Furies call’d our Wives,
Have shew’d your Anger in a Strain Divine,
Resentment sparkles in each poignant Line.
Sure you’ve the Fate of wretched Husbands met,
And ’tis your own Misfortune you regret;
You cou’d not else with such a feeling Sense
Expatiate on each Fault, and Blazon each Offence.288

The drama of Sprint’s sermon is here taken up in full rather than laid aside; it is the
instigating event of the dialogue, present in Sir John’s recognition of “Till now”—i.e., the
occasion of Sprint’s sermon. And though it is a dialogue, the practice of writing is
immediately addressed as well in lines two and three, integrated as part of the
experience of hearing sermons that “grate” upon the ears. Against Sir John’s generally
poor opinion of divines (“none of your Tribe were ever kind”), he lifts up the Parson,
pseudo-mockingly, as a men’s rights advocate (“thou brave Defender of our Right”).
Prior to the event of this particular sermon, Sir John’s experience was that of hearing a
morality preached to the men, who were implicated, “Because we impudently shar’d”
the Parson’s “crimes,” and so heard the sermons “with awful Reverence.” While is
possible Sir John’s use of the inclusive first person “we” here applies to the full parish
community and that he views all as instructed by the Parson’s sermons condemning vice
and the “Times,” given Sir John’s mock-jubilation at hearing “our Right” newly

defended it is likely Sir John references the Parson’s special attention to the vice of men, the Parson’s primary audience.

“Till now” simultaneously marks the occasion of the “strange doctrine” Eugenia rebukes in The Female Advocate: a gendered, matrimonial argument attacking (to quote Sir John), “those Terrous of our Lives, / Those worst of Plagues, those Furies call’d our Wives.” Although in her preface to “The Ladies Defence,” Lady Chudleigh does not speculate as to John Sprint’s motivations for The Bride-Womans Counseller (“What his Reasons were for using us so roughly, I know not; perhaps he did it to let us see his Wit, who has had the ill Fortunate to converse with Women of ungovernable Tempers”299), her character Sir John freely observes that the Parson has surely experienced wounding himself, remarking that it is “the fate of wretched Husbands” and “your own Misfortune” which spur the Parson onward with “such a feeling Sense” towards “those Terrous…Plagues…Furies” otherwise known as women and wives. The unhappy marriage that Sir John implies is confirmed when he turns, mid-address, to the other man present, exclaiming:

How happy, O Sir William, is your Life!
You have not known the Trouble of a Wife:
Your Rural Cares you undisturb’d can mind,
And ‘midst your Brutal Subjects Pleasure find…300

300 Ibid., “The Ladies Defence,” 23-26. The final line may or may not contain a bestiality reference.
Sir John’s characterization of women as terrors, plagues and furies implicates him as an
unhappily married man, and his complaint against matrimony develops more fully as
he wistfully describes Sir William’s freedom:

And when from Business you your Thoughts unbend,
You can with Joy the Noble Chase attend,
Or when you please Drink freely with a Friend.
No frowning Female stands observing by,
No Children fright you with their hideous Cry;
None dare contend; none your Commands dispute;
You like the Great Mogul, are Absolute:
Supream in all things; from our Slavery free,
And tast the Sweets of envy’d Liberty.\(^{301}\)

There is much to unpack in Sir John’s opening address. First and foremost, in Sir John’s
dialogue the reader witnesses Chudleigh’s subtle extension of Sprint’s criticism of
bothersome women (“waspish…ill-natured” and contributing only “an Iliad of Female
Objections”\(^{302}\) to children as well. The whole marriage, from spouse to progeny, and
those others (women and children again) that compose the whole community are
nuisances to the man who would, pleasantly and leisurely, “from Business” his
“Thoughts unbend.” Sir John’s dialogue demonstrates how the sentiment and tone of
John Sprint’s sermon (in the very least) neatly dovetails with a dim view of community
and privileged notion of masculinity; Sprint’s counsel to the “Bride-Woman” strikes
against the entire community and sermon audience in singling out women as the

\(^{302}\) Sprint, “Preface,” The Bride-Womans Counseller.
troublemakers and misbehavers in marriage (as well as before: Sprint also calls out the courtship and wooing behaviors of single women). Community (i.e. women and children) in Sir John’s view poses an unwelcome interruption to the working and leisure schedule of men. The role he praises is the life of a single man that best approximates the authority of “the Great Mogul” and “Absolute” rule, “supream in all things.” In Sir John’s estimation, marriage and mixed company are “slavery” compared with such envied “Liberty”—language that presages Melissa’s arguments and elocutions in the dialogue.

    Sir William’s character is static in terms of narrative presence and how his replies move (or do not move) the dialogue forward; he is a gentle and ineffective foil to the tense, aggressive posturing of Sir John and the righteous parrying of the Parson. Sir William responds to Sir John by protesting that he is not married by “fate, not Choice,” and claims to be an ally to women, “the dear Idols of my Heart.” He even decries the deployment of “Spightful Invectives” (one presumes against women) which he calls “Venom of the Mind.” At first sight, Sir William appears to be the most benign character and Sir John seems the most vicious, for the Parson is also moved to soften Sir John’s declarations, and claims that zeal, not passion, inspired his sermon:

    I’ve told the Women what’s of them requir’d:
    Shew’d them their Duty in the clearest Light,
    Adorn’d with all the Charms that cou’d invite:
    Taught them their Husband to Obey and Please,
    And to their Humours sacrifice their Ease:
    Give up their Reason, and their Wills resign,
And every Look, and every Thought confine.
Sure, this, Detraction you can’t justly call?
’Tis kindly meant, and ‘tis address’d to All.\textsuperscript{303}

Through line 59, the Parson’s reasoning sounds like standard pulpit fare—he even confesses to painting an image of matrimonial duty, “Adorn’d with all the Charms that cou’d invite.” The roles of husband and wife are gendered in a manner that could be deemed scriptural in light of Ephesians, chapter five. But line 60 introduces the most insidious form of vice, at least where the poet Lady Chudleigh is concerned. In line 60, the Parson explains how he has advised wives to, “Give up their Reason, and their Wills resign / And every Look, and every Thought confine.”\textsuperscript{304} The Parson’s words offer Chudleigh’s readers a more accurate representation of who is actually expected to enact a slavish role within the matrimonial relationship: the wife. Though the Parson tries to soften his matrimonial prescriptions for women with his wheedling query, “Sure, this, Detraction you can’t justly call?” followed by the sanctimonious assurance that, “’Tis kindly meant, and ‘tis address’d to All,” it is his words, and not the words of Sir John Brute or Sir William Loveall, that provoke Melissa to enter the dialogue.

The gendered “all” to which the Parson’s closing pronoun gestures have representation, if not equal numbers, in the dialogue’s three men and single woman. The men each speak first, declaring their various positions towards women and enacting

\textsuperscript{303} Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 55-63.
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., 60-61.
their authority to speak prescriptively to the social and moral worth of the other sex.

Melissa is not given, nor does she apparently need, an introduction. She has no social or aristocratic title, unlike her male interlocutors, and Chudleigh’s reader is given no context for why Melissa is even present and part of the conversation. This seems to be part of the power of Melissa’s character—that she is an ordinary (but educated) woman taking up debate with men above her social status, and can be viewed as exemplary for Chudleigh’s ideal readers: intelligent, sincere women. At the Parson’s, “‘Tis kindly meant, and ‘tis address’d to All,” Melissa decides to interject:

Must men command, and we alone obey,
As if design’d for Arbitrary Sway:
Born petty Monarchs, and, like Homer’s Gods,
See all subjected to their haughty Nods?
Narcissius-like, you your own Graces view,
Think none deserve to be admir’d but you:
Your own Perfections always you adore,
And think all others despicably poor:
We have our Faults, but you are all Divine,
Wisdom does in your meanest Actions shine…

Melissa delves straight to the gender disparity integral in the speech of her male interlocutors, deploying the hyperbolic analogy of gods and divinity to highlight the different treatment of men and women. Yet the gods she compares men to are not Zeussian in their might, but in terms of character are comparable to one of the most vapid and solipsistic of all the Greek gods: Narcissus. Melissa’s tone brims with satire as

she notes women’s human “faults” but the phenomena of men as “all Divine”; “Just, Pious, Chast, from every Passion free,” Melissa observes, “By Learning rais’d above Humanity.” Any reader who has read Lady Chudleigh’s preface to “The Ladies Defence” already knows the importance of education in Lady Chudleigh’s estimation. In her preface, Chudleigh concedes, “That we are generally less Knowing, and less Rational than the Men, I cannot but acknowledge; but I think ‘tis oftener owing to the illness of our Education, than the weakness of our Capacities.”306 Knowing and rationality, states of being in the world are, for Lady Chudleigh, effects of privilege and education that disproportionately favor men. Like a good philosopher, then, having claimed that men act as though they are “all Divine,” Melissa now offers ordinary examples as evidence:

For every Failure you a Covering find;
Rage is a Noble Bravery of Mind:
Revenge, a Tribute due to injur’d Fame;
And Pride, but what transcendant Worth does claim:
Cowards are Wary, and the Dull are Grave,
Fops are Genteel, and Hectoring Bullies Brave…307

Every line introduces a new failure or vice of men only to immediately rename it as a virtuous quality. Yet Melissa refuses to tangle with the language of “virtue” and describes the linguistic process as a glossing over: “Thus to each Vice you give some specious Name, / And with bright Colours varnish o’re your Shame.”308 The effect, however, is to show the slippage possible between the language of vice and virtue—rage

308 Ibid., 89-90.
becomes “noble bravery,” pride “transcendant worth” and “Cowards are wary.” What Melissa here describes is a perverted version of Aristotle’s ethics, where vice is the entire spectrum and virtue simply a renaming of vicious qualities. The poetic balance of each line, the interplay of parallelism and rhyme via the heroic couplets also show Melissa to be one of the most rhetorically agile speakers in the dialogue and demonstrates to Chudleigh’s reader a woman good at both philosophy and poetry (to cite scholar Gillian Wright, Chudleigh “unashamedly gives all the best lines to her one female character”309).

Melissa’s opening dialogue offers no niceties or mincing of words to her three male interlocutors. She closes by questioning the gendered imbalance inherent in the question of what men and women owe each other: “But unto us is there no Deference due? / Must we pay all, and look for none from you?”310 In the context of Melissa’s opening dialogue, the analogy is less economical and more about the virtue of justice— “Why are not Husbands taught as well as we; / Must they from all Restraints, all Laws be free?”311 Melissa wastes no time in calling out her main complaint against the representative men present, that they too readily “transfer” “passive Obedience” to women—that men have passed to women a subjectivity in which they themselves do not participate. What Melissa describes is a social obligation and “owing” that men have foregone only to ask it of women: “And we must drudge in Paths where you have err’d:

309 Producing Women’s Poetry, 1600-1730: Text and Paratext, Manuscript and Print, 251.
311 Ibid., 93-4.
/ That antiquated Doctrine you disown; / 'Tis now your Scorn, and fit for us alone.”

The Parson responds by seizing on the transactional language latent in Melissa’s speech, and parries “Love and Respect, are, I must own, your due, / But not till there’s Obedience paid by you.” The Parson calls for “Submission, and a studious Care to please” and the “Subjection” of women to men. The language of transaction (i.e. the husband’s love as contingent upon the slavish obedience of the wife) is the rhetorical, beating heart of John Sprint’s The Bride-Womans Counseller, made visible in the sermon by the unforgettable image of the Persian lady with her foot-emblazoned coronet. In terms of argument, it pushes matrimonial relations dangerously near the transactions of persons—namely, wives. The Parson’s seizing onto the concepts of “Passive Obedience” and “Subjection” brings the reader closer to the language of slavery. Melissa’s successive responses take the dialogue all the way to slavery, conquest and colonialism.

When Melissa reminds Sir John, “Not thus you talk’d when you Lenera lov’d,” Sir John responds with a justification of male inconstancy: “I lov’d her, ‘till to her I was confin’d: / But who can long to what’s his own be kind?” The language of confinement and ownership (e.g. “what’s his own”) that frames Sir John’s response provokes Melissa to decry the treatment of women as “infidels” and, by implication, their treatment as

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313 Ibid., 99-100.
314 Ibid., 113.
315 Ibid., 129-130.
conquest. The following lines, spoken by Melissa, grafts the analogy of “safe Infidels”
on the social treatment of women:

O that my Sex safe Infidels would live,
And no more Credit to your Flatteries give.
Mistrust your Vows, despise your little Arts,
And keep a constant Guard upon their Hearts.\footnote{Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 135-8.}

The scene of flattery, vows and arts that Melissa describes applies to both women and
“Infidels,” the scene of male wooing a narrative preface to both matrimony and
colonialization.\footnote{“Colonial” would be a relatively new word for the English at the turn of the eighteenth century; the OED places the adjective “colonial” at 1776. “Conquest” has a much earlier etymology from the fourteenth century.} The modifier of “safe” before “Infidels” implies by contrast that
women are not safe and that marriage is not an act of their free will—some are led by
“Duty,” others “by their Fathers Avarice or Pride,” or “Constrained” by economic
circumstances to marry men who are themselves “slaves” to their own “imperious
Will.”\footnote{Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 139-152.}

Reason and will emerge as the highest prized capacities in Melissa’s estimation:

But such as may be from this Bondage free,
Who’ve no Abridgers of their Liberty;
No cruel Parents, no imposing Friends,
To make ‘em wretched for their private Ends,
From me shall no Commiseration have,
If they themselves to barbarous Men inslave.
They’d better Wed among the Savage kind,
And be to generous Lyons still confin’d;
Or match’d to Tygers, who would gentler prove
Than you, who talk of Piety and Love,
Words, whose Sense, you never understood,
And for that Reason, are nor kind, nor good.\textsuperscript{319}

Melissa does attribute responsibility to women for whom they marry and addresses women who are “free” from “this Bondage” (of marriage to unkind men). In her estimation, women who of their own volition “themselves to barbarous Men inslave” are equal to women who wed ferocious animals. Yet Melissa’s point is not to throw women figuratively to the wolves, but to dramatically realize the wild harm of men who only “talk of Piety and Love” while extracting servility and subjection from their wives in practice.

Melissa is not the only character to take up the language of slavery, conquest and colonialism but she is the one who drives the dialogue forward on her own terms, according to the concepts she sees as relevant to the conversation and her own argument. The Parson rhetorically submits to Melissa’s reasoning and language:

\begin{quote}
Why all this Rage? we merit not your hate;  
‘Tis you alone disturb the Marriage State:  
If to your Lords you strict Allegiance pay’d,  
And their Commands submissively obey’d:  
If like wise Eastern Slaves with trembling Awe  
You watch’d their Looks, and made their Will your Law,  
You wou’d both Kindness and Protection gain,  
And find your duteous Care was not in vain.  
This, I advis’d, this, I your Sex have taught;  
And ought Instruction to be call’d a Fault?\textsuperscript{320}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{319} Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 165-176.  
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., 177-186.
In most other contexts, a Parson advising women as a group to be more “like wise Eastern Slaves” in their marriages would be farcical or acknowledged as satire. In “The Ladies Defence,” while Chudleigh explicitly calls her poem “a satire of vice,” the language is also poetic repetition of John Sprint’s actual wedding advice sermon. In the Parson’s formation, the simile “like wise Eastern Slaves,” rather than functioning as an analogy of two unlike things, offers women an adoptable model of behavior. All the actions he cites are actions he recommends to women: watching their husbands’ “looks” with “trembling Awe,” and making “their Will your Law.” In the Parson’s understanding of matrimonial transaction, the woman submits and “gains” for her troubles a patriarchal mode of kindness and protection. The Parson makes no pretense that a woman should be internally motivated by her own volition, and attributes obedience to a lesson learned: “This, I advis’d, this, I your Sex have taught,” he chides Melissa. Again, we see marriage behavior as something a woman must be instructed in: “Obedience,” the Parson lectures, “being a harsh, uneasie Art: / The Skill to Govern, Men with ease can learn. / We’re soon instructed in our own Concern.”321 The Parson’s “soon” creates a binary between men and women: men learn their lesson easily and early, unlike women who must submit to a “harsh, uneasie Art.” Women’s whole persons differ strikingly from that of men, warranting more help, more training, more moral education. “But you need all the Aid that I can give,” complains the Parson, 

To make you unrepining Vassals live.
Heav’n, you must own, to you has been less kind,
You cannot boast our Steadiness of Mind,
Nor is your Knowledge half so unconfin’d;
We can beyond the Bounds of Nature see,
And dare to Fathom vast Infinity.
Then soar aloft, and view the Worlds on high,
And all the inmost Mansions of the Sky:
Gaze on the Wonders, on the Beauties there,
And talk with the bright Phantoms of the Air:
Observe their Customs, Policy and State,
And pry into the dark Intrigues of Fate:
Nay more than this, we Atoms can divide,
And all the Questions of the Schools decide...

The Parson’s poetic litany of the quality difference between men and women continues another twenty lines further, ending on the declaration: “Yet by Compassion for your Frailties mov’d, / I’ve strove to make you fit to be belov’d.” The lines preceding this declaration make clear that women are not fit to be beloved as they are and, in fact, exist on a different plane of being than men—the Parson’s descriptions of the vast abilities of the male mind to “soar aloft, and view the Worlds on high” are angelic and disembodied, transcendent in a way women’s minds and bodies are not. In contrast, women are:

Born fools, and by resembling Idiots Nurst.
Then taught to Work, to Dance, to Sing and Play,
And vainly trifle all your Hours away,
Proud that you’ve learn’t the little Arts to please,
As being incapable of more than these:

323 Ibid., 224-225.
Your shallow Minds can nothing else contain,
You were not made for Labours of the Brain;
Those are the Manly Toils which we sustain.\textsuperscript{324}

In addition to discrediting multiple forms of labor deemed “women’s work” (e.g. the Parson specifically names nursing and childcare, but other forms of labor are erased under the general naming of “Work”), the Parson aggressively attacks the abilities of women’s minds and rationality—the true forms of (gendered) human “labour” and “toil.” Again, the dialogue reads like satire, but it is a direct reflection (or “paraphrase” as Chudleigh notes) of Sprint’s sermon, a text which casts numerous doubts upon women’s intellectual abilities and attentions. Indeed, the final lines of Sprint’s sermon are spoken in the same vein as Chudleigh’s Parson’s dialogue: “But I must forbear enlargement, least, that, by overlading the memories of the Women, I should cause them to forget their Duty which has been set before them.”\textsuperscript{325} The final words of Sprint’s sermon are a gibe at the intellectual ability of women to comprehend the scope of his lecturing marriage advice sermon. His essentialist arguments find their capstone in these words—women are fit to submit and obey because their bodies and minds are inferior to men; in this gendered, transactional union, the lesser submits to the greater. Later in her dialogue, Lady Chudleigh will write these final lines of Sprint’s into the Parson’s dialogue: “But I would not too much their Memories charge; / They’re weak, and shou’d

\textsuperscript{325} Sprint, \textit{The Bride-Womans Counseller}, 16.
they over-loaden be, / They'll soon forget what has been said by me.” The Parson’s advice to the married Sir John Brute and unmarried Sir William Loveall is that they read women their lessons daily, as children:

But let it be our more immediate Care  
To make ‘em these unerring Rules revere.  
Bid ‘em attentively each Precept read;  
And tell ‘em, they’re as holy as their Creed:  
Besure each Morning ‘ere they Eat or Pray,  
That they with Care the sacred Lesson say…326

Melissa’s response must, in turn, include a defense of women as worthy of companionate marriage and as deserving of more than a matrimonial role of “passive obedience.” The answer is a practice of mutual kindness or, “reciprical esteem.” In the dialogue’s remaining 355 lines,327 Melissa speaks 302 of them with Sir William, Sir John and the Parson each receiving one interjection. The final lines are delivered, uninterrupted, by Melissa, and her closing argument regards the education of women.

Objecting first to the Parson’s despising of God via God’s effects:

Who think us Creatures for Derision made,  
And the Creator with his Work upbraid:  
What he call’d Good they proudly think not so,  
And with their Malice, their Prophaneness show,328

Melissa next outlines how women’s subjection and life of service are created and sustained by a patriarchal society rather than essentially integral to women as persons:

327 Ibid., 490-845
328 Ibid., 508-511.
Melissa holds the social and educational system responsible for producing uneducated women, and then punishing them for their lack of education—a disciplining tactic evident at the close of John Sprint’s sermon, under the conceptual guise of women’s faulty “memory.” Sprint’s sermon illustrates the acceptability of chiding women’s intellectual inferiority in social settings. Melissa’s use of the phrase, “Native innocence,” meanwhile, recalls both language of colonialism (and those people who have been spared colonialization) and prelapsarian reason, “native” carrying with it the definition of original and unspoiled. Coupled with the language of “Slaves,” Melissa’s rebuke draws on her extended analogy and argument of human trafficking and abused monarchy—the woman’s mind not a capacity but a commodity controlled by patriarchal

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330 Melissa’s rhetoric recalls that of Sir Thomas More’s travelling ambassador-narrator in Utopia, who, as a stranger and outsider, argues, “For if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them.”
331 For example, John Milton’s language of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost.
institutions (e.g. education, marriage, gender roles). The loneliness of women’s complaints as received only by “Kind Heav’n” finds special edge when spoken in the company of a misogynist Parson who has declared himself in the employment of Heaven. Earlier, when Melissa asked, “Of our Offences who shall Judges be?” the Parson enthusiastically replied:

For that great Work Heav’n has commission’d me.
I’m made one of his Substitutes below,
And from my Mouth unerring Precepts flow;
I’ll prove your Duty from the Law Divine,
Celestial Truth in my Discourse shall shine.\(^{332}\)

In the last third of the dialogue, Melissa comes out in full rhetorical sail for the education of women; she argues for education as pertinent to companionship and kindness in marriage but also social respect, fame and self-companionship. A philosophical focus that Chudleigh shares with the earlier poet Katherine Philips is that of Stoicism, an emphasis Chudleigh’s readers experience through the argumentation of Melissa, who exclaims:

O that my Sex would all such Toys despise;
And only Study to be Good, and Wise:
Inspect themselves, and every Blemish find,
Search all the close Recesses of the Mind,
And leave no Vice, no Ruling Passion there,
Nothing to raise a Blush, or cause a Fear:
Their Memories with solid Notions fill,
And let their Reason dictate to their Will.
Instead of Novels, Histories peruse

\(^{332}\) Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 274-278.
And for their Guides the wiser Ancients chuse,
Thro' all the Labyrinths of Learning go,
And grow more humble, as they more do know.333

In Melissa’s preliminary paean to the good that is the general education of women,

Chudleigh gives reply to the under and overlying gendered prejudices of John Sprint’s
The Bride-Womans Counseller. By creating a dialogic space for her response to Sprint,

Chudleigh’s formal response of a dialogue also proffers the solution to the social strife
incited by Sprint’s sermon: conversation between men and women that enacts

“reciprocal esteem.” At this point in the dialogue, the reader is allowed to see what
might happen should Sprint be answered by a woman championing women’s broader
education outside of matrimonial instruction and “passive obedience.” In this
imaginary, dialogic space, Chudleigh offers several examples of potential responses
from men to the education of women and the several goods resulting from such
education. Melissa closes by listing the goods:

By doing this, they will Respect procure,
Silence the Men, and lasting Fame secure;
And to themselves the best Companions prove,
And neither fear their Malice, nor desire their Love.334

Sir William Loveall is naturally distressed by such a pronouncement. “Had you the
Learning you so much desire, / You, sure, wou’d nothing, but your selves admire: / All

334 Ibid., 561-4.
our Addresses wou’d be then in vain,” he worries. The disinterest of educated women in the advancements of men would, in Sir William’s mind, result in a wooing class shift, and he protests: “No Courtship then durst by the Beaux be made / To any thing above a Chamber Maid.” Then Sir William utters the truly damning line where gender roles and education are concerned: “While you are ignorant, We are secure.” Sir William paints such a distressing image of the lost attention of women that Sir John draws an immediate and unthoughtful conclusion: the education of women is the bane of men, and the fault of books. Sir John wonders aloud:

By Heav’n I wish ‘twere by the Laws decreed
They never more should be allow’d to Read.
Books are the Bane of States, the Plagues of Life,
But both conjoin’d, when studied by a Wife:
They nourish Factions, and increase Debate,
Teach needless things, and causeless Fears create.
From Plays and Novels they learn how to Plot,
And from your Sermons all their Cant is got...

By Sir John’s direct address of the Parson (“from your Sermons”), the reader sees Sir John turning from one man (Sir William re: books) to another man in his response, as if to contain the dialogue and the hydra-like problems that appear from Melissa’s recommendation of women’s education. Sir William addresses Melissa directly, but the Parson and (most strikingly) Sir John often respond to the other men first and primarily. Since Sir John has just implicated the Parson in the downfall of society, i.e. women

learning “cant” from listening to sermons at church, the Parson protests by blaming women, not books. “You’re in the Right,” he appeases Sir John, “Good things [women] misapply; / Yet not in Books, but them, the Fault does lie.” The Parson then stands up for various genres: plays, sermons, poetry, and makes an argument for men playing the moral guide to women: “What e’er they know shou’d be from us convey’d: / We their Preceptors and their Guides shou’d prove, / And teach them what to hate, and what to Love.” At which point, Sir William interrupts to assure Melissa that physical beauty is the true advantage of women over men, and that women “shou’d content your selves with being Fair.” Sir William even confesses a self-preference to beauty than wit, cementing his role as the loving dandy who, to augment his charms, prefers to appear as though he supports women.

Melissa throws all these offerings on the floor. From lines 638 to the end of the dialogue (line 845), she offers her three male interlocutors an impassioned defense of women’s education and mental aptitude. This time, however, she is done with generalities, and opens by speaking from the first person point of view. In some of the most evocative and powerful lines of the dialogue, Melissa begins by declining the offering of extrinsic beauty:

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Beauty’s a Trifle merits not my Care.
I’d rather Æsop’s ugly Visage wear,
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337 Ibid., 613-615.
338 Ibid., 621.
Joyn’d with his Mind, than be a Fool, and fair.
Brightness of Thought, and an extensive View
Of all the Wonders Nature has to shew;
So clear, so strong, and so inlarg’d a Sight
As can pierce thro’ the gloomy Shades of Night,
Trace the first Heroes to their dark Abodes,
And find the Origine of Men and Gods:
See Empires rise, and Monarchies decay,
And all the Changes of the World survey:
The ancient and the modern Fate of Kings,
From whence their Glory, or Misfortune springs;
Wou’d please me more, than if in one combind,
I’d all the Graces of the Female Kind.339

Melissa lays claim to education’s gift of perspective—history, science, politics, literature (Aesop). As her words create a panorama of historical knowledge, her language reflects back on the Parson’s earlier lines regarding men’s qualification for education and intellectual engagement, when he noted, “Heav’n, you must own, to you has been less kind, / You cannot boast our Steadiness of Mind.” The transcendent, intellectual glories that the Parson then recited we see similarly claimed here in Melissa’s dialogue—she, too, extolls “brightness of thought” and nature’s wonders. That both Melissa and the Parson’s characters, as a woman and a man in the dialogue, share similarly rhapsodic lines regarding knowledge and thought demonstrates that such feelings towards knowledge do not make one a man or a woman, but a human person engaging intellectually with the world.340

340 One might even say: rational animals.
Such engagement does not necessitate dominion or power, however, and Melissa assures the three men before her that such aims have never been the end goal of women’s education. “…Do not think ‘tis an ambitious Heat,” she assures her listeners, “The Tyrant Man may still possess the Throne; / ’Tis in our Minds that we wou’d Rule alone.”341 The men, having voiced their fears and anxieties towards women’s education (scorned courtship, the evil of books, the moral corruption of women) fall silent under Melissa’s final speech. Is this a failure of the dialogue form under Chudleigh’s direction? Against such a reading, I would argue that it is a radical provision of space for a woman’s voice and reason; Chudleigh creates here for Melissa a space that could not be created or reproduced in society, drawing the Parson, Sir William Loveall and even the (unwilling) Sir John Brute into dialogue and conversation. Having created the situation of the dialogue in response to John Sprint’s sermon, Chudleigh then gives Melissa a boldness and courage in her engagement with the men speaking—not to mention uninterruptibility, a social power most often (still) given to men in “dialogue” with women. Melissa has all the narrative and argumentative space she needs in Chudleigh’s re-imagining of socio-gender roles. Knowledge and learning are not competitive, but collaborative, Melissa’s character argues—contributive towards a self-companionship and self-sovereignty resulting in better communities and marriages rather than a community parsed by gender roles and unjust power dynamics. Petitions Melissa:

Those unseen Empires give us leave to sway,
And to our Reason private Homage pay:
Our struggling Passions within Bounds confine,
And to our Thoughts their proper Tasks assign.
This, is the Use we wou’d of Knowledge make,
You quickly wou’d the good Effects partake.
Our Conversations it wou’d soon refine,
And in our Words, and in our Actions shine:
And by a pow’rful Influence on our Lives,
Make us good Friends, good Neighbours, and good Wives.\textsuperscript{342}

It is community good, the \textit{common weal}, that the education of women affects—a reciprocal esteem and good lacking from John Sprint’s sermon that Chudleigh is able to illuminate via the form of a responsive, philosophical dialogue. But if the good is for all, the limit and the check on such a good as a present reality for Melissa and other women is one controlled by men. Melissa names a small catalog of great and ancient women (Lucretia, Porcia, Cornelia, Zenobia\textsuperscript{345}) as instances of virtuous learning in women and concludes: “If we less Wise and Rational are grown, / ’Tis owning to your Management alone.”\textsuperscript{344} Although Melissa then outlines a successful program of education for women—even one that directly benefits men in the formation of rational wives who, “Never dispute, when Duty leads the way, / But its Commands without a Sigh Obey”\textsuperscript{345}—her conclusion is less than hopeful:

\begin{quote}
But you our humble Suit will still decline;  
To have us wise was never your Design:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{343} Ibid., 680-686.  
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., 689-690.  
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid., 710-711.
You’ll keep us Fools, that we may be your Jest;
They who know least, are ever treated best.346

Melissa’s direct recognition of patriarchal power and competitive dominion of women by men accords with the language of servitude, slavery and colonialization invoked throughout “The Ladies Defence” as well as The Female Advocate. It is impossible to extract the subjection of women from the analogy of the subjection of others through enslavement and colonialization—yet that inextractability should be credited to John Sprint, who provokes such language by invoking the example of the “Persian ladies” in The Bride Woman’s Counseller. What was, perhaps for Sprint, initially a clever or colorful sermon example, issued a conceptual challenge to his English women parishioners and readers to see themselves as truly other, as foreign subjects—and as objects—in their roles to their husbands and men.

The few scholars that do engage with Chudleigh’s work are often unimpressed by Melissa’s conclusion at the close of “The Ladies Defence,” which admits the possibility of a social failure where the enactment of “reciprocal esteem” is concerned, and looks instead to heavenly community and heavenly knowledge as the ultimate and glorified conditions of women’s entire “Faculties.” What is missed, however, in viewing Melissa’s conclusion as an avoidance of gender parity on earth, is the care which with Chudleigh contextualizes “The Ladies Defence” in terms of audience. Her audience is

twofold: John Sprint, from whom she welcomes any critique of her dialogue, and serious lady readers. That Melissa’s speech includes scriptural solace and hope for Chudleigh’s women readers, many of whom were potentially in matrimonial situations which required “passive obedience,” makes her the better parson. Her parting words, heard by her male interlocutors, affirm a gendered, community identification with other women, the author’s primary audience:

‘Tis we alone hard Measure still must find;  
But spite of you, we’ll to our selves be kind:  
Your Censures slight, your little Tricks despise,  
And make it our whole Business to be wise.  
The mean low trivial Care of Life disdain,  
And Read and Think, and Think and Read Again,  
And on our Minds bestow the utmost Pain.\(^{347}\)

As in her preface, Chudleigh returns to the idea of education as self-kindness and to Stoicism as a form of care women can practice in their daily lives. Embedded in these lines are instructions for Chudleigh’s women readers, concrete advice for putting wisdom into practice against the existential slog of “Care of Life”: “Read and Think,” Melissa urges women, “and Think and Read Again.” These simple words form a poetic chiasmus: a cross of reading and thinking, thinking and reading, that contain in themselves a homily on learning: a repetition of reflection, reading, dwelling with texts on a daily and consistent basis. The “pain” reference in the final line above means both care and concern: to yourselves, Chudleigh tells her women readers, give the most good

\(^{347}\) Chudleigh, “The Ladies Defence,” 794-800.
trouble and kindness, a self-attention integral to living as “good Friends, good Neighbours, and good Wives.” 348

“The Ladies Defence,” as a philosophical-dialogue-in-verse, allows Lady, Mary Chudleigh to dramatically engage both John Sprint’s The Bride-Womans Counseller and her women readers. It enacts a collaborative, social engagement with men and male authorities that her women readers can, in turn, use as a template in their own lives and conversations. Chudleigh’s dialogue poem also creates possibility inside relationships where women lack “reciprocal esteem” and are treated as servants rather than companions. Chudleigh does so by showing, through her character Melissa, how women can perform self-kindness and self-companionship and (ultimately) look to a heavenly community and celestial city where women will be in glorious company, bodies and knowledge. I do not read Chudleigh’s conclusion as encouragement for her women readers to demurely accept their unhappy domestic situations, but rather see her poem’s conclusion as echoing the advice found in her dedication “To All Ingenious Ladies,” where she lifts her readers eyes to self-knowledge and contemplation through philosophy and study. There, having told her reader that a tranquility of mind and evenness of temper are conditional on “much study, and the closest Application of

Thought…the work of Time, and the Effect of a daily Practice,” 349 Chudleigh reminds her readers that:

...In order to the gaining such a happy disposition of Mind, I would desire [women] seriously to consider what those things are which they can properly call their own, and of which Fortunate cannot deprive ‘em, and on these alone they ought to terminate their Desires, and not vainly extend ‘em to those things which are not within their Power, as Honours, Riches, Reputation, Health, and Beauty; for they being Goods which they cannot bestow on themselves, and of which they may have but a very transient possession, they ought to enjoy ‘em with indifferency, and look on ‘em only as Gifts, which the Almighty Donor freely and liberally gives... 350

Even as she provides the above advice and Stoic consolation, Chudleigh offers her women readers a prime example of engagement with gendered prejudice and injustice in her poem. Despite what seems to be a solid education, Chudleigh’s character Melissa represents an Everywoman. Unintroduced (and often unaddressed) in the dialogue, Melissa nevertheless persists as an interlocutor and debate partner with Sir John, Sir William and the Parson, holding her own until, at last, she is the speaker and the male characters her audience. Even if the model of the philosophical dialogue is not a form practically available to Chudleigh’s readers, what amounts to women’s manuscript circulation of written responses to sermons is—in fact, Chudleigh affirms that she did not initially intend to publish “The Ladies Defence,” but had merely written it

349 Chudleigh, “To All Ingenious Ladies,” 6.
350 Ibid.
expressively for circulation among her friends. \(^{351}\) “The Ladies Defence” in its printed form, then, enacts the evolvement of circulated manuscript to print publication, from coterie readership to London bookshops. Chudleigh promises her readers heavenly joys and community, but she does not do so at the expense, or as a replacement, of local engagement and community, which are her motivations for responding to John Sprint in the first place. Women’s thoughts and arguments, and what women can bring to the dialectical table, are first in the formal goals of “The Ladies Defence,” embodied through the character of Melissa but also proclaimed by Chudleigh’s prose paratexts, her authorial care with contextualization, and her uniquely collaborative writing practice of “paraphrasing” John Sprint’s sermon. Chudleigh’s character Melissa demonstrates that self-education and self-kindness come first—it is these qualities that lift women from underneath their husbands’ feet and fit them for dialogue. It is these qualities, also, Chudleigh’s dialogue argues, that men and husbands must come to acknowledge in women in order to begin the practice of reciprocal esteem. Such an argument, linking a practice of self-kindness to the reciprocal practice of kindness within marriage and between spouses, accords with “The Ladies Defence” as not being read as an “Invective on Marriage,” but as a collaborative conversation between Chudleigh and John Sprint.

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\(^{351}\)Chudleigh, “To the Reader,” *Essays Upon Several Subjects*, 248.
Conclusion

With or without rooms of their own in which to write, early modern women in seventeenth-century England wrote with and for each other. To bring the modern language of collaboration to their poetry is to highlight an attention to audience and community integral to the production of their texts. The four women whose work this dissertation examines did not view themselves as writing alone but in a company of other women, readers and writers. These chapters argue that these four poets did not have the luxury or privilege—despite some of their aristocratic statuses—of considering themselves as working alone or autonomously. Whether the aim in addressing each other by name was praise, invitation or, as in the case of Lady Chudleigh’s poetry, a deployment of “reciprocal esteem” taking the form of corrective dialogue, the recognition of specific others forms the occasion of the poem itself.

In this sense, all the poems analyzed in this dissertation are epistolary and occasional—they are from a specific person (the poet and speaker) to a specific person, ever-aware and acknowledging the relationship between writer and reader. To think of them as epistolary is to also see the boldness of the communications grow and extend across the seventeenth century, from Herbert’s intimate, dedicatory poetry to her brother Philip Sidney to Lady Chudleigh’s verse-dialogue addressing the minister John Sprint; a similar growth of agency and authority occurs in how Herbert, Lanyer, Philips and Chudleigh brilliantly accommodate the shift from manuscript to print.
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The Female Advocate; Or, A Plea for the Just Liberty of the Tender Sex, and Particularly of Married Women: Being Reflections on a Late Rude and Disingenuous Discourse, Delivered by Mr. John Sprint, in a Sermon at a Wedding, May 11th, at Sherburn in Dorsetshire, 1699. London,: Printed for Andrew Bell at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhil, near Stockmarket., 1700.


Biography

Hannah VanderHart received an AA&S from Lord Fairfax Community College (2005), a BA in English from The College of William and Mary (2007), an MFA in poetry from George Mason University (2010) and an MA in English from Georgetown University (2012). Her poetry chapbook *What Pecan Light* is forthcoming from Bull City Press (2019). She is a recipient of the Thesis Completion Fellowship from George Mason University and a Graduate Lannan Fellowship from Georgetown University.