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READING WOMEN WRITERS
IN
THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

by
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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation assesses the place of the female reader in early modern English culture. I consider discussions of reading and metaphors of ocularity in women's writing in the period; approaching the topic historically, I place texts by women in relation to their male contemporaries and to prominent literary and cultural discourses (education, religion, the coterie, patronage, beauty, and especially vision).

Throughout the dissertation, I consider ideological conflicts within representations of reading—how reading is an activity bound up with class, how both masculinity and femininity are inculcated through reading, and how women use reading to question dominant constructions of gender. While educational texts allied reading to the regulation of femininity, the women writers I discuss transform, rather than subvert, ideologies of domesticity, piety, and maternity as they negotiate the legitimacy of their reading and education and the publication of their writing. Reading also spawned religious discord in early modern England, and representations of reading in women's religious writings (Anne Askew, Katherine Parr, Anne Wheathill, Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Grymeston) engage the political dynamics of religion in the period. These religious writers advocate the extension of literacy for the sake of vernacular lay reading and defend their faith communities. The convergence of print and manuscript cultures allows Mary Wroth to represent an intimate form of reading in the coterie, crucial to her female writers, while the amalgamation of the literary and religious is key to Aemelia Lanyer, for whom the vision of the patron and the glimpse of beauty are

a means to recast the female reader and the woman writer as central to the Passion narrative.

Women used the representation of reading in order to negotiate publication, to represent publicly the activities of their minds, and to participate in crucial historical moments, including the English reformation, the development of print culture, and the emergence of the public sphere. Not only does this dissertation recover a sense of the cultural work done by women's writings, but it also proposes that, in reading, women possess a tool through which to reconfigure the cultural construction of femininity and to justify making themselves visible in print.

Keywords: , Anne Askew, Elizabeth Grymeston, Aemelia Lanyer, Dorothy Leigh, Katherine Parr, Rachel Speght, Mary Wroth, women and history, literacy, education, reading, women writers, women readers, print culture, coterie, public and private sphere, sight

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Vita

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The “Great Picture,” attributed to Jan Van Belcamp and commissioned by Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery (1590-1676), makes a remarkable contribution to the archive of representations of early modern women’s reading. Measuring eighteen feet by nine feet, and now hanging at Appleby Castle in Cumbria, the painting is a triptych; side panels representing Anne Clifford at the ages of fifteen and fifty-six frame a central portrait of Lady Anne’s parents—George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland and Lady Margaret Russell, Countess of Cumberland—and her elder brothers, Robert and Francis, who died in childhood.¹ The painting portrays Anne Clifford as a reader, by placing her amidst her books, and an educated member of upper-class society and thus dramatically illustrates several issues that are crucial to this dissertation: the various ideological implications of reading, the participation of women in print and manuscript culture, and the representation of the female mind through the practices—the activity and spaces—of reading.

In the left panel, which depicts Anne Clifford in her youth, not only does the small library of books indicate her status as a reader, but the portraits of her tutor, Samuel Daniel, and of her governess, Anne Taylour, point to her education. Clifford possesses feminine expertise in needlework and music, as the embroidery, music book, and viola da gamba indicate, but she also has an extensive knowledge of books. At her feet are two atlases, as well as Agrippa’s *Vanity of Science*, and *Don Quixote*, while shelves on the wall above her contain many more books, with their spines all clearly labelled and displayed: Castiglione’s *Courtier*, Montaigne’s *Essays*, Gerard’s herbal, Sidney’s *Arcadia*,

Spenser's *Works*, Chaucer's *Works*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Bible, and St. Augustine's *City of God*, among others. In the opposing panel, that representing Anne Clifford at the age of fifty-six, her hand rests upon two books, Charron's *Book of Wisdom* and the Bible, and above her, two shelves display more books, here in a disarray that intimates frequent use. These books include George Sandys' verse translation of the Psalms, Jonson's *Works*, Donne's *Poems*, as well as his *Sermons*, Herbert's *Temple*, John Barclay's *Argenis*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and More's *Map of Mortality*.² Represented in both youth and age as a reader, Anne Clifford is endowed with a subjectivity informed not only by the religious and practical works frequently recommended to women, but also by romance, poetry, philosophy, and history. As Mary Ellen Lamb writes, "Representing her as a reader of some fifty-three books, all written by male authors and most addressed primarily to male readers, Clifford's diaries and portraits reveal her use of reading as a means of interpolating herself into a dominant, rather than a subordinate, subject position in her culture" ("Agency" 349).

This representation of a woman's reading raises important questions about the connections between ideologies of reading and gender, issues central to this dissertation. Reading occupies a conflicted position in the lives of early modern women because it is at once a permitted activity, encouraged for the sake of devotion or occupation, and a limiting one; what, where, when, and how to read, and the relationship between reading and life's other activities—such as piety, motherhood, writing, romance, friendship, and societal engagements—were regarded as matters of social concern. Judgements on these issues made

by pedagogues, along with the construction of readers by writers addressing their books to women, were allied to the regulation of gender and implicitly to the moulding of the female subject. Women writing about reading had to negotiate the treacherous waters where the permitted conflicted with the constraining, as well as the various hierarchies of learnedness, gender, and class, in order to publish their writings. Because I argue that negotiation and transformation provide more apt descriptors of the ideological work of early modern women's writing about reading than does subversion (a model of power relations which has frequently been applied to women's reading), the quality of early modern feminism becomes complicated. Most often not characterized by overt resistance to patriarchy, the texts that I consider nevertheless make apparent and therefore call into question the mechanisms by which gender is inculcated, especially with regard to the limiting representation of female minds and women's authority over reading. The historical recovery of early modern women's writing is important for late twentieth-century feminism because such investigations draw attention to the various kinds of cultural work that women's writing did, contributions that have been forgotten through the construction of literary canons. Research on women's reading and writing can also tell us much about the construction of gender in early modern culture. When located within and against the gender discourses of early modern English society, women's various engagements with gender issues become visible; sites of slippage and protest emerge to offer alternative perspectives on and to contribute to gradual changes

in the dominant social construction of female "nature," female social roles, and women's intellectual capacities.

The painting also unfolds its interest in Lady Anne Clifford as a reader through a keen attention to the book as a material object. The books are precisely and accurately illustrated, with each volume proportionately sized to the format of an edition that was actually available and the title of each book clearly displayed on its spine (Williams 341-344). Lady Anne Clifford is manifestly a reader within print culture. Yet, the painting also contains a number of handwritten texts. The central panel gives four books to Margaret Russell, one of them a manuscript entitled "Alchemist Extractions, of Distillations and excellent Medicines," which she compiled (Parry 208). The painting includes, as well, a number of inscriptions, probably done by a scribe rather than the artist (Williamson 338), and possibly written by Clifford herself, considering their similarity to entries in her diaries and her central role in the narratives (Lamb, "Agency" 361). An antique shield hanging on the wall in the left panel details Lady Anne's life until the death of her first husband; a parchment hanging from the hand of young Francis, Lord Clifford, in the central panel recounts the history of the Cliffords; the paper emerging from under the small pile of books upon which Anne Clifford rests her hand, in the right panel, records the occasion of her second marriage, the death of her uncle, her inheritance of her lands, and the marriage of her youngest daughter; and detailed inscriptions underline each of the several smaller pictures, of relatives, her husbands, her tutor and her governess, that adorn the walls in each of the three panels (Williamson 494-

498,506-507). The handwritten text represents identity in a no less personal, but more familial, way than the printed book, offering evidence of her mother's writing and of her biography: Lady Anne's marriages and those of her daughters, the births and deaths of members of her family, her relationship with her mother, her places of residence, and her struggle to gain possession of her father's land.

Integrally linked to questions of the authority of writers and readers is the place of women in print and manuscript cultures, participation that was thoroughly informed by the class position that determined their education and leisure time, as the portrait of Anne Clifford meticulously illustrates. While almost every scholarly study of early modern women's writing is devoted, to some extent, to a consideration of the woman writer's negotiation of print, and an ever-increasing amount of interest is being paid to women's writing in manuscript, less attention has been paid to the issue of women as readers. Awareness of representations of women readers in print, of women's writings about reading, of reading in manuscript culture, the various cultural spaces that women occupied, as well as the function that female readers served for writers can contribute to thinking both about print culture and about the emergence of a public sphere. Elizabeth Eisenstein briefly notes the rise of a "specifically feminine reading public" (133) in the nineteenth century, while Jürgen Habermas notes that, with the development of a public sphere in the eighteenth century, women readers took a more active part in the literary public sphere even than the owners of private property and family heads, although women were excluded from the political public sphere (56). Early modern women do not constitute a reading

“public” according to Habermas’ definition of the public sphere in the world of letters—the press, coffee houses, and salons of the eighteenth century where the educated debated. But early modern women readers were a significant group, to whom writers, male and female, addressed their books, as Suzanne Hull’s bibliography *Chaste, Silent & Obedient : English Books for Women, 1475-1640* demonstrates.

In explaining the increasing importance of the female reader, Cecile M. Jagodzinski, in *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England*, points to the contiguity of femininity and privacy to suggest that the woman reader exemplifies for all readers “the possibilities for the realization of the private self in the seemingly powerless, supposedly sexually and textually vulnerable newly literate reader” (18). I argue, however, that the cultural importance of the woman reader ranges beyond the validation of the private self to include issues related to literacy, vernacularity, the marketplace, religion, and the transformation of the definition of femininity itself. Privacy, as Seyla Benhabib notes, with Habermas, includes three dimensions: the sphere of moral and religious conscience, of economic liberty, and of intimate family relations. Given Benhabib’s objection to the recurring gender-blindness of theories of public and private, and given that early modern women’s reading is related to religious conscience, labour, and family, women need to be occupy a more central position in scholarship on the private and the emergence of the public sphere of letters and of political discourse.

I argue that women who publish destabilize the gendering of the private and domestic as feminine because they place their representations of reading in interstitial spaces. They employ the consanguinity of manuscript and print culture, the possibilities of gender inversion within a mother's education of her sons, the cultural power of the female patron, and the dichotomy within religious discourse that made it a lexicon both for the structuring of private, subjective experience, and for the articulation of public affairs. David Zaret argues that religious discourse ought to be a contributing factor in the development of the public sphere: "popular developments in Protestantism created a public sphere in religion that cultivated nearly the same critical, rational habits of thought that Habermas locates in the public spheres of politics and letters." The Reformation not only had a privatizing effect, in making faith the attribute of the individual, as Habermas suggested, but it also caused religion to be "defined, defended, and debated in arguments that appealed explicitly to public opinion" (221).³ But Zaret fails to notice the different and crucial presence (in both religious discourse and to women) of women's reading and writing. If in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the public/private distinction between the more narrowly denoted *polis* and *oikos* might be disrupted by women readers and writers who broach reading as a means to serve the monarch, as an essential national pastime, or as an activity like labour, within an economy where women were key producers rather than consumers of goods, what do these complications mean for thinking about the public and private in the early modern period? As we continue to explore the conditions in which early modern women lived their lives

and to rediscover the texts that they wrote, not only do women enter the historical picture, but their presence there can sometimes require the reconstruction of the frame within which we have organized history, including the histories of print culture, of the Reformation, and of early modern literature.

In addition to placing Anne Clifford in a cultural space informed by class, literacy, and education, the "Great Picture" also implicitly situates her within a physical and geographical space. The domestic spaces of reading—bedchambers, gardens, and the house itself, set in opposition to schools and universities—are key to understanding not only the act of reading but also the role of reading in shaping social identities. In the painting, the furnishings of the left and right hand panels, a table, shelves, a viola da gamba, a dog, and a cat, as well as the books and even the central family grouping suggest an interior domestic space. The appearance of Henry Wotton's *Booke of Architecture* in the right panel implies an interest in the construction of this space and may signal Clifford's efforts to restore the properties she eventually inherited. The atlases, Camden's *Brittania* and Abraham Ortelius' *Maps of the World*, in the left panel, evoke the spaces of nations beyond, although, ironically, it was only as a widow that Anne Clifford could move freely about the locales pictured on the maps of England; during her marriages, her husbands decided where she would live and travel. Women writers whom I discuss similarly place themselves within national spaces, but it is private space, as a material construct, that crucially informs their activities. Women's reading, and even their identities, are constructed through the spaces they occupy. Spatial organization is important, according to Pierre

Bourdieu, not only in defining the public/male world and the private/female world, but also in the imposition of perceptions, thoughts, and action through “the dialectic of objectification and embodiment in the privileged locus of the space of the house and the earliest learning processes” (90). Rather than supposing that the mind is a sovereign consciousness that constructs the world of objects, the mind itself is structured through the interaction with objects within spaces: “the mental structures which construct the world of objects are constructed in the practice of a world of objects constructed according to the same structures. ...The mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors” (91). The practice of reading for women takes place within the domestic space, and pedagogical discussions of early modern women's reading illustrate how the spaces that they inhabit, as well as the actions in which they engage, construct the female mind, circumscribing the boundaries of women's knowledge and characterizing the activity of the mind itself. My dissertation demonstrates how women configure their own mental activities through the domestic or religious spaces that they inhabit, and how they also, resisting the dominant discourses of their culture, ascribe value to those spaces, putting them to use in the process of becoming subjects and writers. For Anne Clifford, this meant commissioning a painting that placed her in a familial, domestic space, while also invoking, through the disordered books, the conventions of painting scholars (especially St. Jerome) in their studies (Friedman 367).⁴

Woven through all of these issues, reading, the public and private, as well as the representation of the mind, is the idea of sight. Reading is a visual activity, when distinguished from oral recitation, for it involves the eyes in looking at a page. That sight was an erotically charged sense contributed both to the confinement of women to the domestic sphere, in attempts to ensure that they would not instigate desire in men who were not their husbands, and to limitations on women's vision; the threat that female desire might be aroused in reading was reason enough both for a restricted library and continuous surveillance. Yet, to see is also to know, particularly within the context of Platonic and neo-Platonic vision, which juxtaposed physical and metaphysical sight to describe material and ideal knowledge. The women writers that I discuss use the ubiquity of this form of vision, in both the sacred and the secular, to situate themselves in society as the possessors of knowledge, to dispute categories of knowledge, and to represent desire. The use of metaphors of vision contributed to the process by which women became visible in culture, to be seen to be, as well as to be, intellectual agents operating in the world. Being visible as a reader was a way in which to articulate the mind's activities and commitments.



In my first chapter, I consider the ideologies inhering in the idea of reading. Distinguished from "reading" and "literacy," "education" was a term used by pedagogues (such as Erasmus, Ascham, and Vives, as well as men who wrote for a more middle-class audience) to refer to the knowledge that boys learned in grammar schools. These discourses of education produced gender

difference, not only in the differing curricula for boys and girls, but also in the configuration of desire for knowledge, the activities of the mind, and the development of the capacity for judgement in reading. The imperative of chastity restricted women's reading, in the interest of containing desire, and resulted in the construction of the female mind as static. Rachel Speght, Anna Maria Von Schurman, and Bathsua Makin, three seventeenth-century advocates for women's education, do not write in ways that were subversive or directly oppositional to their predecessors. Rather, they transform the confinement of women to a domestic space and the importance of an ethic of labour into reasons for a more extensive version of education for women and into the creation of images of the female mind as rational and capable of development.

My next two chapters approach women and religious reading from different perspectives as I explore notions of spiritual vision: the anti-image arguments made by Reformation writers and Puritans, the importance of the senses in reading for a Catholic writer like Elizabeth Grymeston, and the use of the language of transcendent vision of the divine to legitimize a representation of the female mind and female desire. By using the lexicon of religion, the woman—not blinded and excluded from exploratory thinking for the sake of chastity as discourses of education frequently recommended—legitimizes her sight. In discussing Katherine Parr and Anne Askew in my second chapter, I argue that the traditionally feminine position of the unlearned reader becomes a politically effective tool for Reformers in altering the role of reading in the English church. The female voice, constructed through representations of the authors

and texts ventriloquizing the female voice, performs femininity in a way that coincides with the gendering of Reformation history. The advocacy of Anne Askew and Katherine Parr for an unlearned, but literate piety—the type of reading typically allowed women—corresponds with Reformers' aims to encourage lay vernacular reading. Anne Wheathill, writing three decades later, works within a similar dichotomy between learned theology and vernacular piety to gather a national community of Protestant readers; as for Parr and Askew, the Bible provides the material from which to cast the female mind in a form different from that found in educational writings.

In my third chapter, I discuss Dorothy Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* and Elizabeth Grymeston's *Meditations Miscelanea Memoratives*, two maternal advice books presented first to an audience of sons, and I demonstrate how their works construct motherhood as a site of conflict over the gendered difference between the more feminine faith and masculine learning. Representations of the female and maternal voice configured it as exceptionally pious because of its privacy, domesticity, and chastity, on the one hand, while also employing it, as Thomas Bentley and Nicholas Breton do, in social commentary. In my discussion of Elizabeth Grymeston, I argue that Grymeston uses her representation of reading, the intertextuality of her text, to create a positive intellectual and social identity for herself and to intervene in the way masculinity in early modern discourses of education is contingent upon the absence of the mother. Because Elizabeth Grymeston was Catholic, I also investigate the social function of being a Catholic woman reader as evidenced in the dedications of

Catholic writers to their female patrons. The later editions of Grymeston's work, unlike the first, take on timely problems, such as loyalty and oath-taking, that were confronting Catholics in an England somewhat paranoid about Catholics after the exposure of the Gunpowder Plot. Precisely because Grymeston's text is presented as the private work of a mother and reader, it becomes an effective and politicized representation of the contentious space of the Catholic home, publicly revealing it to be both devout and loyal. Although criticism of early modern male writers has recognized a duality in religious writings that made texts both spiritual and political documents, scholarship focusing on early modern women's writing has focused more exclusively on gender, to the exclusion of other social concerns. But because issues of gender are interlaced with social, political issues, and because speaking publicly reconfigures the limiting association of femininity with privacy, silence, and obedience, women's writings become political in both senses, even when they are not overtly engaged in questioning the dominant construction of femininity.

In my final two chapters, I take up works that are more traditionally literary and consequently better known. With my penultimate chapter, I turn from the permitted discourse of religion to one that is contentious and even prohibited: romances. Mary Wroth's *Urania* is embedded in the reading and writing practices of manuscript culture, as evidenced not only by Wroth's own literary life but also by the representation of reading in the volume: the production, exchange, and preservation of handwritten texts; the use of ciphers; and a decorum of reading that relies on the intimacies of handwriting, a personal

acquaintance between reader and writer, and the control of reading within private spaces. Through these reading practices, Wroth allows selected female characters to become writers while protecting them from antagonistic readers. To become a reader or a writer is to be allowed to enter an inward space where identity has been inscribed and where subjectivity thrives.

I conclude my discussion of reading and vision with Aemelia Lanyer's passion poem, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, the last best example of the integration of reading with vision. By engaging ideas of religious vision and the conventions of the love lyric, Lanyer allows her readers to gaze upon her text. In so doing, they see the body of Christ, an act of seeing that rewrites the usual inscription of female beauty. They also fail to see their own physical beauty, since it has not been written, and regard instead the beauty of the female mind. In the dynamics of vision at the cross, the special relationship of sympathetic gazes between Christ and the women who attend him represents a superior capacity in women to know, critiques gender roles in marriage, and articulates the subjectivity of the female reader. For her imagined readers, Lanyer becomes an artist, the one who represents beauty rather than the object represented.

So finally, what is so important about early modern women's reading? It illustrates where we have been, and in some ways, where we still are. When my grandmother died, during the writing of this dissertation, the minister of her church remarked at the funeral upon her frustration with her difficulty in reading the Bible. A reader whose education was curtailed by poverty and immigration to Canada in the 1920s, and for whom English was a second language, my

grandmother nevertheless always had books beside her armchair. A historian looking at her life, which was taken up with raising five children, baking innumerable pies and cookies, cooking thousands of meals, preserving the fruits of her garden year after year, and all the things that women did on farms, might miss the importance of reading to that life. Knowing my grandmother, her comment to the minister was likely the result of her fierce independence not an attitude of deference to authority, but her reading has no archive. It did, however, take place. Produced in an early modern culture where many more women could read than could write, the texts I consider might recuperate something of the importance of reading to women who never recorded their experience of texts, even as early modern women's writing indicates, by writing, the difference that material privilege makes. The women writers that I discuss represent reading for various reasons, but the consequence of the representation is to transform crucial commitments, especially to families, faith, friends, reading and writing, into a public representation of femininity that challenges the common fictional and artistic representations of women as sexualized fictions mediating relations between men or attractive surfaces embodying the beauty of art. Representing reading, one of the myriad of activities in which women engaged, allows women writers to create feminine subjects capable of seeing, desiring, and knowing, and to conceive of themselves in ways at once both like and unlike the culture in which they live.

¹ There were originally two versions of the painting, one at Appleby Castle and a second at Skipton Castle, another of Lady Anne's properties. The Skipton version has been destroyed by decay and fire. Parry adds the further detail that through an inscription recording that the figures were copied from a painting made in June 1589 and that she was conceived in May 1, 1589, Anne places herself in the painting in embryonic form (Parry 204, 208).

² For a discussion of the contents of these books, see Parry and Lamb, "Agency."

³ David Norbrook similarly argues that Habermas misses the "strong religious motivations behind the emergence of the public sphere in England" ("*Areopagitica*" 15). He concludes his article, however, with a consideration of the gender dynamics of the public in *Areopagitica* and by noting that "women were taking an increasing interest in public affairs" (32).

⁴ For other examples of paintings of this sort, see Mario Praz (98-101).

Chapter One

Working in "Erudition's Garden":

Education, Literacy, and Gender in Early Modern England

The "subject" must dig his foundations deeper, extend the underground passages which assured the edifice of his determination, further dig out the cellars upon which he raises the monument of his identification, in order to prop up more securely his "dwelling": the system of his relationship to himself, the closure of his auto-representations, the focus of his lonely exile as "subject." Man's home has indeed become these/his theoretical elaborations, by means of which he has sought to reconstruct, in an impossible metaphORIZATION, the matrix and the way that would lead to or back to it. But by wishing to reverse the anguish of being imprisoned within the other, of being placed inside the other, by making the very place and space of being his own, he becomes a prisoner of effects of symmetry that know no limit. Everywhere he runs into the walls of his palace of mirrors, the floor of which is in any case beginning to crack and break up.

(Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 136-37)

Juan Luis Vives begins his *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, first published in England in 1529, by distinguishing between the education of boys and girls through the different social spaces they will occupy as adults. Because men live "bothe at home and forthe abroad, both in theyr owne matters and for the common weale," they require many words of instruction, but because a woman lives at home, she "hath no charge to se to, but her honestye and chastity wherefore whan she is infourmed of that, she is sufficiently appointed ("Preface"). In 1581, Richard Mulcaster similarly informs the (implicitly male) readers of *Positions* that "our owne traine be without restraint for either matter or manner, bycause our employment is so generall in all thinges," but for women, "theirs is within limit, and so must their traine be" (*Positions* 174). The gentleman's education, according to sixteenth-century humanists, included not only training in horsemanship and feats of arms, as it had in the years previous, but also a knowledge of the writings of Greek and Roman antiquities and the literary arts of history, philosophy, and law (Charlton, *Education* 81).¹ Although Kenneth

Charlton argued that the purpose of a humanist education was to enable public service and to produce better men (65), Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine consider the implication of education in discourses of power: "It, stamped the more prominent members of the new élite with an indelible cultural seal of superiority" (xiv). Even though Richard Mulcaster writes to educate the sons of merchants, unlike his predecessors, who had been more specifically concerned with the role of the courtier, he still contends that the education of young gentlemen has a public purpose, the best ordering of the commonwealth; when young men, regrettably, prefer the private, they are "liker to maidens" (*Positions* 184).²

Female education, as Mulcaster's "theirs is within limit" suggests, was conceived of through the constraints of privacy. To be private in the period meant, according to Jürgen Habermas, "the exclusion from the sphere of the state apparatus: for 'public' referred to the state that in the meantime had developed, under absolutism, into an entity having an objective existence over against the person of the ruler" (11). Because women lack a public function in which to utilize their learning, the intellectual impetus for women's education is blunted. Retha Warnicke notes that "The humanists hoped to educate male students to become enlightened governors and female students to become erudite wives and mothers" (3), but as Richard Mulcaster's work suggests, to be educated to be a mother and wife is to be educated for the comfort of men and for lineal purposes: to be the mothers of their husbands' children. "[W]el

in minde, well strengthened in bodie" through education, women will be better able to fulfill these duties (*Positions* 168).

That the purpose of a girl's education was to be a wife, intellectually and sexually ensconced within the domestic, private sphere, also constrained women's writing. Elaine Beilin writes of the interconnectedness of privacy and silence:

While male virtue might be expressed by an active life in the world or public service or eloquence, women were taught that feminine virtue meant a private, domestic existence, lived in 'obedience, silence, and chastity.' Indeed, writers on female education seem obsessed with these three traditional feminine virtues at the very moment when they are considering the untraditional topic of improving women's minds. (*Redeeming* 4)

Kim Walker explains such constraints on women's education and speech within the educational practices of early modern English culture:

The prudent, chaste, and silent woman, then, was a signifier of male sovereignty in a secular world; it is as if, in "possessing" her, a man could lay claim to Christian virtues at the heart of his own secular activities. Relegated to the private sphere of the home, with her mouth, her body, her doors closed to all but the proper owner, she provided a justification of the humanist endeavor. (12)

If a woman is to be educated, her learning is measured according to the scale of privacy; for her to attempt that which is central to the humanist program of

learning would not only lack purpose, but it would also destabilize gender difference and undermine her husband's justification for his secular learning.

In this chapter, I want to add to this discussion about female education in early modern England by focusing the discussion of education on reading and by expanding it to question how educational writings, especially those directing reading, produce definitions of masculinity and femininity through the interconnectedness of gender, learnedness, domesticity, the public, and the private. After exploring the nature of early modern literacy and the differing connotations of "reading" and "learning," I will turn to the question of the production of gender. My discussion focuses on the articulation of the male tutor's authority and the representation of the minds of male and female readers, especially through their respective capacities for desire and judgement. I then consider the way in which two seventeenth-century female advocates for education, Bathsua Makin and Anna Maria Von Schurman, respond to these earlier humanist writings with regard to establishing their own authority to write and the labour and spatial aspects of the ideology of domesticity. I conclude with a discussion of space, work, and the female mind in Rachel Speght's dream poem.

I develop two key principles in this chapter, the first of which is that educational discourses produce gender. Although women's education is limited through its place in the domestic sphere, these restrictions are also productive; what it means to be a "man" or "woman" does not have a stable existence prior to

the construction of these definitions, exemplified here in writing about education.

As Michel Foucault writes:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. Power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.

(Discipline 194)

Pedagogical writings create knowledge about what women are, even as they discuss how and what to teach them. Reading, a central element of education, is integrally related to the production of gender difference because reading is presented as a constituent of personal, intellectual, and social identity. While contemporary scholars have considered how women's writing possesses a fraught relationship with the public, less attention has been paid to reading, an ostensibly private activity. Yet, women were presented with regulations on their reading as well, suggesting how privacy also articulated a relationship to authority, of being governed rather than governing. The representation of gendered reading practices that result—in saying that women read in one way and men in another, that women ought to read one sort of book and men another—articulate both knowledge about gender and the gendering of knowledge.

The second argument that I develop is that women's writings about reading and education are less subversive of dominant ideologies than

transformative. Influenced by the 1978 work of Judith Fetterly on "the resisting reader," scholars have focused on the subversive potential of reading, locating feminism in this "subversion." Jacqueline Pearson's work is characteristic, although work by Margaret W. Ferguson, Caroline Lucas, and Francis Teague follows a similar model. Pearson writes: "Conduct and educational works throughout the period deal with the issue of women's reading, sometimes in detail, and a central impulse in virtually all such works is to contain its subversive possibilities" ("Women Reading" 81). This division of power between a masculine hegemony and feminine subversion needs to be reconsidered, however, because it presupposes a stable meaning for the word "woman," as if the writers of the treatises were not playing a part in constituting that significance. Because writing about reading for both men and women was not only about what they would read, but also about defining the qualities of masculinity and femininity, regulations on women's reading cannot be simply about containing what is subversive. Not functioning within a stable system of masculine power and feminine contestation, regulations construct or manufacture a social system in which both men and women fulfil particular social roles and create the meaning of gender difference according to those social requirements.

Of course, there are material limits to the effectiveness of the prescriptive pedagogical works that I will be discussing. As Margaret W. Ferguson writes of these works, and others like them on medicine, politics, and the law, "it is clear that the prescriptions were mainly articulated by educated men and aimed at controlling the behavior of relatively privileged women" (97). But while my

examination of educational works and diaries by women will show that women were not precisely acquiescent to the instructions, the treatises were not ineffectual. While all the directives may not have been implemented, they did attempt to determine the goals, methods, and matter of female reading and education. Works on pedagogy are situated in particular historical localities, and thus they are indicative, at least, of the ideological positions on gender of those with the authority and means both to publish and, in some cases, act as tutors. Even if treatises on women's education by men represent themselves as dominant, while the women writers represent themselves as dominated, as Michel Foucault argues, discourse is not divided between the accepted and the excluded, the dominant and the dominated. Rather, there is a distribution of discourses that must be reconstructed, with "enunciations required and forbidden," variants according to who is speaking, and "the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes" (*History* 100). Patterns of repetition, of "reutilizations," indicate both the fragility of the efforts to dominate and the possibilities for change within discourses of education. Rather than using the term "subversion" to describe women's reading, which values straightforward opposition, I propose a model of "transformation," in which the very terms of limitation, especially of work and domesticity, are also "reutilized" in justifications for women's reading and the expansion of their domains of knowledge. To say that women mostly do not subvert educational discourses may seem to devalue their writing, in that subversion has become a term of our endearment towards early modern women.

But it may also allow for the dismantling of a sense of patriarchal authority as monolithically powerful. The regulations and limits imposed on women are themselves, at least partly, expressions of instability within patriarchal authority; when women write from within the terms that confine them, they are also already, if to a lesser degree, inside structures of power.³

II

Definitions and Data: Literacy, Learning, and Reading

I will first distinguish between the terms reading and education. With regard to literate education, they are equivalent, but education can include the non-textual concerns of conduct, manners, and even hunting skills. Possessing the ability to read also does not necessarily mean that one is “educated,” as the word was used in the early modern period. Studies of early modern literacy reveal something of the difference between literacy and education, as well as the difficulty of accessing historical data about reading. The most influential examination of literacy is David Cressy’s *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (1980). He argues that there is little connection between the well-intentioned who wrote education treatises—even for those like Hartlib and Comenius in the 1640s who would have extended education by both class and gender—and actual increases in literacy. Cressy admits only the ability to write as an indicator of literacy, and using political oaths taken in the 1640s, he assesses the literacy rate among the male population at 30 percent, with women being as illiterate as the most illiterate group of men.⁴

About 90 percent of Englishwomen, he concludes, in what is now an often cited statistic, were illiterate in the seventeenth century, and those who were literate were primarily in the upper classes (41). Only after the 1670s, in his view, was there a significant decline in female illiteracy.

Although Cressy does not distinguish between the literacies of reading and writing, regarding signatures and marks as the best evidence of literate skills, other historians do demarcate between these skills and consequently arrive at divergent conclusions, particularly with regard to literacy among women and the lower classes. The distinction between reading and writing is especially necessary for evaluating the literacy skills of the less-educated, for as Richard Mulcaster writes: "writing in order of traine do succede reading" (*Positions* 31). Because reading and writing were taught as separate skills, Margaret Spufford argues in *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (1981) that even children who had been to school only for a few months would have been able to read; documents that demonstrate the ability to write are therefore inadequate as a complete measure of literacy. Reading needs to be a separate category of study or the resulting statistics will be an inappropriate measure of the literacy rate among those with limited education, especially women and the less wealthy (27). Spufford concludes, from the evidence offered by the increased numbers of ballads, chapbooks, "godly books," and pamphlets, all addressed to a popular audience, that a larger portion of the population than Cressy allowed was literate at some level. Thomas Laqueur also disagrees with Cressy's methodology on

the grounds that he relied overmuch on the idea that literacy was learned in school. Laqueur contends that for most people in England between 1500 and 1850, learning to read and write was not confined to childhood or to formal teaching from teachers and tutors. Along with instruction from a few charity schools, reading and writing were skills acquired as necessary from parents, neighbours, and relatives. His crucial point is that people will learn to read or write when they have a reason to do so, and in a culture becoming more reliant on texts, in law, religion, and economics, literacy was increasingly necessary and desirable ("Cultural Origins"). Laqueur, like Spufford, is interested in the extent of reading literacy, and cites the half million copies of inexpensive Bibles, the two million agricultural almanacs, the multiple inexpensive editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and documentary evidence of the possession of books among even the poorest members of society ("Cultural Origins" 265). Although Cressy had dismissed the relevance of book publishing to calculating literacy rates because he believed that the entire numerical output of the publishing industry could have been absorbed by the privileged classes (47), for Spufford and Laqueur—as for Suzanne Hull, who looks at books for women—the extent and variety of books suggest a growing popular and female audience. When the topics and costs of the books, along with the number printed, are considered as indications of potential readership, the argument for an increased number of readers among the non-elite and among women becomes the more convincing.

While Keith Wrightson, like Cressy, is also not concerned with the difference between reading and writing, Wrightson does make an important

addition to Cressy's work with his analysis of the relationship between literacy and geographical location. His position is that "[e]ducational expansion has produced not a literate society, but a hierarchy of illiteracy which faithfully mirrored the hierarchy of status and wealth" (190). He adds, however, that while the overall illiteracy rates were high, social class was not the only determinant upon literacy. Local circumstances were also a factor: "despite the gross overall social bias in the attainment of literacy, there were places, whether great cities or tiny hamlets, in which a much more widespread literacy had been achieved. Some husbandmen, artisans, labourers, servants and women could read and write" (194). Not only were the literacy rates of towns generally higher than that of the countryside, but literacy rates also varied between parishes, even within counties. In Essex, for example, the worst parish had a male illiteracy rate of 82 percent, while the best had only 36 percent (194). Wrightson accounts for these variations through the availability of schooling, local occupational structure, and the influence of individual clergymen and schoolmasters.⁵

Unless studies of women's literacy distinguish between reading and writing as forms of literacy, a distinction that requires the admission of non-signature evidence, a distorted picture of women's illiteracy will emerge. Yet, signatures do offer the possibility of statistical conclusions, and in their absence, literacy levels, especially the ability to read, cannot be precisely measured. Further, because of the effect on literacy levels of geographical location—or more precisely, the instructors available—we might alter our perception that literate women were necessarily solitary figures. While overall literacy rate

among women may have been low, women's literacy, like other forms of popular literacy, existed within communities that could be enabling—and indeed must have been so, or instruction (itself a form of support) would not have taken place at all.⁶

Even so, an early modern person could be literate and nevertheless remain “uneducated.” Being educated was frequently distinguished from the possession of literacy skills in writings about popular education in England at the end of the sixteenth-century. William Kempe says that his 1588 work, *The Education of Children in Learning*, is written in English to teach the uneducated. He has, he says, “adorned the whole worke with some wittie, Greek, and Latin sentences, englishing the same nevertheles in the Margent for the behoofe of the unlearned” (185,186). Clearly, the “educated” are those who read Greek and Latin, for the “unlearned” can read only English. But the “unlearned” can read, nevertheless; they are not illiterate. Francis Clement’s *The Petie Schole* (1587) promises “a method to enable a childe to read perfectly within one moneth” and wishes to redress the problem of unlearned teachers. As his preface to the reader declares, “Children (as we see) almost everie where are first taught either in private by men or women altogeather rude, and utterly ignorant of the due composing and just spelling of wordes: or else in common schooles most commonlie by boyes, verie seeldome or never in anie of sufficient skill” (52). Edmund Coote in *The English Schoole-Maister* (1596) assures his readers that he will teach “the most easie, short, and perfect order of distinct reading, and true writing of our English tongue” so that the “unskillful” may understand hard English

words they hear or read in Scriptures or sermons. In his "Preface for direction to the Reader," Coote, too, distinguishes between the unlearned and those able to read when he asks leave to speak to his unlearned readers. He will instruct them (specifically men and women of trades such as tailor, weaver, shop-keeper and seamstress) in how to teach without hindering their work. That the "rude," unlearned, and unskilful were teaching children to read must indicate several things: the difference between education and literacy; the existence of some level of literacy among the adults who were described in this way; and, most importantly, these adults' interest in and motivation for teaching reading skills to children.

Reading and education also differ in that education possessed a broader social purpose that could also be dissociated from texts. Richard Mulcaster, in *Positions*, defines education in this way: "Education is the bringing up of one, not to live alone, but amongst others...whereby he shall be best able to execute the doings in life, which the state of his calling shall employ him unto, whether, publicke abroad, or private at home, according to the direction of his countrie, whereunto he is born" (184). Although for men, part of the humanist project is to centre education on the text, on reading rather than on skills like hunting and hawking, for women learning to execute her "doings in life" is more about deeds than books. Indeed, Vives' work—one of the most important on women's education—is as interested in regulating female behaviour as it is in outlining the books from which women might learn. Education is explicitly about learning one's position in the social order. But because reading may take place alone

and with texts not necessarily educational in nature, reading and education do not precisely replicate each other in social function.⁷

The distinction between the terms reading and education is also crucial to the way that historical narratives of women's education have been told. Although early modern works on women's education tend to consider women as a group unified by nature, in practice—as for men—the form of women's access to literacy and to education is determined by class. The story of this access has been told as a tragic tale of decline from the "golden age" of Sir Thomas More and his daughters, of progress from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, and of stasis, with the mid-sixteenth century as an exceptional period. Kim Walker paints the period of 1520-1560 in the brightest hues because it saw humanist encouragement of a relatively extensive educational program for women. After 1560, however, female education followed either an aristocratic model that underlined social graces or a bourgeois model that emphasised housewifery. Retha Warnicke charts a narrative of development over this period by dividing the time between the reigns of Henry VIII and James I generationally. She argues that Sir Thomas More's humanist plans for the education of girls, which involved training in classical languages and literature for scholarly and domestic purposes, did not extend much beyond More's circle and the court of Henry VIII. The second generation, which included Elizabeth I, divided its attention between the study of Christian and ancient texts, while the third generation, exemplified by Mary Sidney, saw a declining interest in classical translation but increasing possibilities for writing and reading in the vernacular.

For Warnicke, the reign of James I offered the most positive view of education to women; although classical translation was no longer a pastime at court, more women were able to read and write. So a decline in humanist values was attended by, if it did not necessarily result from, increased literacy (134,135). For his part, Lawrence Stone declares the middle third of the sixteenth century to be an exception to the rule of general stasis that lasted until the mid-eighteenth century (*Family* 340). He does suggest, however, that women participated in the extension of literacy beyond the upper classes because women of the lower classes, such as the daughters of yeomen, may have been educated to read and write, and because, during the seventeenth century, boarding schools in which girls learned social graces became fairly common (202).⁸

The differences among these historical narratives may be more the result of different assessments of the value of the classical and the vernacular and their place within "learning" than of different facts. The early humanist period was more oriented towards classical training for women, while the seventeenth century was more concerned with vernacular and religious instruction. If women such as Margaret More Roper and Queen Elizabeth received extensive training in languages and rhetoric, many more of their contemporaries received no literate education whatsoever. If the seventeenth century displayed less interest in humanist education for women, it also saw more women becoming literate. The story of women's education in the early modern period, then, is about neither progress nor decline, but a story in which we must distinguish the educational experiences of women by class and through the discriminations

among “education,” “humanism,” and “reading.” It is clear, even from the increased numbers of middle-class women who published their work in the seventeenth century, that women who were not necessarily included in court dynamics learned to read and write in English, without any knowledge of Latin or Greek texts.

By placing a primary value on an education rooted in Latin and Greek, contemporary scholars may be uncritically perpetuating the values of an educational system that was available only to the elite who had, after all, been the first to declare the superior value of the education they received; the system played a part in constructing versions of masculinity and femininity and situated upper-class men in more powerful positions in relation to what is defined as learning than women and the lower classes. But classical education does not necessarily possess an inherently superior value to housewifery, except that those who received a classical education (and left matters of the house to women) also had the power to declare that their knowledge was of more cultural worth. Because women who wrote about education in the seventeenth century did so by returning to the classical educational values of the earlier humanists, as well as by relating such learnedness to domesticity—both positively and negatively—I want to recuperate the possibility that there are other valuable categories of knowledge as I explore how treatises on female education construe the issues of the “nature” of gender, the female mind, and knowledge.

The treatises on education also demonstrate how gender is both textually and historically constructed, and how reading is a crucial part of this construction.

In writing about women's education, male authors proceed by the citation of exempla from Biblical and classical authorities. This methodology, common enough, suggests that knowledge about women can be gained by reading the texts of the past because language is the means by which knowledge is transmitted. Richard Mulcaster, for example, writes in his *Elementarie* (1582) that every virtue in learning, arts, and sciences proceeds from reading and writing because knowledge "travels" in language. By reading, the reader receives "what antiquity hath left us" (and by writing, "we deliver what posterity causes of us") (25). John Milton, similarly, begins "Of Education" (1644) by saying that a student learns the languages of those nations that have been "most industrious after wisdom; so that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known" (631). For Comenius, too, books are instruments of transplanting wisdom (*Reformation* 25). As a result of believing that knowledge can be attained through reading the books of the past, reading becomes a conservative act, for neither plans for female education nor constructions of female nature will be allowed to depart radically from history. In order to alter women's education, reformers must confront contemporary social forces, the texts and theories of the past that are deployed in support of that situation, and the method of constructing knowledge that values that past. Here, then, is the real value of education for women. It is not that intellectual activities have, *prima facie*, more worth than domesticity, but possessing knowledge of languages and texts allows women to participate more fully in the discourses that define them and thus to participate more fully in their culture. Through gaining the discursive

knowledge of learning, women have a greater opportunity to alter the terms by which their gender is defined.

III

Gendered Readers, Engendered Minds

Having noted the differences in definition among reading, literacy, and education, I want now to consider the differences in the way reading, in particular, was represented for both men and women and how gender differences both precede and are established by the regulation of reading. By looking at works by Juan Luis Vives, Thomas Salter,⁹ Richard Mulcaster, and Richard Braithwait, I want to show first of all that these prominent advocates of female education explicated masculine authority, particularly the authority of the male author or tutor, through gendered versions of intellectual activity and domains of knowledge. Male tutors wrote to represent their cultural authority, both to define knowledge and teach it. However, when women such as Bathsua Makin, Anna Maria Von Schurman, and Rachel Speght wrote to defend women's education, they defined themselves, not as tutors who would guide others, but as women arguing for access to a category of education that had been valued because of their exclusion from it. The problem they confront, as I will show, is that the definition of "learned" knowledge is inextricable from that of masculinity.

Gendered versions of mind emerge, first of all, in the representation of desire, and secondly, through the mind's capacity to reason. For boys, desire is a rational means by which to progress towards intellectual autonomy so that the

end of education for the male pupil is no longer to need the tutor's guidance. According to Sir Thomas Elyot, desire can be directed to the advancement of virtue or the rebuke of vices, and when the child is older, desire can be involved in reading (43). When the child reads Homer, he will find instruction in governance through the excitement of a yearning for virtue: "the reders shall be so all inflamed, that they most fervently shall desire and coveit, by the imitation of their vertues, to acquire semblable glorie" (44). This profit may also come from reading other Greek and Latin writers: "Than the childe's courage inflamed by the frequent redynge of noble poetes, dayly more and more desireth to have experience in those thinges, that they so vehemently do commende in them, that they write of" (*Boke* 47). Francis Clement's *The Petie Scole* (1587) also suggests that virtue, gained by learning, is "cheifly obtained by a longing love, and lovyng longing after it" (35). Not the interfering passion of the kind that Jacques DuBosc accuses his male readers of having when they misunderstand him (E3), this form of desire is met by knowledge. The sort of desire inculcated by poetry, is, as Philip Sidney wrote in his *Defense of Poesie*, that in which reason masters passion, and "the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind has in itself is as good as a philosopher's book" (24).¹⁰ For male pupils, desire is associated with reason, virtue, action, and governance.

Desire is a form of movement. It is part of a teleological pattern of progress for the pupil that inversely correlates to the tutor's authority over reading; the boy's development accompanies the diminution of the tutor's responsibility for his pupil's reading. Erasmus, for example, outlines an

educational plan in which authority eventually shifts from the tutor to the pupil. The boy's reading is carefully and sequentially structured, beginning, as soon as elements of language have been taught, with Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom. These require little explication, but offer instruction, showing "briefly and conveniently whatever is relevant to the office of the good prince" (61). The Gospels should be read next, for they help to teach the skill of interpretation, to be followed by the Apophthegms of Plutarch, and works by Seneca, Aristotle, Cicero, and Plato. After instruction in moral philosophy, the Prince is ready to exercise his own judgement by reading history, wherein he must distinguish between wisdom and destruction. Here the reader must be on guard, "forearmed," lest he be deceived by some unworthy, un-Christian value of a previous century. Similarly, he must take care when reading Scripture not to imitate everything, especially not barbarities (64). Although he does not transform all that he reads into action, the Prince can, and must, be able to read that which is antithetical to what he believes. He must be able, as Erasmus says, to use his reason and rescue the worthy from that which is not, "like a jewel from a dung-heap" (62). When a tutor guides a boy's reading, his aim is that the boy become a man, a warrior able to do battle, to read anything and be edified by the good and unbeguiled by what is not.

Indeed, one facet of being a man is the ability to read extensively and to make moral judgements about what one reads. For Elyot, too, the child's reading is instructional, while the man's reading is judgemental. The boy becomes a man "when reason in him is confirmed with serious learning and long experience." At

this time, he can read what is morally tenuous: "than shall he in redyng tragoedies execrate and abhore the intollerable life of tyrantes: And shall contemne the foly and dotage expressed by poetes lascivious" (48). Elyot defends both the reading of poetry, criticised for being bawdy, and comedies, said to be ribald. By beholding vice—the snares of harlots, and deceit of servants which are pictures or "a mirroure of mans life"—the reader may be prepared to resist or prevent them in his own life. For Elyot, it is untenable to argue that being shown vices is corrupting, for by the same reasoning, sermons where vice is declared would increase the number of sinners (63). Thus, he says, the fear of "some lite mater" in verse is no more a reason for a reader to abandon his work, than fear of being stung by a nettle is reason for a man not to enter a garden and gather what is good:

No wyse man entreth into a gardein but he sone espiethe good herbes from nettiles, and treadeth the nettiles under his feete whiles he gadreth good herbes....Sembabliye if he do rede wanton mater mixte with wisdom, he putteth the warst under foote, and sorteth out the beste, or if his courage be stered or provoked, he remembreth the litel pleasure and gret detriment that shulde ensue of it. (64)

Although learning must be sown in a child "timely," the wise man that emerges through the tutor's guidance has courage, constancy, and an ability to judge for himself. To come "to the perfection of wysedome" (65) is to have a natural

disposition that is shamefast and continent, but it is also to have lessons that exclude nothing from the ancient poets.¹¹

Masculinity is the end of a process of maturation through which the pupil assumes the role that his tutor had in making choices and judgements about what he reads. It is true, as critics have said, that reading is an active process for men, but it is also the case that the process of learning to read in this way is instruction in masculinity. This is not necessarily the case for all men, however. Class, as well as the reader's age and education, determines the pupil's relationship to the tutor.¹² A poem at the beginning of Clement's work, which is addressed to an audience of ill-educated teachers and to parents and children, calls children to their teachers: the parish clerk, the tailor, the weaver, and the seamstress, who, now improved, can instruct them in reading. But these teachers and students will not eventually read extensively, without exclusion. In a way more typical of works on women's reading, Clement distinguishes the positive force of book love from the dangerous "love books," which are "enemies of vertue, nources of vice, furtherers of ignorance, and hinderers of all good learnyng" (84). While Clement does want to extend the reading population, he does not give these new readers the authority to decide what to read or to determine what is "good learnyng." Comenius, who writes much later but is interested in the inclusion of all men and women in the reformation of schools, still recommends that men of wisdom should go forward and disarm pagan writers, engaging in a battle others would not be equipped to fight (*Great Didactic* 245). To have the ability to read is not necessarily to have the right to decide

what is worth reading. The latter is the privilege of those who attempt to set and express cultural values.

Women, as a group undifferentiated by class, are not accorded the privileges of choice and judgement in reading. As Jacqueline Pearson and Valerie Wayne have noted, regulations on women's reading are particularly associated with sexual control ("Women Reading"; "Some Sad Sentence"). Obligatory chastity also configures the female mind and the knowledge it possesses. Like chastity, which defines itself by an action that is not done, the chaste mind appears to be static and incapable of development; as a consequence, the woman's capacity for judgement, her ability to read other works, and the way her identity is fashioned through her reading are all affected. While a boy's lust for virtue, his "loving longing" after learning, can be inflamed through reading, female desire is, edging towards the absence of metaphor, always assumed to be sexual; the description of the boy's yearning is desexualized through association with reason. The literalization of women's reading in this way manifests itself explicitly in regulations on romance reading. For Vives, reading a romance is like an illicit love affair, for a woman can be "quickened into vyce" by her reading (11). Braithwait, too, remarks that Venus and Adonis are "unfitting Consorts for a Ladies bosome," and the stories of the rape of Ganimedes or Lais in Eurypedes instruct the reader in "looseness," rather than morality (139). Such reading instigates a desire that is not for the husband, destroying his sense of legitimate succession. Furthermore, a female pupil is never accorded the capacity to judge. When Vives discusses what women

should read, in a paragraph at the end of six full pages devoted to expounding upon the sorts of book that maids should not read, the selections seem almost beyond question: "some, every body knoweth, as the gospelles, the actes, the epistles of thapostles [*sic*], and the olde Testament, saynt Hieronyme, Saynt Ciprian, Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary, Gregory, Plato, Cicero, Senec, and such other (12,12v). But the maid cannot read even these independently, for "wyse and sad men must be asked counsayle of, in them. Nor the woman ought not to folowe her own judgement, lest when she hath but a lyght entring in lernyng, she shulde take false for true: hurtful in stede of holsome, folyshe and pevyshe for sad and wise" (12v). There is no sense that a girl will progress from one kind of reading to another as she becomes a woman or that there will be a time when her learning is more substantial or chosen according to her own judgement. Vives simply allows, "and some such other," a vagueness that is a marked contrast to the way in which boys education is specifically delineated to move from one type of book to the next, in a careful progression that aims to produce a man.¹³ Instead, the wiser man will always make the final judgement about what and how the woman reads. Through the stasis of such a construction of women's reading, the female intellect also remains inert. If books can be divided between the moral and the corrupt, the wholesome and the harmful, then a woman should read only that which is good; not progressing towards maturity in which the mind writes a mental text of assessment, separate from what is read, her mind must read only what is good or she herself will not be a good woman. Whereas (upper-class) male pupils progressed from boys to men, the female

pupil is always, first of all, female; she is always being instructed, never judging, and never changing what she should read. There is no significant difference between the reading material of youth and age, of the maid and the woman, except that her married state and its domestic duties leave her less time for reading.

Making chastity the indispensable requirement of education, rather than knowing and understanding, also limits the range of books that the woman can read, which, in turn, further confines her ability to read actively. Prohibitions on certain books, for the sake of chastity, prevent the understanding of others. By way of contrast, Elyot, in his *Boke Named the Governour* recommended that his pupil read Virgil's *Aeneid* with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssee*: "by the joynynge together of these autours, the one shall be the better understande by the other" (45). He allows that *Metamorphoses*—although there are few virtuous matters of policy in it and little time should be spent on it—is necessary for the understanding of other poets, like Virgil and Homer (46). Thus, the comprehension of the morality of works happens through the ability to make connections and distinctions between texts. But, as Vives warns, women should be as careful of romances and "Ovidis bokes of love" as she is of serpents or snakes (12). As a result, women may lack an inadequately developed intertextual position from which to read, understand, and make moral choices. When a woman has not read extensively, when she has "lyght entring in lernyng," as Vives says, she is more likely to make mistaken moral judgements about her reading. Yet, she is denied access to that extensive reading that

would give her a more substantial entry into learning. So, instead of deciding what is wholesome and what is hurtful after she has read it, the female reader must defer to masculine authority and never read that which is morally questionable.

This deference also affects how a girl's reading relates to her identity. Identity emerges, not through the activities of her mind, but through the text that she reads. In Vives' remark that a woman should not follow her own judgement is the fear that, without guidance to turn her from what is bad, she will become what she reads. Salter, as well, says that the young maid is like a new vessel that will keep the taste of the liquor that first fills it, and so he reprimands fathers who make the mistake of giving their daughters, as soon as they can read, "bookes, ballades, Songes, sonettes, and Ditties of daliance" which they retain forever (79). Mulcaster's *Elementarie* (1582) also states that his work will "season the tender, & untrained minde with the best & swetest liquor" (23). This tender mind is that of a child early in his education who must be protected, so that he hears and sees only that which is agreeable. But the (male) pupil that Mulcaster considers is not always a child. The maid, however, is perennially sheltered to keep her reading worthy of her reputation. Her reading becomes a part of a discursive statement, like the gossip of her peers, about who she is. Her moral character is an external scaffolding rather than an internal frame of approbation or rejection constructed through a series of moral judgements.¹⁴ The maid can neither take the jewel from the dung heap nor wander in the garden, to take Erasmus' and Elyot's metaphors, because she will simply get a

reputation for inhabiting the dung heap; the fear of the nettle ought to keep her beyond the walls of the garden. Binary demands on the text and on the female mind limit the range within which female identities can exist; if the text that is read is stable and morally unambiguous, the identity assembled from contact with it will be the same. The mind is a space rather than an organ of activity, and in itself can make neither heaven nor hell. Allowing the female mind to engage only with words that are already approved and known by watching authorities, regulations on reading ensure that the mind will always be visible.

Reading is a locus for the maintenance of a gendered and classed social order. The upper-class, masculine reader may eventually act with judgement towards what he reads, while the lower classes and women will not. Thus, education, and the position of reading within it, is an expression of a social relationship. Those who will govern society can, indeed must, be able to govern their own reading. As Elyot writes: "But if by redynge the sage counsaile of Nestor, the subtile persuasions of Ulisses, the compendious gravities of Menelaus, the imperiall majesty of Agamemnon, the prowesse of Achilles, and valiaunt courage of Hector: we may apprehende any thinge, wherby our wittes may be amended, and our personages be more apte to serve our publike weale and our prince" (249). The man learns to serve the prince by reading about exemplary rulers. Although serving is not ruling, because he reads of rulers, he is being made more like them. Service to the monarch is itself a form of social power because only those who could govern may do it. Those who will not govern—women and the lower classes—must instead learn to be governed, both

in society and in reading. Erasmus writes that because the “chief hope for the state is founded in the proper training of its children,” special attention must be given to the education of girls so they will “absorb both Christian principles and also literature that is of sound quality and conducive to the welfare of the state” (*Education* 72). Here Erasmus envisages education, and reading in particular, as a means of social control, a way to ensure that female citizens will internalise the social order so that the imposition of external laws will be unnecessary.

The regulation of reading as the regulation of sexuality and the attendant limitation on the possibility of intellectual development ultimately connect the “learned” to the “masculine.” When men possess authority over women’s reading, they also have control over the definitions of what is said to be wise and learned. Gender differences, the boundaries of what is masculine and what is feminine, are established on the basis of this control. What is wise is also what is masculine, and the feminine is that which is not masculine, the possibility of the foolish outside the boundaries of the wise. This is apparent in works about both male and female education. Treatises on male education construct scholarly activity as male, in part, through the repudiation of that which is viewed as feminine. In his delineation of the characteristics of a scholar, authorised by reference to Plato, Roger Ascham emphasises a physical masculinity; a scholar, he says, must not have a voice that is soft and womanish, but must be manly and strong (*Scholemaster* 21). Erasmus sets both the tyrant and the woman in opposition to the “good man,” the fair, masculine character of the scholarly prince. The prince, as well, must reject feminine things, like a desire for

approval for his appearance, for "that sort of praise is for a woman" (50). Further, it is the mark of both a tyrant and a woman to "follow an emotional impulse" (52), and the prince must do neither. It follows, then, that the prince, in the course of his education, must be kept away from women because they are prone to foolishness and flattery and may effeminise him through their influence (*Education* 55). As Ascham proposes, the humanist scholar is not the scholar of the past, the weak son with the deformed body who was unfit for hunting. While diminishing the importance of traditionally masculine activities, Ascham and Erasmus take care to assert that the scholar is not effeminate.

For Vives, as well, the category of "learnedness" is denoted by its association with the masculine voice of moral authority. He is the one who knows, because he has read Cicero, that the books that women like to read are foolish, ignorant, and dangerous. The learned possess authority, and women, by their lack of that which has been determined to constitute "learning," are denied access both to the opportunity to read more within that category and the authority to make decisions about what and how they will read. There is a circular logic: women cannot read extensively because they will fail to understand because they have not read extensively. This conflicted mode of reasoning transpires, I think, because learning is a category that has been, historically, almost exclusively established by men; what women read cannot be "learned" because it is they, and not men, who have read it. The foolish is the unlearned and it is also the feminine. Indeed, Erasmus urges his Christian prince to avoid the stories of Arthur and Lancelot because they are "not only tyrannical, but also utterly

illiterate, foolish, and on the level of old wives' tales" (61). To have significance, the category of "learnedness" needs boundaries, and it attains these boundaries by excluding, for one thing, what women read.¹⁵

IV

Authority and the Learned Lady

Given this exclusionary association between masculinity and learning, women who wished to represent themselves as learned or to urge education for other women had first to consider the problem of authority. If "learnedness" was demarcated by the exclusion of women, women writers also lacked the authority that attended it. The struggle for authority of representation is suggested by the "Great Picture" by Jan van Belcamp, which depicts the fifteen year old Anne Clifford with portraits of her tutor Samuel Daniel and her governess, Anne Taylour. The monument that Clifford commissioned for Daniel, at a church, in Somersetshire where Daniel had retired in his old age, further indicates the importance of her tutor to her identity as an educated woman. The monument states:

Here lyes, expectinge the second comming of
Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ye Dead Body
of Samuel Danyell, Esq., that Excellent Poett and
Historian, who was Tutor to the Lady Anne
of Clifford in her youth, she that was sole Daughter
and Heire to George Clifford Earl of Cumberland

Who in Gratitude to him erected this Monument
 in his Memory a long time after when she
 was Countess Dowager of Pembroke, Dorsett

& Montgomery. He dyed in October 1619. (qtd. in Williamson 53).

As Mary Ellen Lamb suggests, the monument is as attentive to Clifford's identity as it is to Daniel's and equates his activities as poet and historian to his role as tutor to Clifford, who is specifically mentioned as heir to her father and as countess: "Clifford's expression of respect for Daniel is bound up with her obtrusive representation of her own identity" ("Agency" 357). For Clifford, the relationship of the female pupil to her tutor is not a confining one of obedience to a male authority—although Daniel himself had complained of being "constrayned to bide with children" (qtd. in Williamson 62)—but a connection that enables her own public representation of herself as an intellectual subject. Wealth must, as Lamb suggests, underpin such a representation, for only one with financial resources can manage to commission paintings and monuments. By associating herself with the authority of the male tutor and writer, rather than by rejecting that authority as limiting, Clifford is able to construct publicly an identity that includes the possession of both learning and land. This identity may be subversive, in that it is a female identity that is not represented in terms of obedience or passivity, but it becomes so only through the "reutilization" of attaching the patriarchal authority of her tutors and husbands to her own aims and not through radically challenging the legitimacy of their social positions as men, tutors, or landowners.

The writings of Anna Maria Von Schurman and Bathsua Makin demonstrate the difficulties for women in asserting their identities as intellectual subjects independent of a male authority. Although they, like the male writers that I have been discussing, are writing to urge female education, they do not represent themselves as guides for young women in the way that the male pedagogues do. They write to avow their own right to learning, as much as to direct the education of girls. Anna Maria Von Schurman's *The Learned Maid: or, Whether a Maid May be a Scholar?* was first published in 1641 in Europe, but was translated from Latin into English and published in England in 1659. Schurman deploys the irrefutable authority of logic, which she calls the "Key of all Sciences" (5) in her challenge to objections to women's education. She is herself an answer to the question posed by the title of her book, since the title page of the English edition and translation from Latin identifies her as Anna Maria a Schurman of Utrecht, both a "scholar" and a "virgin." Her own status as unmarried and chaste allows her to demonstrate that she is neither derelict in domestic duties nor sexually licentious. Constructing her authority through the juxtaposition of her scholarship with her virginity confirms that learnedness was, at least in part, constituted by the expurgation of female sexuality; the containment of her female sexuality, in addition to her class, for she was the daughter of a nobleman, allows her to enter the field of knowledge that is scholarship—a field to which the gate remained closed to most of her female contemporaries, as Schurman herself recognized.

The issue of the tutor's authority is also crucial to Makin's work because Makin represents her authority as that of the male tutor, by offering no author's name on the title page and constructing the voice of the tract's narrator as male. In the address to the reader, Makin presents the author of the book as a man: "I am a Man my self, that would not suggest a thing prejudicial to our Sex" (5). Makin's narrator, constructed as authoritative through masculinity, logic, and reference to the exemplary women of history, performs the authority of the male tutor to mitigate the antagonism to women's authority and the education of girls. Not arguing, as male pedagogues did, in favour of the confinement of woman because of their potential for excess, Makin's narrator attempts to remove those limitations. The performance, in which the voice says he writes nothing prejudicial to men, nevertheless confronts restrictive attitudes toward women, and when it is revealed as a performance, might confer some degree of authority on female tutors through the ability to be a convincing actor.

Neither Makin nor Schurman presents women's physical nature or the preservation of chastity as a barrier to learning. Rather, they appeal to the universal, taking up the potential of an ungendered concept of mind. Makin writes: "There is in all an innate desire of knowing, and the satisfying this is the greatest pleasure" (25), a view which she repeats: "There is in all an innate desire of knowing, in Women as well as Men" (33,34). Schurman also argues that "all Mankind have in them by Nature a desire of knowledge," and that maids are also a member of the species (8). If this desire for knowledge is "natural," it emerges from a nature women were not allowed to possess because, while men

might virtuously desire knowledge, women's desire was imagined more as sexual or dangerous; if women were like Eve, their desire for knowledge could only have disastrous results. I will discuss Von Schurman and Makin at further length, but I want here to note the terms of their negotiation of an identity for the female reader that includes the possibility of being a scholar. Like Anne Clifford, these two women accept aspects of discourses that limit them—the superior authority of masculine voices and the necessity of chastity—but they also use, reutilise, these elements in ways that enable them to outline convincingly more expansive plans for the education for girls.

V

The Mulier Economica and the Labour of Reading

With social role determining the mind and method of reading, the private mind becomes chaste, wandering neither literally nor in literature, far from home, and struggling to possess necessary cultural authority. Privacy, however, was not only a limitation on reading. To both male and female advocates of female education, the domestic—as private space and as type of labour—offers complex rationalizations for why women should read; reading is necessary for religion and for various aspects of domestic life—for being a wife, a mother, and a housekeeper.¹⁶

Gender is naturalized through the work for which education is necessary. Education helped to define public and private social roles, but so did the work for which that education was necessary. Ian Maclean summarizes this dichotomy

aply: "Man, more robust and audacious, is better suited for a peripatetic, outdoor, public, acquisitive role; women, more timid, possessing judgement and physical force in lesser measure, is naturally the custodian of children, household goods and the acquisitions of her husband" (57). But, the organization of gender according to such binary oppositions is suspicious. Lorna Hutson says of such formulations—exemplified in Dod and Cleaver's *Godlie Forme of Household Government* and in Xenophon's *Economicus*, popular with Northern humanists—that the formula is "too symmetrical to be anything other than a fiction" (*Usurer's* 21). And as Judith Butler argues, because such gender binaries persist

[t]he masculine/feminine binary constitutes not only the exclusive framework in which that specificity can be recognized, but in every other way the "specificity" of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that both constitute "identity" and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer. (4)

The early modern set of binary oppositions is certainly just such a framework, an attempt to construct a category of female identity only on sex, independent of all other factors. What has been excluded from the early modern formula is, among other things, how the work that women do may actually undercut the stability of a separate and distinct masculine identity within the public sphere.

Within the private sphere, women, depending on their class position, might follow one of two models of femininity. In *Still Harping on Daughters*, Lisa

Jardine contends that because the purpose of humanist education is to produce an eloquent and cultivated individual, knowledge of Latin and Greek and the ability to compose verse became female accomplishments valued in the drawing room. The educated court lady, exemplified by the women in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, was admired precisely because she has no social role. Rather than leading to a public vocation, her education is ornamental and a distraction from civil affairs (51,52). Ian Maclean adds another model for women outside of court, the *mulier economica*, for whom learning was presented as a solution to the problem of leisure (Maclean 64). It is the *mulier economica* upon whom I want to concentrate because she is central to the domestic impetus for reading and education, which is, in any case, represented as if it could transcend class in ways that the "ornament" of Latin could not. Giovanni Bruto, for example, urges his audience, a nobleman, to teach his daughter not to disdain the duties associated with the running of the house as unfit for the honour of her estate (J4v). Salter, addressing a less specific audience of gentlewomen with the same advice, says that "every woman ought wholelie to be active and diligent about the government of her housholde and familie" (101), and Vives writes to a queen and a princess that he "wolde in no wyse that a woman shulde be ignorant of those feates, that muste be done by hand, no, nat though she be a pri[n]cesse or a quene" (3). In addition to the business of the house, there are other activities of the hands—like spinning, weaving, and cookery, which "no body" should "lothe" (5)—for they keep all women from idleness.¹⁷ While women of different classes would do different work in the house, with upper class women being

more involved in household administration than in physical work, the ideology of the domestic, the importance of employment within the house, if not its particular manifestations, is for all women. Class, especially, is bracketed off as an aspect of a woman's identity, with the effect that sex is made the more powerful determinant of her social role. A gender hierarchy that might be disrupted by women who possess a higher social class than their tutors can thereby be restored with the placement of women in the private sphere.

There are several ways in which reading, and thus intellectual identity, can be related to domesticity, which is an ideology of both work and space. Reading and work are connected in several ways: reading can be extraneous, although morally edifying, to that housework; it can offer useful information about the house; and it can be analogous to it as a form of mental engagement. When reading is an activity extra to household occupations, it is essential neither to the work nor to any female identity. Vives urges women to read continually on holy days, and on working days, "sometime," (after she has overseen the necessary business of the house) (12v). The house functions something like the "wyse and sad men" who are also guiding woman's reading; both are authoritative controls, but where the wise men should direct her judgement, the house regulates her time. For Salter, the wife's "Econemicall" activity means that her ascent of the contemplative ladder of philosophy is more "to bee desired then hoped for." Even for men with leisure and much time spent reading, contemplation is difficult, and the housewife, presumably, has even less time because her household duties take precedence (105). Indeed, the task of this matron-tutor is

less to instruct her charge in books than to give the young woman experience in running a household.

For Richard Mulcaster, as well, reading makes no essential contribution to that which women need to know. Although he says that reading is “very needefull for religion” and other uses (*Positions* 176), he makes it seem less than essential by neglecting to name those other uses and by describing the connection of reading to religion as something, after all, less than necessary; reading of religious matters, he says, allows women to “read that which they must know, and ought to performed, if they have not whom to heare, in that matter which they read: or if their memorie be not stedfast, by reading to revive it” (*Positions* 176,177). Reading is not intrinsic to religious knowledge but a supplement to the sermon—an aid “if” they have not heard, or “if” they cannot remember. As Mulcaster writes, “[t]hose wymen that have skill and time to reade, without hindering their houswifery, do continually receive by reading some comfortable and wise discourses, penned either in forme of historie, or for direction to live by” (*Positions* 177). “Without hindering their houswifery,” Mulcaster assures his readers, women can read to some profit. The mother, who is also an honest woman and a good housewife, will not have children who are worse brought up for having a mother who reads (*Positions* 179,181). If reading is not positively useful to motherhood, in that mothers do not actually teach their children much, motherhood is useful to reading; it makes women worthy of an education. Because women are “the principall pillers in the upholding of housholdes,” their education is important. Threats to the household

that might succeed through women's weakness can be prevented through the fortification of their instruction. These writers presume that while reading can be useful—and that this is even a possible proposition is important—it is still extraneous to the real work of the house. Although needles and housewifery are, as Mulcaster says, “the principall commendation in a woman,” he deals “onely with such thinges as be incident to their learning” (177,178). “Learning” is neither domestic knowledge nor requisite knowledge in women.

While Mulcaster and Vives made reading incidental to work and identity, others who wrote later would actually find a domestic use for it. Here, again though, we see the difference between learning and reading. Richard Braithwait writes that his ideal Englishwoman reads some books for devotion and others are “usefull for direction of her houshold affaires. Herbals she persueth, which she seconds with conference: and by degrees so improves her knowledge as her cautelous care perfits many a dangerous cure” (G). Comenius says that education will make a woman a better mother, although such education is limited because of her erratic moral character: “For we are not advising that women be educated in such a way that their tendency to curiosity shall be developed, but so that their sincerity and contentedness may be increased, and this chiefly in those things which it becomes a woman to know and to do; that is to say, all that enables her to look after her household and to promote the welfare of her husband and her family” (*Great Didactic* 68). These comments and the increasing number of books published on domestic topics for women suggests that there were an increasing number of women readers (Hull). But if the idea of

education, which included both texts and behaviour important for social purposes, could encompass household topics, the definition of "learning" could not.

Reading can also be an occupation of the same kind as domestic work. To the problem that the female mind "abideth not longe in one place, it falleth from the good unto the bad without any labour" (30v), Vives offers a programme of reading (the Bible, Church Fathers, Plato, Cicero and Seneca) that will, supposedly, keep women at home. It is a boundary like the walls of the house that will keep women from wandering, and a safe occupation, like wool and flax handling, keeping women from idleness (8-12v). As Valerie Wayne writes of Vives' work: "It was presented as an agent of control more than of enlightenment and was identified with that other occupation, the handling of wool and flax, as a craft" ("Some Sad" 20). Vives' English translator, Richard Hyrde, in his preface to Margaret More Roper's translation of Erasmus' *A Devout Treatise upon the "Pater Noster"* even offers reading as a preferable occupation to needlework: "reading and studying of books so occupieth the mind, that it can have no leisure to muse or delight in other fantasies, when in all handyworks, that men say be more meet for a woman, the body must be busy in one place and the mind walking in other" (174). The anxieties about female sexuality that amplified the importance of authoritative control over what women should not read—romances that contain stories of events and places and loves away from home—also suggest, almost perversely, a potential reason for why women should read: reading is an occupation. For Vives it is "jeopardous to be idel" (30v), and

Braithwait suggests something of the nature of that jeopardy. Sloth and sensuality are contiguous because they “maketh of men, women; of women, beasts; of beasts, monsters” (139). For women to work at home, on the other hand, ensures gender order—the masculinity of men and the femininity of women. When reading is a preventative for sloth, the importance of being occupied takes precedence over any particular content. Reading might be better than needlework, but its effect on the mind is different only in degree, not in kind. The association seems to be a derogatory one for women's reading, but it would be a shame to assume, unreflectingly, that intellectual labour has more worth than domestic labour when the cloth and food produced sustain life. To make such an assumption is only to repeat the hierarchy and gendered division of labour that early modern pedagogues were establishing, as in Hyrde's suggestion that craft is more suitable for a woman. But the comparison between reading and craft is still troubling. While the association justifies reading, it makes reading less an activity of the mind than of the body. The comparison provides a very limited rationale for reading because it requires neither participation in learning nor the expansion of the domains of women's knowledge beyond the ideological walls of the house.

The value placed on reading as a domestic occupation is the result of, or results in, a particular concept of the female mind's activities in pedagogical texts. The mind is both empty and wandering, faults which can be remedied by occupation at home. Criticising those who say that girls appear to learn more quickly than boys, Mulcaster suggests that girls' minds are vacuous spaces:

“Their naturall weaknesse which cannot holde long, delivers very soone, and yet there be as prating boyes, as there be prating wenches. Besides, their braines be not so much charged, neither with weight nor with multitude of matters, as boyes heades be, and therefore like empty caske they make the greater noise” (*Positions* 175). Comenius, too, takes up the idea of emptiness to characterise the female mind. Although he does say that both male and female minds are formed in the image of God and endowed with equal sharpness of mind and capacity for knowledge, he retains the right to assert that women ought to avoid idleness: “The more we occupy their thoughts, so much the less will the folly that arises from emptiness of mind find a place” (*Great Didactic* 68). For them, the female mind is effectively void of functioning mechanisms that allow the reader to consider actively what she is reading, and so must be occupied with what men can see and approve.

Besides being empty, the female mind also wanders. If emptiness is cured by domestic labour, wandering is fixed by domestic space. Vives writes that it is in women's nature to be easily impressed and deceived, like Eve, and that “womans thought is swyfte, and for the moste part unstable, walking and wandering out from home” (3v). For Braithwait, too, the honourable woman exhibits liberality and compassion, but also has a body and mind that are controlled, precisely because they do not wander: “Her mind is not subject to wavering, nor her walke to wandering” (202). Patricia Parker also cites two interesting examples of the wandering whore in her study of gender and rhetoric. “The Description of the Good Wife” (1619) contrasts the “fixt eye” with

"wandering lookes," and the wife like a snail always in her house with the "gadder," while Barnabe's Rich's *My Ladies Looking Glass* (1616) compares the housewife to a harlot by saying the latter's "feet are wandring, her eies are wandring, her wits are wandring." For Parker these are an expression of anxiety about female sexuality, the control of property, and the woman speaking in public (104, 105). Wandering also plays a particular part in the early modern constructions of the female mind; as the eyes and feet wander so, too, do the wits. That reading may be the cause of inordinate passion, "wandring fancy, or wandring frenzy," suggests first that the control of both female sexuality and family lineage is the predominant imperative in imaging the female mind: the association between wandering and reading requires that the intellectual activities be placed under the same privatising and domesticating controls as physical activities.¹⁸

These attributes, wandering and emptiness, are curious. They are descriptive terms that find their meaning, not in the possessor of the mind or body, but in the perspective of the one who is watching and failing to see. The woman who wanders fails to remain within sight. She comes and goes. She does not properly follow authority. This is a failure of masculine understanding, made the more problematic because the wandering can also woo. The descriptions are also evaluative claims to superior intellect, stability, and fullness by the one making the statement.¹⁹ The scholar has a mind, has something, while the woman has only a void where a mind should be. The only imagined consequence of reading is the arousal of sexual desire, which may be less

because the advocates know that this is how women read, than because by writing about female desire, it can be better controlled and regulated. Desire has been put into language, made visible. Conversely, when reading has been authorised, the attendant internal mental activity is left invisible, inarticulate. This is an expression of power, but it is also one of unacknowledged and wilful bafflement, a failure to see what is there, an act of looking for the intellect that ends with a statement of "nothing to be seen," not because there is nothing but because it is different—or must be different, or "masculinity" itself is nothing.

Anna Maria Von Schurman and Bathsua Makin situate reading in leisure time and avow it as an occupation, but they assert that reading is learning and integral to a female identity founded upon an active mind. Although domestic labour can limit the possibilities of learning through its claims on women's time, it also gives women a social position from which to argue for an education. Schurman allows that leisure is a requirement for the study of letters, and thus it is only the women with time away from exercises of piety and household affairs who can study, free from "impediments": the maid, kept from employment by her youth, the elderly woman, never or no-longer married, and the woman with the means to have maids (3). Still, given leisure, women should not be excluded from education because of their domestic role in life. Schurman challenges the objection "that Women are seldome or never preferred to publicke Offices, Politicall, Ecclesiasticall, or Academicall" by stating that "Women in Speculative Sciences are never frustrated of their End" (29). While women may not have a public vocation—the end for which men need education—they do have a private

one, and education, at least, will not interfere with it. Furthermore, that the "Vocation of a Maid, or Woman, is included in very narrow limits, the terms of a private or Oeconomical life" is no reason to deny education. If a private life were sufficient reason to deny learning, men who lead a private life ought also to be denied, Schurman argues. She, like Makin (33), detaches the meaning of the private life from the domestic situation to connect it to that of retirement, a move which disrupts the gendered aspect of the public/private distinction, especially when those terms are used to determine the extent and kind of education (30). Still, Schurman accepts that the domestic will be a material and practical barrier to female education, and thus she also maintains its dominance as an ideology of work and social role. What she does not accede to, however, is a necessary connection between women's domestic role and the illegitimacy of female education: while women may work in the house, for it is woman's "spetiall Vocation" to bring order to a Family and "Oeconomical cares," they can still possess knowledge that has been defined as learned. When disassociating the social sphere of one's action from learning, because learning is a "universal calling," shared of all Christians, male and female (31), the reasons for female education shifts from the social to the personal. And as if in response to Braithwait and others like him, Schurman acknowledges that one of the objections to her plan for female education will be the disruption of gender difference: "Many Scholars excell their Masters: and that other saying of a very ancient Poet, *Ves etenim juvenes animes geritis Muliebres: Illa Virago Viri.* Those Men are spirited like Women, that Virgin like a Man" (24). And indeed, the

gender hierarchy would be interrupted if the teleology of a boy's education, ending with the boy's assumption of the authority of his tutor, were to be the purpose of education for girls. For Schurman, it is not masculine to think, as the notion that a learned virgin will be spirited like a man implies, but human, a "universal calling."

Bathsua Makin, too, assures her readers that women will not be taken from their housework for the sake of learning: "The Question is of persons at leisure" (33). Erasmus' Learned Lady, according to Makin, found "great content in reading good Authors at spare times" (23), and it is the "over-plus time" that "may be employed in polishing their minds with the knowledge of such things" (30). She even states explicitly: "I do not intend to hinder good Housewifery. neither have I called any from their necessary Labour to their Book. My design is upon such Persons whose leisure is a burden" (31). For Makin, as well, the precedence of household labour over learning must effectively reduce the number of women for whom education is a possibility. But for Schurman and Makin, the issue is the availability of time, and not women's ability to learn. They challenge the restriction of female identity to household labour, though not the necessity of the work itself. In their reformulation, wives and daughters at least have the capacity for learning because they, like men, have a desire to know. Their arguments are a compromise, for as Bathsua Makin's narrator explicitly remarks at the beginning of her essay, "To ask too much is the way to be denied all (4)."²⁰

Schurman and Makin also argue for education by relating it to occupation,

but they crucially increase the importance of content. Because they allow that learning was an activity for leisure time, they indicate an acceptance of the ethic of labour; it is, indeed, good that idleness be avoided. But for them learning, not just reading, is the very best way to avoid idleness. Schurman's argument is a syllogism: those who need employment should give themselves to learning; women need continual employment; therefore, women should learn. She also concurs with the proposition that those in most danger of vanity, most need employment. Thus, when she adds that women have the greatest tendency to vanity, she can conclude, logically, that women most need learning (9). What Schurman means by learning is the same as what men mean by it when they refer to their own learning: "By a scholar, I mean one that is given to the study of Latine, that is the knowledge of Tongues and Histories, all kinds of Learning, both superiour entitled Faculties; and inferiour, call'd Philosophy. We except onely Scriptural Theology, properly so named as that which without Controversie belongs to all Christians" (1,2). Although it is actually not exactly "without controversy" that theology belongs to all—because, in fact, women were urged towards a practical, personal, and instructional way of reading the Bible—Schurman's ideal scholar is supposed to be, like the Christian, intellectually ungendered.

For Makin, too, the acceptance of the ethic of labour becomes a way to encourage the rigorous education of women in all fields of knowledge. As Makin demonstrates the necessity of learning to housework, she moves beyond the proposition that learning is for leisure time. The integration of learning and

domesticity occurs not through reading, the utility of perusing a herbal for example, but through a more traditionally defined education. She takes up the argument employed by Erasmus' Learned Lady against the irreligious abbot: with learning women will "better administer their Household Affairs amongst a multitude of Servants, who would have more reverence towards them, because they were above them in understanding" ("The Abbot" 23).²¹ Knowledge really is, it seems, power, in that it marks a class difference that gives the housewife authority. Makin also discusses Solomon's good housewife (of Proverbs 31), who is praised for her work but not for her knowledge of arts and tongues, by saying that if she had been accomplished in arts she would have known even better how to manage her family. For this exemplary woman, knowledge of arts and sciences is applicable to domestic work:

To buy Wooll and Flax, to die Scarlet and Purple, requires skill in Naturall Philosophy. To consider a Field, the quantity and quality, requires knowledge in Geometry. To plant a Vineyard, requires understanding in Husbandry: She could not Merchandize, without knowledge in Arithmetick. (35)

Governance of the family requires knowledge of politics and economics, looking after the household, physic, and opening "her mouth with Wisdom," grammar, rhetoric, and Logic." The learned woman is also a better housewife and a good mother; she may use her learning to assist her husband in his trade (27) and can effectively instruct her children before they are sent to school (27). Makin, too, raises the spectre of idleness which leads to sin; women of "high quality,"

those it seems who are not engaged in housework, "have nothing to employ themselves in, but are forced to Cards, Dice, Playes, and frothy Romances, meerly to drive away the time; whereas knowledge in Arts and Tongues would pleasantly employ them, and upon occasion benefit others" (26). To be a learned woman is morally and nationally superior. This is exemplified, competitively, in the picture of the Dutch woman—a reference, in part, to Anna Maria Von Schurman with whom Makin corresponded—and should be a pattern followed by the English woman (35). The works of Schurman and Makin, argumentative treatises, demonstrate what the relationship between domesticity and education might be, but also what it was for them. By their arguments they become exemplary women, as indeed Schurman was for Makin and Makin was for her readers through her instruction of others (10,42,43).

Diaries also offer some evidence, not just of an exemplary ideal, but of how women actually regarded the place of reading in their lives. I have already discussed how Lady Anne Clifford made depictions of her reading and education an important part of her self-representation in painting and monument. In her early diary, she also records more of her reading (or perhaps has more time for reading) and portrays it as an occupation that relieves boredom brought about by her confinement to her house because of her husband's control over her movements. Margaret Hoby's diary, written between 1599 and 1605, is a record of the daily events of her life and describes a consistent routine of private and public prayers, working, eating, hearing lectures and readings by others, writing in a sermon book or household book, and conversing with Mr. Hoby

(when he was home) about household matters. Her reading is primarily devotional in nature, but it, too, is most certainly not extraneous either to her time or to her representation of her identity.²² Devotion provides her with authority. It is not that Lady Margaret's memory of a sermon is revived by her reading—as Mulcaster suggests it should be—but her reading provides her with a position of commanding piety from which to criticise what she hears. On September 23, 1599, she records going to church to hear a Mr. Palmer speak: "but to small profite to any: thence I returned and privatly praied, lamentinge the misirie of godes visible Church, and praisinge his goodnes to my selfee about others" (73).²³ Her reading "of the arball" after she has dressed a man's leg (72) is another aspect of her confidence in the use of her knowledge. She has a proprietary pride in the medical care she provides, as she records, on February 5, 1599: "at 5 a cloke I dressed my patientes" (a poor boy who had injured his leg, and the hand of a servant who had a cut" (101). Reading is an vital part of her construction of herself as a devout Christian housewife.²⁴ The diaries of Lady Margaret Hoby and Lady Anne Clifford reveal two women for whom reading was an essential use of time and an integral part of their assertion of their own identities. Even when they read within the boundaries of knowledge established by male pedagogues, the results are different. While not being "disobedient," they are also not acquiescent or passive.

Here is the inadequacy of situating women's reading only within a resistant or compliant model of relationship to power. First these women's reading is situated within the constraints of a larger cultural struggle over the

meaning of "education." There is not only one site of contestation but several, the cultural authority that distinguishes reading from education based on gender, as well as that based on class. A woman like Anne Clifford might reconfigure the terms of her reading, as a woman, while accepting the validity of masculine authority because of the social effectiveness of the class of her tutor, her father, or her husband. "Resistance" is also complicated by the articulation of criticism through the very terms of limitation. Women's reading is situated in relationship to home, as persistently suggested, but rather than being extraneous to a primarily domestic female identity, it is integrated into the representation of identity through home, religion, and, that less attainable, education. For the women I have discussed, reading does not occur exactly as male pedagogues imagined that it would. The integration of home and reading adds a layer of discourse of mind and personal identity to what was imagined more as labour and social function. Even when reading is not explicitly "resistant," as in the case of Margaret Hoby, reading enables the construction of an identity that the regulations on reading, if followed precisely, would preclude. Differing more radically from Vives and his followers, Schurman and Makin still accept the necessity of home and occupation but make them into reasons for education, including the arts and sciences, without limit. Still, their mode of argument is not radical in the sense that it rejects all roots of the checks placed upon them. They even agree with the logic of containment. But, their agreement becomes a strategy by which to legitimise a claim possession of more knowledge.

Accepting the ideology of labour and placing education and reading within its terms is an effective way to justify women's reading because, while domestic labour actually diminished the time available for reading, it also provided an ethic of morality and productivity that had empowering potential. Alice Clark, in her *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, argues that household occupations were economically important for privileged women. In the period she examines, domestic work included, in addition to preparing meals, cleaning the house, tending the children, sewing, brewing, the care of chickens, pigs, and a dairy, the production and preserving of fruits and vegetables, spinning flax and wool, and medical care (5). This domestic production formed an important part of the economy: "The more prosperous the family, the less the mother went outside to work, but this did not mean, as under modern conditions, that her share in the productive life of the country was less. Her productive energy remained great, but was directed into channels from which her family gained the whole profit" (64). It was when women had to work for wages outside the home that their capacity to support their family was reduced. In her 1992 introduction to *The Working Life of Women*, Amy Louise Erickson confirms Clark's earlier work: "In terms of its importance to the family, women's work was not only essential but appears to have constituted at least half of the total household economy" (xix). Because of the economic importance of this work, Susan Dwyer Asmussen argues, a conflict develops between the social dictums of passivity and obedience and the commercially important domestic duties: "The wives of

early modern England could not successfully fulfil their obligations to their families were they too demure" (119).

The nature of the work that women do differs according to class position. The idleness of upper-class women, of which Makin complains, may have become a problem in the late seventeenth century, not from moral degeneracy as their critics seem to suggest, but because of economic developments that excluded women from production (Charles 8). To the same women for whom literacy was a possibility, domestic work—as opposed to work for wages necessary among the lower classes—offers the possibility of transgression of the very public/private dichotomy that was also used to limit their education.²⁵ Diane Willen in her study of poor relief also demonstrates how poor women were employed in the public sphere to help others and to support themselves. She concludes: "The lives of these women implicitly challenge our modern assumptions and suggest that the dichotomy between domestic and public, like our very definitions of private and public, do not apply in this context" (575). Concerned primarily with Renaissance Italian women, Merry E. Wiesner also asserts the inappropriateness of the application of traditional ideas of the public to work. She writes: "A woman's assessment of her private responsibilities led much more often to a request for a public role, at least in the world of work. She asserted that she should be free to work because of, not despite, her private life. Thus in the realm of work as well as in financial decision making, women stressed the connection, not the distinction, between public and private" (11). In Anne Clifford's later diary, her activities range widely. When Clifford has been

widowed for the last time, and when her uncle has finally died, she gains possession of her father's land, after which she expends time and money in overseeing the rebuilding of the castles at Skipton, Apelby, and Brougham, and Barden Tower, as well as a water corn mill in Craven (120). She also built an almshouse at Apleby, into which she installed "twelve goode women"—eleven widows and an "injured maid"—and a Mother, the widow of a minister who oversaw them (116).²⁶ Supervising the affairs of here estate also required her energy, for these were, she says, in great disarray after the death of her father and the Civil War, with many law suits between her tenants to be settled (106).

Describing her work in more detail than Anne Clifford, Margaret Hoby mentions (in what is by no means a comprehensive list) performing surgery,²⁷ serving "divers poor people with wheet and beeffe" (91), taking "order for Houshold mattres" (92), being "busie in the Kitchine" (93), overseeing "some thinges done about the house" (95), dispensing advice and moral guidance (80), as well as talking with Mr. Hoby about "Husbandrie and Housholde matters" (119) and their land (118). In her diary, Margaret Hoby represents her life through her occupation with work or with devotion. These, in turn, bring her into contact with others in the community, the poor men and tailors whom she assists with medical problems, the poor whom she feeds, as well as the people in the community whom she directs and advises.²⁸ Early modern domesticity is not just a limitation placed on women. Although it was a way of describing women's social role that kept them from positions of political power, and although

women's work was rarely publicly acknowledged as economically important, women still could see their work as crucial to families and communities.

So, when reading is described as an occupation, it need not be only a deprecatory appellation, as it seems to be in Vives' vocabulary. For women of some means—the same women likely to be able to be educated—their work is a part of their identity and associated with speaking and writing, with guidance, household authority, and with concern for society, expressed in part through the dispensing of medical care and philanthropy. Although women are engaged in care-giving, and as such these fall within the ideology of the domestic, such activities also take them, physically at least, outside of the house and beyond the domestic space. On the one hand, this is a transgression of their exclusion from public spaces, when public space means that which is not the home. On the other, such work does not disrupt the notion that the public sphere is constituted through government. The question then arises as to the integrity of such a definition of public. Nancy Fraser criticizes Habermas' model of a bourgeois public sphere—defined as a sphere of public discourse and political participation that arose at the end of the seventeenth century against absolute rule—for not interrogating its rhetoric thoroughly enough. For Habermas, economic and class factors denied the promise of liberal claims to universal access to the public sphere. Fraser argues, however, that Habermas idealizes the public sphere, which was, in the first place formed on the basis of status and gender exclusions and "markers of 'distinction.'" Habermas, she says, fails to consider competing "nonliberal, nonbourgeois public spheres" (74), and she writes: "Virtually from

the beginning, counterpublics contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behaviour and alternative norms of public speech" (75).

Although I am not discussing the "bourgeois public sphere," the same historiographic criticism of the male/public versus female/private distinction might apply; rather than accepting and reiterating that this distinction was irrevocably so, and thus potentially repeating the exclusions and blindspots of the early modern period, it is worth inquiring into the fictionality of public/private distinctions. Defining the public only through the activities of government excises the contributions that women made to their society. More than raising children and helping to provide the necessities of life, no small offering, the work of women created its own crucial social commitments outside of, not only through, the home. The exclusionary definition of the public as political action, those attachments to monarchs and parliament, underestimates the ways in which women were also public, when public is defined through economics, not just in opposition to the domestic.

Still, I think, it also must be important to acknowledge the sort of false valorisation of domestic and service work that still happens, by which women's domestic work is given a moral superiority, and at the same time, governments—and their tax systems—give it no economic value, the only value system that really seems to count.²⁹ Praising early modern domestic work can have only patronising results if such praise ignores how domesticity was constituted as a category of exclusion. But, it is equally important to note how it was not only that.

Male writers on women's education described domestic work as being outside of the realm of learning and necessary because women were the weaker sex and in need of occupation—as if they, as scholars, husbands, and fathers, received no benefit from their work. Women, though, seemingly did not quite ascribe to the system of (under)value that was placed on them.³⁰ If occupation, of whatever sort, was morally laudable, women could take that point of permissiveness and apply it to reading to assert better their own sense of autonomous identity and the possibilities of their minds. The contributions of upper- and middle-class women to the public good through their families and through philanthropy and care may have helped to entitle them to participation in the public sphere of learning; it provided, in any case, the basis for their arguments.

Bathsua Makin's essay and Anna Maria Von Schurman's logical treatise contravene the representation of the female mind as empty and wandering by presenting active and energetic female minds engaged in intellectual work. Both employ a technique of argument, laying out objections to women's education and then refuting them. Both consider the idea that women, because of the nature of their minds, especially require occupation. But argument itself becomes a visible demonstration of women's intellectual ability. Writing and disputation were not the usual imagined result of reading, however. For Vives, the purpose of this reading is a sanctioned pleasure and delight, a "chaste quietnes," and as Vives repeats twice, a "quiet mynd" (12v). Mulcaster describes reading as offering "contentmentes," "comfortes," and "delites." (*Positions* 177), and Comenius recommends that women be sincere and content

(*Great Didactic* 68). Makin's narrator, too, assures his readers that education will certainly not induce women into discontentment with their lot: "a little knowledge, like windy Bladders, puffs up but a good measure of true knowledge, like Ballast in a Ship, settles down and makes a person move more even in his station" (32). But the promise of quietude is a means through which to argue for more education; when her wishes are granted, she assures her audience, all will be truly and surpassingly peaceful. She is not herself settled in her educational station nor would she have other women be, so the road to this shared vision of a gender utopia is not through containment or the maintenance of the status quo, but through progress towards intellectual plenitude.

VI

Rammed Up Portals and Hedges against Heresies

Just as the mind occupied with reading is like the body occupied with domestic work, the mind too lives in a domestic space—although it may wander dangerously. Schurman and Makin also engage with the spatial aspects of domesticity in justifying women's education. For their male predecessors, the house offered protection, with the result that limitations on education coincide with the walls of the house; there was a public world of men and knowledge from which women physically and mentally had to be preserved. Clearly, the home, in which women are educated to live, constructs an intellectual boundary because education had to be justified through its imperatives, even if domestic work could take women beyond its physical walls. But, the home could also be a

place in which women could learn—as indeed they did—and in which their learning, even the expansion of the domains of knowledge, could be justified. Anna Maria Von Schurman argues that those who have a quiet life and time at home are most able to study. Further, because maids have both a quiet life and because it is more decent and Christian for them to work and recreate at home, maids are most able to study (11-13). Indeed, it is precisely because the woman might wander abroad that she should learn: “Experience testifies; whose tongues. Ears, eyes often travail abroad, hunting after pleasures; their faith, diligence, and modesty too, is generally called into question” (14). Makin and Schurman reconstruct the category “learning,” transforming it from a field outside the walls of the house into the walls of the house itself. Chastity is protected by learning—not by its restriction—and so the house/wife remains safe. The woman’s learnedness, according to Makin, can be a “hedge against heresies,” and it can give women a way to “stop their ears against Seducers;” as her chastity is preserved, so too will her house, her husband, and her children be protected (25). For Schurman, as well, learning provides a form of protection to the sanctity of women’s spaces. She quotes Erasmus as saying that “nothing takes so full possession of the fair Temple of a Virgins breast, as learning and study, whither, on all occasions she may fly for refuge” (9, 10). Not requiring the protection of the men who censor her reading material, the woman has an instrument, her own mind, by which to protect herself.

The female mind is imagined through domestic space, as it is through domestic labour. Again, the metaphoric association of minds with spaces turns

on the placement of women in the private sphere. Mark Wigley explains the association between the woman and the house in terms of the control of sexuality. In his study of the relationship between the architecture of the Renaissance house and gender, he writes: "A woman's interest, let alone active role, in the outside calls into question her virtue. The woman on the outside is implicitly sexually mobile. Her sexuality is no longer controlled by the house" (335). Women lack the self-control that, for men, maintains these boundaries of self and other, because, Wigley writes,

her fluid sexuality endlessly overflows and disrupts them. And more than this, she endlessly disrupts the boundaries of others, that is, men, disturbing their identity, if not calling it into question. In these terms, self-control for a woman, which is to say the production of her identity as a woman, can only be obedience to external law. Unable to control herself, she must be controlled by being bounded. (335.336)

The house with its walls and attendant duties is a kind of fortress that protects the too easily besieged woman's body from the public world of men. For Georgiana Ziegler domestic space becomes a simile of identity: "It is a simple step from woman *in* house/chamber to woman *as* chamber/enclosed space" (77).

Space is integral to the representation of thought. Phillipe Ariés argues that the progress of literacy, and especially silent reading, along with the changing role of the system of justice and new forms of religion, were important factors in changing attitudes towards privacy between the Middle Ages and the

nineteenth century ("Introduction" 2-4). But in Wigley's argument, there is a gendered relationship to space, in which the masculine relationship to space is intellectual. He contends that the study, a private space new in the early modern period to which women are denied access, became constitutive of a private, masculine intellectual identity.³¹ The lady of the house, for her part, has a dressing room, which she occupies with children and maids, with the consequence that in the fifteenth century, the subject in the private space was male (347-350). Ziegler also associates the lady's chamber with privacy, but she does not consider the difference between the lady's bedchamber and the man's study. The lady is private for the sake of sexuality, but the master is private for the sake of mind. These different and gendered relationships to space come into conflict when the lady uses her bedchamber for reading. This is a different kind of privacy than that of sexual segregation, and it can be threatening. The chamber that was private to keep the woman from other men, also becomes, dangerously, the space, like the mind, beyond the male gaze, where no surveillance is possible. If the house is a private space for women, when privacy is defined in opposition to the public of government, it is more problematically a private space, when privacy is defined as solitariness.

The dilemma raised by female privacy even while women inhabit the private sphere is apparent in Richard Braithwait's impulse to extend the controlling gaze of the public, father and pedagogue into the lady's closet, where the woman might be seen reading and praying. When the maid retires to her closet to pray, she is to imagine her chamber as her "private theatre" where she

enacts some "devout Scene to Gods honour" (48). There, she is retired from the eyes of men, but she is to "thinke how the eyes of God are on you." "Do not say," Braithwait warns, "the walls encompass me, darknesse o're-shadowes mee, the Curtaine of night secures me: These be the words of an Adulteresse: Therefore doe nothing privately, which you would not doe publikely. There is no retire from the eyes of God." (49). The theatrical metaphor for devotional activity takes reading that is private back into the public space where there are the watching eyes of an audience—a God who functionally replaces Braithwait's own more limited powers of seeing in order to ensure female chastity. If a woman even imagines that no one is watching, she must be doing something amiss. He also relates what he has heard (not seen) of some ladies. They, for "want of more amorous or attractive Objects abroad, have furnished their private Chambers with wanton pictures, Aretine tables, Dibariticke stories." He advises, "These were no objects for Christian eyes: they convey too inordinate an heat from the eye to the heart. Eye no object which may estrange you from thought of your Maker." (49). The eyes of God control the space which male eyes, much as they would like, cannot penetrate—the meditating female mind and its attendant private closet.³² Thus, the regulation of women's eyes as they read is the result of a concern to prevent intellectual privacy.

Braithwait also figures the woman herself as a house. He advises against falling in love at first sight, loving a man for his appearance, and reading of love, as if these were activities all of the same kind. The eyes, he says, are the windows by which death enters:

Your inward house cannot shine, unlesse these be shut...Eve looked on the fruit before shee coveted, coveting shee tasted, tasting shee perished. Thus aspiring to the knowledge of good and evill, became to her and her posterity evill. The Eye is a Living glasse, but if wee make it a false glasse, it wil neither represent us truly, nor discover our blemishes freely; but make that seeme faire which is odious and ugly. (140,141)

The woman/house is confronted with an epistemological problem, because as for Eve, seeing led to coveting, to knowledge, and to the entry of death. And the entry of death into the house is a threat, not just to the woman, but to the man—as Adam discovered. To prevent this danger, the female eye is best kept shut.

But the eye is also a mode and metaphor of understanding, as so many of those writing about education noted. Understanding is figured as sight, and education is, in part, learning to see. Sir Thomas Elyot describes histories as works that offer things commodious, lessons that are “the mirrour of mannes life, expressing actually, and (as it were at the eye) the beautie of vertue, and deformities and lothelynes of vice” (250). By sight, one is drawn to what is good, while visions of evil teach one what to flee. In Ascham’s terms, as well, learning is about seeing: “For good precepts of learning be the eyes of the minde, to looke wiselie before a man, which waie to go right, and which not” (*Scholemaster* 54). Reading is particularly important because books are better than “blinde and dangerous experience” (*Scholemaster* 57). William Kempe, too, writes that “Learning doubleth the quicknes of the sight: to wit, the sight of the mind” (213).

mind" (213). The result of sight is that the child can aspire to heavenly things; he can understand what is set out in God's word by learning, and transcend his "fleshly eyes" which "are starke by nature blind" (213). Mulcaster, in *Positions*, praises reading for its relationship to the eye: it is "above all praise, bycause she makes the eye, the paragon sense, by benefit of that object" (32). Francis Clement relates seeing to learning in a different way: "And assuredly, if learning could be perfectly beheld with humaine eyes, in her entire grace, countenance, and majestie, she would (as Cicero reporteth after Plato of honestie) excite, allure, and stirre up a marvelous desire of wisdom and discipline" (97). Eugene R. Kintgen, in an article on Elizabethan reading, argues that "quick sight and illumination of the senses" is the aim of reading, and through early modern education people are "taught the correct way to observe or to read in order to do it effectively" (8). He does not consider either gender or the implication of desire in the medium of sight, but it remains that sight is the metaphor which describes the end of learning. When Braithwait urges his female readers, for the sake of wisdom, to "ramme up those portells which betray you to your enemy, and prevent his entry by your vigilance" (152), he demands that privacy be internalised, even violently, for the sake of chastity; the consequence is to proscribe knowledge.³³

Female sexuality is legislated in order to control the actions of men. In Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, Lucrece's body is a "sacked" house and a "battered" mansion (1170), but she blames herself for the invasion, regarding her appearance as a snare: "my poor beauty had purloined his eyes" (1651).

Braithwait, too, makes men seem unexpectedly passive and at risk, as he warns women against looking lustfully: "Throw abroad no lose Lures, wandring eyes, strayed lookes; these delude the Spectators much, but the Actors most" (73). Women's looks are dangerous because they bring harm to themselves, but also to men who become trapped in the power that they have endowed upon women. This is so because looking is not just a subject-object relationship in which the power of defining rests solely with the subject. Seeing is more reciprocal because it was, according to the Platonic theory of emission, an exchange of likeness between the observer and the object seen. In relation to men, women are supposed to be only the objects of the gaze, things known, but even when men gaze upon women, men are affected by their own actions. Consequently, Englishwomen have to control themselves and keep themselves private for the sake of the continued public existence, free of home and desire, of Englishmen.

While only Braithwait offers such an extended consideration of women's intellectual occupation of private spaces, others do propose directions for women's seeing and knowing. The education treatises that I have been looking at frequently recommend that the safest thing for a woman to do with her eyes is to close them, just as the safest place for her to be is in the house. Braithwait suggests an alternative to the rammed up, blind portals: making the eye a "living glasse." But this is not a way of seeing but of being seen. It is a demand for self-evident representation, so that when the woman is visible, she will be transparent to the world, without guile; no men can be deceived by her because she seems to be just what she is. Vives warns that the sight of men is dangerous to chastity

because it "fire[s] the mind with fylthy and jeoperdous heat" (20v). Again, the regulation of seeing is the regulation of reading, for Vives figures a woman's reading of armor in romances as a kind of seeing. Her eyes, he says, are as sensual, immediate, and dangerous to herself as a man's handling of armour is to him because she is conversing with them in heart and mind. Better than this, Vives recommends, would be that a woman lose her eyes and not read at all. It is preferable, he says, "for them to go blynd and deffe in to lyfe, than with ii eyes to be cast in to hel" (10). So, he authorises the eyes of the female reader to see what male authorities would have her see, her faith; if she looks at what is outside that authority or reads with ill-will or a disrespectful attitude, she is threatened with blindness. Knowledge gained through sight may actually be a sign of unchastity, for Vives tells women that they are not to fix their eyes upon men, not to think that they behold her, and not to think about their own beauty (40). Women are to look where men want them to look, and, especially, are not to return men's gaze. Women's occupation of space must be different because they should not be able to escape being the object of a gaze, the exclusive privilege of the study. Women must be without the guile of privacy, always being seen, even to Braithwait's moral imperative for women to "be really, what you appeare outwardly" (106). While the particular ban on reading romances is not a denial of access to learning, since romances are placed outside of its bounds, the blinders placed on women's eyes make chastity paramount, prohibiting both exploratory looking and independent, extensive reading. The domestic space is

a space that controls the erotic aspects of seeing, just as the family and marriage direct female sexuality itself.

VII

Rachel Speght's Quest for 'Erudition's Garden'

I want to conclude by discussing Rachel Speght's 1621 *Mortalities Memorandum with a Dreame Prefixed*, a meditation on death prefaced by a dream poem. The dream poem that precedes *Mortalities Memorandum* considers at some length the relationships among reading, labour, domesticity, intellect, and seeing, as it continues the polemical project of defending female education of begun in *A Mouzell for Melastomus* (1617). Her first and more famous work, *A Mouzell for Melastomus* is the only reply known to be by a woman to Joseph Swetnam's misogynist diatribe *Arraignment of Lewde, idle, froward, and unconstant women* (1615). Speght, the daughter of a minister, was herself unusually well-educated for her time. Her work suggests a knowledge of Latin, training in logic and rhetoric, and as Barbara Lewalski, the modern editor of her work, argues, Speght had also read history, geography, nature lore, classical texts, sermons, bible commentaries, and manuals of devotion (xii,xiii). The poem begins when the dreamer is taken to an unfamiliar place, where she expresses her confusion and sadness about her own ignorance. The female allegorical figures Thought, Experience, Desire, Truth, and Industrie arrive to guide her towards the possession of the knowledge that she desires, the knowledge that is in "erudition's garden." They also assist her in defeating the

beast, identifiable as the anti-feminist Joseph Swetnam by his mouth which froths against women. The dream ends with the cessation of her quest for knowledge because of an unnamed occurrence, and the narrator awakens to find that her dream of her mother's death has become reality. Her poem polemically confronts many of the limitations on female education: the idea that women are passive, emotional readers lacking in the faculty of judgement and that women's physical confinement to the house ought to be replicated in their mental confinement to the disciplinary walls of domesticity. Rather than writing a logical, argumentative treatise as Makin and Schurman did, Speght writes a romance quest, in that peculiarly forbidden feminine genre with its ubiquitous wandering figure, in order to move beyond the confines of the spatial and disciplinary boundaries of domesticated female knowledge.

The poem begins with the narrator at rest, which is "the salve for labours sore" (10). But in this moment in which the narrator is not occupied with her daily work, the dream journey to a beautiful place becomes possible. Speght expresses her confusion about this unfamiliar, nondomestic space; "wanting wisdom," she can only gaze "as one amaz'd" (24). She blames her ignorance for her distress, a kind of ignorance that is not just a lack of knowledge about the world but is also associated with the absence of self-knowledge and self-regulation. She feels diseased, but cannot identify what ails her; she is hungry but cannot seek for food; she seeks the golden mean, but falls into extremes, and as she says: "I measure all mens feet by mine owne shooe,/And count all well, which I appoint or doe" (65,66). In other words, it is

as if she had received Vives' mode of education in chastity—which Speght can look back upon critically because of her own more extensive education. Speght's narrator describes her knowledge as immediate, personal, and lacking in consideration of the general or theoretical against which she could balance and develop these self-perceptions. When she is taken outside of the house, into an unaccustomed situation, she becomes perplexed because, appropriately some might say, she knows nothing of anywhere else.

This problem is remedied as the story continues, and she tells of how she learns another way to think about herself. The dreamer encounters the female figure Thought, who sends her to Experience, who, in turn, tells her that Industry will guide her to the solution to her problem, the Knowledge that grows "in Eruditions garden" (100). Industry is transformed into intellectual labour, as Industry promises:

For with my sickle I will cut away
 All obstacles, that in her way can grow,
 And by the issue of her owne attempt,
 I'll make thee *labour omnia vincet* know. (121-124)

As Barbara Lewalski notes in her edition of Speght's work, "labour omnia vincet" is an allusion to Virgil's *Georgics*. Anthony Low, tracing the reception of the georgics from the sixteenth century until Milton and the Civil War in his *Georgic Revolution*, argues that sixteenth-century writers, with the exception of Spenser, were resistant to the idea of the georgic and favoured the pastoral over the georgic as a trope for poetic (or other) endeavours. When Bacon cites Virgil's

phrase in *Advancement of Learning* (1605), he, too, is critical of the idea because he believes that labour has too little to do with art, reason, and invention (220). Yet at the same time, Bacon wrote of the georgics of the mind, by which he transforms reading and writing into intellectual labour, the tillage and husbandry of the mind. Annabel Patterson, taking up Anthony Low's argument, suggests that Bacon uses the central principle of the *Georgics*, "Labor omnia vincit," "not as a reproach to pastoral's 'Omnia vincit Amore' but as a rejection of Aristotle," who represents the epistemological approaches of the past (136). According to Patterson, the reigns of James I and Charles I saw an increasing polarisation between the aesthetic of the intellectual and that associated with work. In this context, the georgic became a form of "radical scientific thought or social protest, while the pastoral became the exclusive terrain of an aristocratic and later royalist elite" (138). Or as Low writes, the enemy of the georgic is "aristocratic pride" (220).

When the middle-class Rachel Speght asserts that labour will conquer all, it seems to be a means of protest against the current state of affairs, as it was for Bacon. Just as the georgic set the aristocrat against the middle class, the authorities of the past against science, Speght employs the trope to set the educational privilege of men against the limited learning accorded women. The disparity in learning will be overcome by work that disrupts the seeming naturalism of the status quo. As Elaine Beilin argues, Speght's citation of Virgil signals "her serious assumption of the work of the poet," validates the "female experience of intellectual work," and corrects "the exclusion of women from both

the active and contemplative life." In Beilin's view, Speght's poem revises a humanist dogma on the domestic place of women's work, in part, by citing examples of women whose work is that of the humanist endeavour ("Writing Public Poetry" 251, 269,270). But that dogma, with its placement of primary value on occupation, also provides the terms for that revision. As for Schurman and Makin who came after her, Speght employs the ethic of work in justifying female education and as a practical way to attain it. In making learning like planting, Speght creates an opportunity for her own, otherwise stunted, development and growth. The result of her labour, the "issue of her own attempt," is the attainment of knowledge.

In Speght's garden, Truth makes an explicit argument, based on the nature of the female mind, for the validity of the Dreamer's quest. Like Makin and Schurman, Speght appeals to the "universal" and to logic. Women, like men, consist of three parts—the mind, the will, the power—and a woman was not given her intellect in vain because God made all faculties for use. Here there is no emptiness, but a positive identity gained through knowledge. It is by knowledge, she says, that "Gods image man doth beare,/ Without it he is but a humane shape..../The minde without it is not counted good" (205-210). Speght also interrupts the self-involved concern with chastity to construct a female intellectual identity through involvement with another: God. Women are not given by nature a mind that is uniquely feminine nor do they possess an identity based solely on sex and social role; they are like men, and more, like God who is represented as ungendered by being outside of the public/private dichotomy.

Speght's narrative, furthermore, represents the female mind as capable of intellectual development, even through struggle. Like the boy-pupil who becomes a man, Speght's dreamer grows from a frightened, ignorant woman into a knightly figure who can manage the battlefield and prevail. Her education, furthermore, is not the result of obedience to an external masculine law, but of learning from female guides who help her to reach the garden and a state where self-regulation is possible. Unlike Salter, who uses female guides as a mediated way to perpetuate obedience to authority, Speght's female guides offer a means by which to learn self-governance. For example, after being introduced to Experience and then Industry, Speght meets resistance in the form of Dissuasion, who offers typical arguments against her wish to be educated: "As dulnesse, and my memories defect;/The difficultie of attaining lore,/My time, and sex, with many others more" (106-108). This polemic is proved false, as Speght shows her capacity for learning. Speght expresses her distress at this confrontation in military terms, describing herself as being like a horse, newly arrived on the battlefield, who starts at every Harquebuz (a kind of gun) (111). Her friends, Desire, Truth, and Industry make the arguments for her, disparaging Dissuasion, turning her from fear, and encouraging her to have a constant and valorous mind, as Truth says: "True valour doth not start at every noyse;/ Small combates must instruct for greater fight" (165,166). The image of woman as scholarly warrior contrasts directly with the woman urged to remain at home, whose only combat is to withstand the gaze of men when she leaves the house. Speght does not represent the female mind in words that have to be spoken by

one who is watching, language which requires an external determining gazer for its significance, but instead she chooses words about deeds. Courage and constancy are the necessary attributes for the attainment of knowledge, and the invisible, the possession of the image of God, is the reason for her entitlement.

The final point that I want to make about Speght's use of the romance narrative is that she validates the female desire to know in a period in which that female desire was more commonly imagined to be exclusively sexual and so positively dangerous. Speght, Schurman, and Makin all insist that women can desire knowledge, without being lascivious. Makin writes: "There is in all an innate desire of knowing, and the satisfying this is the greatest pleasure" (25), which she repeats: "There is in all an innate desire of knowing, in Women as well as Men" (33,34). Schurman also argues that "all Mankind have in them by Nature a desire of knowledge," that maids are also a member of the species, and so "a Maid hath naturally a desire of Arts and Sciences" (8). When, by following the directives of her guides, Speght reaches Erudition's garden, the dreamer's senses are refreshed and the fragrance of flowers sends sweet savours to her head. There is a sensual pleasure to her intellectual quest. She wanders with Desire, gathering the knowledge for which she had come. Desire here is a powerful, positive force—as it could be for men—motivating and pleasing the Dreamer in her eventual fulfilment through work. For Speght, desire fulfilled through work offers an autonomous pleasure that love cannot provide: although the fulfilment of desire is not unsensual, it requires no reciprocity. In this way, she associates the mind and body, including a positive representation of

intellectual activity, without sexualising desire.³⁴ Speght enters the garden of learning that Elyot had described, not remaining beyond its walls for fear of nettles.

The Dream poem is not utopian, however. After “[s]ome occurrence” calls her away from study and “quenched hope for gaining any more” (234,238), the poem ends with Death taking aim at the dreamer's mother, which made her weep so “That teares and sobs did rouze me from my sleepe” (282). When she awakes, she finds that her dream is true, that her mother has indeed died.³⁵ The dream dissipates, but its status as truth is not called into question as Peter Brown and Derek B. Alwes suggest is frequently characteristic of the end of a dream vision (42) and of dreams generally near the end of the sixteenth century (153). Rather, the dream registers on the same plane of existence as the reality in which the dreamer usually exists, for just as the conclusion of her education in the real world is marked in the dream, when her mother dies, the loss is also experienced in the dream world. The dream of education is not a midsummer night's dream, a pastoral vision of a realm inhabited by fairies but a reality where the image of the female mind as capable and desiring, as well as confused and struggling can be expressed. Speght combines the dream vision with the quest, an amalgam of motifs that Peter Brown says is common in medieval dream vision poems: “Thus pilgrimage and dream have complementary potentials: the one, pilgrimage, is ideally an exteriorized mysticism; the other, dream vision, may be an interiorized pilgrimage, with an urge to mirror and effect spiritual transformation through self-examination” (46). Speght's pilgrimage, like the

dream itself, is an interior journey towards knowledge, but by in transforming herself she also provides an argument for the terms upon which the quest takes place: since she is capable of reaching the end, her society need not set as many obstacles and difficulties in her path. As much history as prophecy, a story. "imaginary in form, real in matter," Speght's dream inhabits the real world in the unfulfilled desire to know more than she had been able to learn before her education ceased.

Critics have described Speght's poem as an effort to construct a new myth of women's intellectual experience, a story that shows a woman desiring knowledge for good purposes to redress the problem of Eve, that bad woman who wandered and desired in another garden.³⁶ Yet, the problem of Eve is enormous. Just as God had placed the knowledge of good and evil outside of innocence, learning is not an innocent category of knowledge, constructed as it is against domestic knowledge, that which women know. It is a category in which cultural authority expresses its wishes both to constitute knowledge and to regulate how those with less authority interact with it. The attainment of learning is eroticized through association with desire and sight, which further distances it from women, for their chastity is threatened by it. Women's minds, like Eve's, are too weak to resist, too imperfectly formed to develop, and too unstable for prolonged thought. Even when a woman is able to learn, her knowledge is monitored by the watchful eyes of tutors and guides who make sure that, even intellectually, she does not wander. So, the exclusion of women from discourses of education could not simply be redressed by allowing them enter its walls. The

cultural authorities who built its boundaries also played a part in constituting the intellectual identities of those they excluded. When women like Rachel Speght, Bathsua Makin, and Anna Maria Von Schurman argue for their inclusion in the garden of erudition, they employ many of the same arguments that had been used by earlier humanist advocates for women's education. They accept the terms of a female social role as domestic and private, and yet the results are different. By writing the activity of their reading, their minds are made public, with the attendant possibility for engagement with and transformation of the discourses that both produce them and limit them.

Endnotes

¹ Roger Ascham's *Scholemaster* (1571) exemplifies this combination of civic and moral virtues, of learning and manners. He connects education with governance, but also argues that in addition to increasing his knowledge of languages by reading, "yong jentlement should use, and delite in all Courtelie exercises, and Jentlemanlike pastimes" (58). Donald Kelley also argues that a humanist education combined letters, grammar, and rhetoric based on the reading of Latin orators, historians, and poets, with a concern for action: the perfect, socially and politically competent person (25).

² William Kempe (1589), writing to a non-elite audience, also indicated that the furtherance of learning glorifies God, overthrows idolatry, advances truth, beautifies the Church, and amplifies the good of the country (217).

³ This raises the question of Foucault's relationship to feminism because in his consideration of the circulation of power through discourse, he does not consider gender as a factor. Discourse does seem to be divided between the "accepted" and the "excluded" on the basis of gender, and there is a difference in the way in which authority is represented at different speaking positions, again a difference that correlates to gender; thus, male pedagogues do represent themselves as being cultural authorities. They write with some confidence that they have the right to speak so. Women, on the other hand, not necessarily less confident, write to assert their right to speak on matters of education. They write from a position in which they regard themselves as outside of educational discourses and to argue that they should be allowed in.

⁴ He uses the Protestation Oath of 1641, the Vow and Covenant of 1643, and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1644. For the sixteenth century, he looks at the Succession Oath of 1534 (62).

⁵ Cressy also notes that a summary of national statistics masks wide variations in literacy from county to county: "Literacy varied wildly from place to place, displaying a bewildering array of irregularities within a short span of miles" (*Literacy* 77).

⁶ Ruth Warnicke also argues that, while Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke Named the Governour* was influential in encouraging gentlemen to educate their sons, Vives' *Instruction of a Christian Woman* did not do the same for the spread of interest in the education of girls. Yet, why then was the work published repeatedly, going through numerous editions? Valerie Wayne argues that Vives was influential in sixteenth-century England because of the number of editions and because both Thomas More and Shakespeare (Shakespeare probably used it for Kate's last speech in *The Taming of the Shrew*) referred to it ("Some" 18). Further, Warnicke chooses David Cressy's literacy statistics as evidence of a primarily illiterate female population. Frances E. Dolan's work can also add to what I have said to complicate Cressy's findings. She argues that in the early modern period, a person able to read one sort of typeface might not be able to read another, and offers many examples of women accused of crimes, primarily from the lower classes, who used their literacy to a variety of social ends.

⁷ A further difference between reading and education rests in the relationship of religion to education. Diane Willen emphasises the particular importance of religion to increasing women's reading literacy. As she argues: "The traditional wisdom is still applicable: Protestantism and reading undoubtedly reinforce one another. If writing was linked to occupational needs, reading was necessary on grounds of religions" ("Women and Religion" 145). She cites the examples of Puritans teaching children to read, of Thomas Becon who urged that children be taught to read, and of William Gouge who urged that children read scripture to "sucke in religion." If women did not participate in education through grammar schools and universities, they could learn to read from petty schools, home instruction, masters, mistresses, and self-education. Further, because Protestantism depended not on memorization but on reading, "the ability to read penetrated to all social classes" (146). I will consider the relation of religion to the categories of reading and learning in another chapter. Reading for devotional purposes is different from education, and yet education, as it appears in humanism, is not entirely secular. My focus, here, is more on the classical,

humanist aspects of education because in works written by women on education that is the view that they took to what education was.

⁸ Although education for girls did not only take place in schools—and indeed in the sixteenth century none of it did—Josephine Kamm’s research into schools for girls in the seventeenth century is also informative. She mentions hospitals established in the seventeenth century that were given money to educate girls, especially in reading but also in the vocational skills required of the laundress or seamstress (64-66). Rosemary O’Day’s work is also useful in giving more information about vocational schools for girls. Although these schools emphasised vocation more than literacy, it is nevertheless apparent that it was increasingly acceptable for girls to attend school. Sherrin Marshall Wyntjes, somewhat optimistically, connects a distinction between classical and vernacular education to the Reformation. She argues: “The Christian humanists hoped that their doctrines would benefit all Christendom and, although the pre-reform movements affected the upper classes almost exclusively, the Reformation, in one form or another, became everybody’s Reformation” (171). Although David Cressy considers only class and not gender—and displays an irritating lack of interest in the difference between “children” and “boys”—he is justifiably critical of such enthusiasm. He argues that charitable ideals which were to extend education by class in grammar schools in Tudor and Stuart England were consistently undermined so that education continued to be the privilege of gentlemen (“Educational Opportunity”).

⁹ Although I refer to Thomas Salter as the author of *The Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579?), his work is actually a translation, with a few minor excisions and alterations, of Giovanni Micelle Bruto’s *La Institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (1555). Salter alters the form so that it is no longer an epistolary address to Lord Cattaneo on the subject of his daughter’s education but a general treatise on education, suitable for “all” ladies, the “Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens of Englande” that compose Salter’s more middle class audience. Bruto’s work was also translated and published in England under his own name

in 1598 (Holm 1-9). As well, Braithwait's work is of a different type than the others. His *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) would be classified more as a conduct book than a work on education, but the distinction for women is somewhat ambiguous. Works that are explicitly about women's education are themselves more concerned with educating women with regard to their manners than their intellectual pursuits. In any case, Valerie Wayne, in her article on Vives, argues that the term "conductbook," would be more accurate for *Instruction of a Christian Woman* (16). Braithwait's work is also different from the others in that it is not addressed to an audience of fathers and assorted Englishmen but directly to Englishwomen. He is not writing of rules to be administered by those with authority over women, but aims for self-regulation, the internalisation of his guidelines by women readers.

¹⁰ Sidney also defends poetry because of its emotional impact. He describes how reading can appropriately move the emotions of the reader because it can inspire him to virtue: "poetry ever sets virtue so out in her best colors, making fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamored of her" (21). Poetry is a better moral teacher than philosophy or history because it is "moving," for no one will study a philosopher and be moved to love morality, except that he already desires good.

¹¹ Richard Mulcaster shares a similar view of the importance of timing to development. He laments seeing men of reasonable good reading and excellent utterance overshoot themselves: "they will push out in publike certaine resolute opinions, before either their wittes be settled, or their reading ripe: which is then to be thought wisely ripe, when after the benefit of many yeares, after much reading of the most and best writers, after sound digesting of that which they have red, and applying it all to some certaine ende" (*Positions* 8,9). In *The Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon is also critical of "untimely learning," especially in the learning of logic and rhetoric by children who are too "unripe" for arts more suitable for graduates. When these arts are bestowed on minds "empty and unfraught," their wisdom is made contemptible (173).

¹² Roger Ascham, unlike others, places more emphasis on his pedagogical authority to guide and less on the progress of the reader. He is more concerned with setting forward the books that offer faulty values and embarks on a diatribe against Italian books translated into English, saying they are a fad, “dedicated over boldly to vertuous and honorable personages, the easielier to begile simple and innocent wittes” (*Scholemaster* 79) and arguing that they subvert true religion with their Catholicism. He also criticizes romances, exemplified by *Morte d'Arthure*: “the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open mans slaguhter and bold bawdrye” (*Scholemaster* 81). Such books contain stories of men who kill without cause and commit adultery, but they are less absolutely reprehensible than ridiculous. They are “good stuffe for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at” (81,82). Worse are the Italian books because they carry young wills to vanity and young wits to mischief (*Scholemaster* 82). He is also critical of those who have more reverence for Petrarch than Moses, give more account to Tullies Offices than Saint Paul’s Epistles, a tale of Boccaccio than a story from the Bible, and make Christ and his gospel serve only civil policy (*Scholemaster* 84). For Ascham, it is important to revere the correct authorial figures, and he emphasizes his own moral authority as a tutor who makes recommendations about books to be read. But there is also a sense in which, for him, the subject matter of a work is of less importance than its language, eloquence, and style.

¹³ Vives is more specific in his *De Ratione Studii Peurilis, or Plan of Study for Girls* (1523), written to assist Catherine of Aragon in guiding the Princess Mary. He mentions more books—contemporary, Christian, and classical which will “inculcate not only knowledge, but living well”—but there is still not a sense of progress from one sort to the next (147).

¹⁴ Vives, Salter, and Braithwait are not exceptional in connecting a need for male authority over women’s reading, to their lack of sexual discipline. Love matter is problematic, as DuBosc says explicitly, because women cannot always control their desires. Kim Walker cites several other examples of this kind of

restriction on women's reading. Henry Bullinger excludes romances and books of love because they incite lust and lying. Hake says that reading amorous books makes a woman smell "of naughtiness even all hyr lyfe after" and is a kind of training that will make women fit companions for "carpet knightes, and giglots, for amorous lovers" (cited in Walker 17-20).

¹⁵ Whereas men could be inflamed with desire for heroic virtues by their reading, for women reading romances, that desire is only sexual in nature, only has negative results. The object of that desire is interesting, however. This is not just an anxiety about female sexuality, although it is that too. The romance is indeed a feminized form because of its association with female readers, and for Vives this is an association that needs to be disrupted. But, Vives describes the content of these tales as masculine, armour and knights and tournaments, a kind of physical masculinity so potent, it seems that they can, metaphorically, at least, impregnate a woman. It may be that this is a version of masculinity that was no longer acceptable to male scholars. It is too much like the medieval version of the gentleman that a humanist, like Ascham, was responding to when he wrote that a scholar should have a voice that is "audible, strong, and manlike...a countenance, but faire and cumlie" (*Scholemaster* 21). Ascham wants to change the history that sent the weaker sons to school to become scholars while the stronger were gentleman at court, skilled in physical pursuits like jousting, hunting, and hawking. Thus, when a woman delights in reading romances, she is preferring a version of masculinity that is no longer current, at least not with the scholars writing treatises on female education. Such a delight is an affront to the humanist scholar who displays his masculinity in his learning and not in his fighting, his externally visible displays of physical prowess. Her delight is an insult, and in preferring him, she is saying that the current version is less desirable, and maybe less masculine, emasculated even. Female desire for what has come before, as a desire that humanists wished to see directed towards themselves, also made liking romances into a social threat that could turn society back to where it had come from. Women are Eve's descendents, and

so they need to be careful of tempting serpents that will bring them to sin. Yet just as Eve's choice led to Adam's fall, here too there is a concern about what female desire may do to men. Vives' strictures on female reading, turning women towards contemporary, authoritative, religious ends, or denying reading altogether, serve not just to discipline what is feminine, but also what is masculine.

¹⁶ The limitations on women brought about by the emphasis on their private role has been considered by Elaine Beilin. She argues that the confinement of women's speech to the domestic circle and that the "insistent coupling of women's learning with feminine virtue (chastity, obedience, silence) was at least partly an attempt to control educated women's involvement in the public sphere" ("Writing Public Poetry" 250).

¹⁷ Only Richard Mulcaster, who offers Queen Elizabeth as the paragon of the learned woman, seems to acknowledge that there are differences among women. Some women, he says, need education because they will rule, others as an ornament to their birth, some because they will marry, and some because they need a trade (*Positions* 174).

¹⁸ That wandering is a sexual issue is clear from another part of Braithwait's work. In a criticism of contemporary fashions, Braithwait offers an odd meditation on breasts:

Eye those rising mounts, your displayed breasts, with what shamelesse art they wooe the shamefaste passenger: view those wandering Lamps, how they rove abroad, as if they would flye out of their Lodges, and spehere themselves in some amorous Orbe. Call them home, lest Dinah-like they lose themselves by straying impeach their honour by wandring, bring themselves woe by their lascivious wooing. (8,9)

He seems to expect his female readers to regard the breasts, as if from an outside perspective, simply because they fascinate the male author/viewer to the point of excess of metaphor. Even the clothes are figured domestically, so that to

be home is to be covered and to be wandering is to be outside of the safety of the domestic, to elide control. Describing the mind as wandering must be connected to the idea of the wandering womb. The source for this description is Plato's *Timaeus* where he describes the womb, when it "remains long unfruitful," as becoming "vexed and aggrieved, and wandering about the body and blocking the channels of the breath" (91C). Thomas Laqueur argues that both male and female genital organs are, according to Plato, "animals prone to wander unless they are satisfied" (*Making Sex* 109). He then adds that by the sixteenth century, understanding of the anatomy made a literal interpretation of the wandering womb impossible, though he does not say what they did mean by it: "Whatever they were debating when they pondered whether the womb wandered, it was not a discussion about the actual travels of an organ from its ligamentary anchor below, up through a foot and a half of densely packed body parts." (111,112).

¹⁹ Men can also have wandering minds. In *Advancement of Learning* Bacon associates both wandering and emptiness, indirectly, with a knowledge that is described as if it were a version of femininity to be avoided. He is critical of entering into knowledge, among other things, for the purpose of making it a "terrace, for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect." Instead, as the man rejects what is "empty and void" in philosophy in favour of what is "solid and fruitful; that knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only, or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain to her master's use; but as a spouse, for generation, fruit, and comfort" (*Advancement* 147, 148). For him, then, both wandering and emptiness are feminized and sexualized as a kind of vain knowledge that may bring the pleasure of the courtesan but not the fruitfulness of the wife. As Genevieve Lloyd notes: "...in Bacon's metaphor the control of the feminine became explicitly associated with the very nature of knowledge" (51). Milton also uses the term to describe the vanity of the search for knowledge of the devils in Hell, who argued of high thoughts, but "found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost" (561).

²⁰ This makes the life of Margaret More Roper seem the more remarkable. Writing sometime after her marriage (possibly in 1521), Thomas More praises Margaret for commencing a study of astronomy and for her continued study of philosophy. He expresses the hope that she will devote the rest of her life to the study of medical science and sacred literature—more critical areas of female study—but expects that her study of “humane letters” will continue since she is yet young. Margaret’s “industry” is an important feature of her father’s praise, but he also praises her husband for following the same course of study as Margaret (148,149). Nevertheless, in a later letter, of 1523, Thomas More also writes of how he expects that Margaret will not receive sufficient praise for her labour in writing because “the incredulity of men would rob [her] of the praise [she] so richly deserved for [her] labourious vigils” (155). In this picture of life in the More household, men and women do not pursue separate courses of study—thus, there are not explicitly gendered domains of knowledge—and domestic work does not interrupt female education. The More house is clearly the exception, however. Thomas More expects that Margaret’s intellectual work will not be culturally credited because it is an exception, and will instead be assumed to be the work of a man.

²¹ In Erasmus’ colloquy, “The Abbot and the Learned Lady,” the lady is more concerned with the wisdom and knowledge contained in books of Greek and Latin than of French (usually more suitable for ladies), and argues that living pleasantly can only come from the pleasure of the “active and vigorous” mind (223). While the abbot argues, typically, that “the distaff and the knitting needle are the proper implements of a woman” (224), the lady argues for education in what is “learned,” if within the confines of the house. The lady does not dispute her interest in the house, but claims that reading, which gives her wisdom, will help her to carry out the running of the house and raising the children more effectively. That reading Latin is incompatible with modesty is also disputed with the argument that “French books stuffed with frivolous fables” are worse. The lady claims for herself this active and vigorous mind that is the result of

education, but makes her husband and family the reason for its necessity; her husband, she says, is very proud of her reading. A further aspect of Erasmus' work is the question of the object of Erasmus' criticism. The colloquy could also be read as a satire of monasticism as much as a criticism of the absence of education for women. When the abbot offers the twin claims that women lack the intellectual mind-space to manage both the absorption of books and the house, and that "Too much book-learning leads to insanity," the lady responds, not with a defense of the female mind, but with a criticism of the corruptions of monasticism. The feasting and parties of monks also take up the mind's capacities and are a form of insanity themselves. The colloquy is as much a criticism of a lack of scholarship among monks, who are more interested in drinking, hunting, and hawking, as it is a defence of women's education. The educated woman is valued because of her contribution to the house but also because she is a rebuke to the men who should be the leaders of society. She also exemplifies the wrongness of the social order, the "world turned upside down," (226), carnival, as much as she represents a move towards a better social order, one in which women, as much as men, are educated, wise, and powerful.

²² Pearl Hogrefe offers a list of Lady Margaret's reading: sermons, writings of divines, the *Book of Martyrs*, the work of William Perkins, Thomas Cartwright, and Thomas Bilson, a herbal, a lecture on rhetoric, and two political tracts on Essex (Margaret Hoby's first marriage had been to Walter Devereux, the younger brother of the Earl of Essex). She also, Hogrefe notes, read "a little of humanite" although neither Hogrefe nor Hoby specify what this might mean (71,72).

²³ She also remarks on October 28, 1600 that she went to church to hear a Mr. Smith preach, "wher I hard, to my knowledge, nothings worth the notinge, but that Aba father was to note out that both Jewe and gentile should Call god Father" (151).

²⁴ For further discussion of women and Protestantism see Wytjies and Willen, "Women and Religion." Willen offers the example of Anne Askew as one for

whom the ability to read, "rather than silencing women, often led to greater activism" (146).

²⁵ Diane Willen in her study of poor relief also demonstrates how poor women were employed in the public sphere to help others and to support themselves. She concludes: "The lives of these women implicitly challenge our modern assumptions and suggest that the dichotomy between domestic and public, like our very definitions of private and public, do not apply in this context" (575). Concerned primarily with Renaissance Italian women, Merry E. Wiesner also asserts the inappropriateness of the application of traditional ideas of the public to work. She writes: "A woman's assessment of her private responsibilities led much more often to a request for a public role, at least in the world of work. She asserted that she should be free to work because of, not despite, her private life. Thus in the realm of work as well as in financial decision making, women stressed the connection, not the distinction, between public and private" (11).

²⁶ In her book, *Tudor Women: Commoners and Queens* (1975), Pearl Hogrefe makes a record of several other women in the period who were philanthropic as Anne Clifford was. Anne Clifford's mother, Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, Anne, Countess of Warwick, and Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury all built almshouses, while Anna Fiennes, Lady Dacre built a hospital. For Anne Clifford, at least, philanthropic efforts included not only the spending of money but also the contribution of time and attention. Thomasine Bonaventura Percival also gave time and money to the "repairing of highways, building of bridges, endowing maidens, relieving of prisoners, feeding and appareling the poor" (Walter Tregelass qtd. in Hogrefe). Alice Owen built a school at Islington with a chapel and almshouses and established rules for the school. Elizabeth Carey, Lady Falkland, founded "industrial schols" in Dublin, where poor children could learn trades. Lady Burghley, besides providing money for Oxford and Cambridge, gave food and clothing for the poor and imprisoned (90-94). Although less philanthropic efforts than business ventures, other women also established schools. Bathsua Makin's book contains an advertisement for a

school that she would found according to her principles and Aemelia Lanyer founded a school in 1617 in St. Giles in the Field, a wealthy suburb of London. The school lasted for two years, and ended when Lanyer got into a dispute with her landlord. She attempted to establish another school in 1620, but the landlord that had agreed to lease to her found a better tenant (Woods xxvii-xxix).

²⁷ On August 26, 1601, she writes: "this day, in the afternone, I had had a child brought to me that was borne at Silpho, one Talliour sonne, who had no fundament, and had no passage for excementes but att the Mouth: I was earnestly intreated to Cutt the place to se if any passhage Could be made, but, although I Cutt deepe and seached, there was none to be found" (184).

²⁸ Grace Mildmay seems to have lived a life much like Margaret Hoby's in that she too records in her diary a life in which she reads the Bible and books of physic, does needlework, dispenses medical care, and plays music. The 1911 editor of her work describes a painting of her: "In her hand is a small clasped volume, apparently a prayer-book; on the table behind her are more books, with bottles and jars—a reminder of her housekeeping accomplishments—and also a work box" (Weigall 135). The inscription on the back of the picture, said to be her motto, is: "The minde alwayes employed in good thinges avoydeth evill, pleaseth God, and promiseth a happy end" (135). Books, then, are both devotional and occupational, certainly a traditional enough notion, but the result is not passivity or quietude.

²⁹ Erickson actually offers the rather humbling observation that in many important respects ("sex-ratio of wages, access to training, concentration in the lowest-paid sectors of the labour market, and sexual division of labour") women's economic position relative to men remains much the same (xviii). See also Marilyn Waring, *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth* (Wellington, NZ: Allen and Unwin, 1988).

³⁰ For something of the early modern value of women's work see Michael Roberts.

³¹ Erasmus' description of Thomas More's household is interesting in this regard.

He describes the house as a place where More converses with his wife, son, daughter-in-law, three daughters, their husbands, and eleven grandchildren, as "Plato's Academy," guided by More as a loving father. But then Erasmus revises his opinion by saying that "I do the house injury in likening it to Plato's Academy...I should rather call it a school, or university, of Christian religion. For there is none therein who does not study the branches of a liberal education. Their special care is piety and virtue. There is no quarelling or intemperate words heard. None is seen idle" (qtd. in Kamm 40). The private space of the house is transformed into the masculine space of Plato's academy and the university through More's presence there. The women do not leave the home, but they are included in a different spatial category through their learning.

³² The anxiety that women could use a pretence of religious devotion to deceive is also evident in an example cited by Jacqueline Pearson: in Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* a courtesan passes herself off as a virgin because observers understand her reading as meaning that she is religious ("Women Reading" 93). Sasha Roberts also discusses concerns about women reading "Venus and Adonis," arguing that it is "emblematic not only of obscene literature, but of illicit goings-on in private chambers at night" (39).

³³ The image of death coming in through the window of the eye seems to come from St. Bernard. The *Ancrene Wisse*, a thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses, refers to his work: "Just as death came into the world through sin," says St. Bernard, 'so through the window of the eye death has her entrance into the soul.' Lord Christ! People would shut fast every window of the house if they could shut death out of it,[the death of the body]—and an anchoress will not enclose her eye-windows against the death of the soul?" (70). Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, the editors of the *Anchorene Wisse*, point to Jeremiah 9:21 as Bernard's source: "For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces" (350). I am indebted to Nicholas Watson for this citation.

³⁴ For Speght there is an interactive relationship between the mind and the

body, whereas Makin and Schurman do not mention the body. Speght's conception of the mind-body relationship, before Descartes, is more like that imagined by Burton in *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621ff). For him, the use of the mind affects the health of the body: "body and mind must be exercised, not one, but both, and that in a mediocrity: otherwise it will cause a great inconvenience. If the body be over-tyred, it tires the minde. The minde oppresseth the body, as with students it oftentimes fall out" (2.95). For women, however, the best occupations for the prevention of melancholy are needlework, spinning, and other domestic work.

³⁵ Lewalski suggests that this unnamed occurrence that called her away from erudition's garden, if the chronology of the allegory conforms to Speght's life, likely did mark the end of Speght's own education. She published her *Mouzell for Melastomus* at the age of 19, and married four years later (xxxi).

³⁶ For discussions of Speght's poem see Beilin, *Redeeming* 110-117; Walker 110-114; Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, 153-175.

Chapter Two

Reformation Women and the Nation of Readers:

The Successful Circuits of Askew, Parr, and Wheathill

*Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—
 Success in Circuit lies
 To bright for our infirm Delight
 The Truth's superb surprise
 As lightning to the Children eased
 With explanation kind
 The truth must dazzle gradually
 Or every man be blind--*

(Emily Dickinson)

Within a culture where pedagogical texts placed numerous restrictions on women's reading and writing, devotional texts were an oasis of relative permissiveness. Suzanne Hull, in her bibliography of books for women, notes that women were frequently enjoined to read religious works, while Patricia Crawford calculates that works of piety accounted for about half of women's published writings in the seventeenth century (Hull 91; Crawford, "Women's Published Writings" 221).¹ Yet, far from a paradise, religious faith, however socially acceptable as a topic for women's reading and writing, also contributed to restrictions on their behaviour. Characterizing devotional books addressed to women readers, Hull remarks that in such works women were "educated in a kind of practical piety, admonished in prayer books and sermons, as in the practical guidebooks, to be chaste and silent, obedient to their husbands or superiors, and to conform to the appropriate religious training" (103). In *Silent But for the Word* (1985), one of the key works initiating contemporary critical interest in early modern women's writing, Margaret Hannay argues, similarly, that

a "woman's desire for godliness was habitually used to silence her, even as she was permitted to speak publicly through patronage, translation, and devotional meditations" (4).

This conflict between sanctioned expressions of faith and prohibitive behavioural codes makes identifying the early modern feminist among religious writers a problem for today's scholars. Hannay, deeming religion to be both limiting and enabling for women, suggests that women's devotional writing can be called subversive insofar as it rejects the commandment to silence, but concludes it has been insufficiently expurgated of patriarchy to be called "feminist." Suzanne Trill, like Hannay, attributes the ideological foundation of women's oppression to a religion which requires chastity, silence, and obedience, but allows that religion also enables women's speech. While Hannay turns to evidence of "self-expression" for the sign of an emerging feminist consciousness, Trill values instances of women "speaking as women," rare occasions when a female author writes autobiographically or explicitly rejects traditional gender roles ("Religion" 50). In the absence of these self-referential or argumentative markers, religious writing seems to be merely acquiescent to a restrictive patriarchal gender ideology. Ann Rosalind Jones, who delineates various ways in which women negotiate publication, places Elizabeth Grymeston's *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives* and Katherine Stubbes' *Confession* in the category of most "submissive" because the works deal with religious topics appropriate for women and their authors wrote without ambition for publication.² And just as Jones regards love poetry as the most resistant

form of writing, Jacqueline Pearson's "resisting" reader uses the pretense of reading a religious book to camouflage more overtly transgressive activities, such as deceiving one's husband or composing poetry. Pearson does acknowledge that religious reading might offer some interest: "Even religious reading offered seductive kinds of empowerment for female readers" (93,94). But she identifies this "empowerment" with conversion and gynocritical reading without explicating how either of these are forms of power. After all, prayer books written by men implied that women would read the Bible with special attention to the activities of women. In any case, the implication of her article is that women really ought not to have been "seduced," that they should have been drawn to a more truly feminist discourse.

These scholars are right to argue that there are more transgressive acts in which women might engage than writing a work of piety. There are limits to the feminism of women who read, write, and publish with relative impunity within the very discourse that gives divine authority to early modern culture's limits on their intellectual, spiritual, and physical activities. Discussing early modern women's religious writing today seems something like the labour of an entomologist, digging around under rocks and climbing trees, looking for forms of life, smaller and more interesting than those with which she is immediately presented. Because the works that I will consider in this chapter and the next rarely discuss gender issues explicitly, they have often been regarded somewhat impassively, as rocks devoid of (feminist) life. Yet, to take this approach is to impose an historical anomaly. This chapter and the next will be devoted to exploring how

women used the language of religion, so central to the expression of early modern subjectivity. Not necessarily accepting the perfect contiguity of religion and patriarchy, women used religion as a lexicon through which they write of themselves as the possessors of knowledge and active readers, a position frequently forbidden them in education discourses. Further, the notion that for women to write of faith was merely an acceptable means for them to publish is troubled by the fact that women's religious writings sometimes were not merely unoffensive to their audiences but could also be quite popular with them; repeated printings of some religious works suggest a more compelling cultural interest in what women wrote than mere tolerance. In this chapter, I will discuss the representation of reading in a group of texts that first appeared between 1546 and 1555—Katherine Parr's *The Lamentacion of a Sinner*, Anne Askew's *Examinations*, and, to be considered more briefly, Jane Grey's published writings—as well as Anne Wheathill's *Handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs* from 1584. Mother's advice books, Elizabeth Grymeston's *Meditations Miscelanea Memoratives*, first printed in 1604, and Dorothy Leigh's *A Mother's Blessing*, first printed in 1616 and repeatedly thereafter, will provide the material for the next chapter.

Rather than regretting that these women were not as critical of cultural and religious constraints on gender as we might wish them to have been, I want to explore how they attained a form of cultural authority through their religio-political position, gender, and class. But here I should outline the limits to my argument. I begin this discussion with elite women, but I am not arguing that

their involvement with religion, mediated through court and literacy, is generally representative of the experience of the majority of women in England. The historian Diane Willen justifiably expresses a dissatisfaction with studies of Katherine Parr and her elite female contemporaries that have made these few women illustrative of the lives of all Renaissance women (141). And, indeed, while all these women's writings are religious in content, they do not share an identical genre or rationale for publication. Several of these works might be called occasional pieces, texts written to a particular historical moment. For Askew, writing was the result of duress, of torture and imminent execution, with publication of her defence of her faith bearing witness to the battle between Catholicism and the emerging Protestantism—a conflict in which Parr also engages in her confessional narrative. Grymeston and Leigh, who also indicate that they write while expecting to die, address advice books to their sons, although Grymeston's advice takes the form of meditations while Leigh's is more explicitly didactic. Only Wheathill and Leigh express their intent to publish their writings, but male readers, attesting to the edifying value, present the works of Grymeston, Askew, and Parr to the public. Historical situation, class, and religious position also differentiate these women, for if they were all gentlewomen, one was also a queen. The biographical narratives that Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* supplied for Parr and Askew add another layer of discourse to the representation of the author, not available to less famous women, and this discourse makes their reading a significant aspect of the representation of the historical character. Further, while all but Grymeston were

Protestant, mid-sixteenth-century Protestantism has a different social and political function than Leigh's seventeenth-century Puritanism. These differences, as well as the position they share by becoming women writers, underpin the representation of reading in their works.

Nor am I arguing that the Reformation dramatically improved the lives of Englishwomen. Lawrence Stone has made this claim, but it has been disputed by Patricia Crawford, Claire Schen, and Judith M. Bennett. Crawford suggests that both Catholic and Protestant male religious leaders believed in female inferiority and subordination. The Protestant emphasis on family piety also enhanced the power of the male head of the household, while denigrating more femino-centric rituals, such as the worship of Mary and female saints (*Women and Religion* 42-47). Claire Schen, in her study of women in London parishes, argues that the disappearance of religious fraternities devoted to saints and endowed chantries, along with alterations to the dispensation of charity, diminished women's participation in parish social life. Judith Bennett also challenges feminist historians studying women's experiences of family, marriage, religious life, or politics to reconsider the dominant narrative of history that posits a great divide between the medieval and early modern periods. I am not placing my discussion of women and the reformation within a teleology of decline or progress. I want only to demonstrate that religious texts, ostensibly disengaged from gender disputes, are nevertheless gendered works. Diane Willen describes Katherine Parr and her contemporaries by saying that "their concern for feminism [is] nonexistent" (141). But, while Willen is right in noting that these

women did not explicitly argue for reform on questions of the material place of women in society or the limiting constructions of their gender, the engagement of these elite women with religious reform produces a form of authority that was unusual for women and accessible to others. I would figure my method for interrogating the function of gender in women's religious writing through Emily Dickinson's advice to "Tell all the truth but tell it slant/Success in circuit lies." By taking an oblique route through religious politics into the discussion of gender, female religious writers give voice to one note in the chord that was England as a community of readers, and in so doing represent femininity as authoritative, thoughtful, and public. More a discussion of the function of women's writing in religious and political discourse than a study of women's writing as a reflection of their religious experience, these chapters present women writers as agents producing their texts and as characters represented and reconstructed in discourse.

It is a commonplace of Spenser, Donne, and Milton scholarship that Tudor and Stuart religion was both political and devotional, although criticism concerned with women's religious writing takes the politics of religion to be almost exclusively that of gender.³ I will argue that women's writing may also be political in some of the same ways as that of their male contemporaries. This is not to deny the importance of gender as a category of analysis, but rather it is to suggest, as the feminist historian Joan Scott does, that "politics construct gender and gender constructs politics" (27). Exploring the exigencies of women's participation in a politics of ecclesiastical governance or the formation of a

Protestant national identity, even if they were not the exceptional Elizabeth, the Dean of St. Paul's, or the Secretary of Foreign Tongues, has the potential to generate what Scott calls the "radical potential of women's history." As she explains, when we use political history, which has been almost exclusively told as the history of men, as well as social history, the more usual venue in which to study women's history, to generate a history of gender, the result may be a rethinking of political concepts:

Feminist history then becomes not the recounting of great deeds performed by women but the exposure of the often silent and hidden operations of gender that are nonetheless present and defining forces in the organization of most societies. With this approach women's history critically confronts the politics of existing histories and inevitably begins the rewriting of history. (27)

The study of women in reformation England has indeed transpired according to the categories of historical study noted by Scott. The most important history of women and religion, Patricia Crawford's *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720* (1993), attends to social issues—family, marriage, and piety—while the majority of the politically oriented historians of the English reformation completely ignore gender issues. For scholars such as J.J. Scarisbrick (1984), Patrick Collinson (1988), Eamon Duffy (1992), and Christopher Haigh (1993), the dominant questions have been the rapidity, extent, and roots—whether religious or political, popular or elite—of England's transformation into a Protestant nation.

These are valid questions, of course, but it is worth asking if gender would change the terms of the inquiry, especially the elite/popular distinction. Is Katherine Parr, for example, to be identified with the elite men that Christopher Haigh suggests are enacting the political reformation to which "the people" respond with obedience, or is she one of the "people," because as a woman she has neither the education nor the political authority of the most powerful male courtiers and the king? Would Parr's text, presented to the public by influential men, function as part of the elite political reformation or the evangelical reformation, the two reformations between which Haigh distinguishes? I cannot hope to consider every aspect of Reformation history, but I will focus on the discourses surrounding reading which are central to national religious conflicts. Here, it is important to note that all members of society did not participate in religion in the same way, and so they were readers, if they were readers at all, for different reasons. Scripture's behavioural dicta make an important contribution to the construction and authorization of gendered identities, as scholars of women's writing frequently note. But gender, education, and class also defined the disposition of one's religion, whether it would be expressed through theology or piety, debate or devotion. Debora Kuller Shuger notes something of this interconstitutive relationship between the material and the spiritual in *The Renaissance Bible*. In an England where the church and nation were aspects of the same entity, with the state legislating Lenten fasts and the church probating wills and running universities, religion is both public and political. Shuger argues "Renaissance biblical scholarship, is less a specialized

discipline with its own internally generated topoi and methods than a disciplinary matrix where philological, historical, legal, antiquarian, and rhetorical procedures combine and recombine in response to fluctuations within the larger intellectual culture" (4). Based on Latin humanist texts, often from the Continent, Shuger's study considers the cultural work to which elite, educated men put the Bible. Biblical erudition could, among other things, bring favour at court, where James I "valued learning in clerics as much as good legs in courtiers." Shuger concludes: "Knowledge may always be politicized, but only in the Renaissance was biblical erudition a recognized instrument of international affairs" (17). Although Shuger is interested in gender, her sources can indicate little about the material consequences of Biblical knowledge for women. Nevertheless, her work is a pertinent reminder that if the Bible was prescribed reading for women because of didactic interest in their behaviour, it was not necessarily a form of knowledge that was always unlearned, private, and apolitical.

Further, how people were supposed to express their faith was a way of articulating social order. The more public, theological, and scholarly faith was associated with elite men, while the private, devotional, and pious correlated to women and the lower classes. As Patricia Crawford concludes, women were not expected to debate religion but were to leave the controversial theological questions to learned men (*Women and Religion* 75). Associating religious dispute with social disorder, Tudor and Stuart monarchs took steps to delimit the social groups who could engage in debate. In mid-sixteenth-century England, the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion limited the reading of the

Bible, newly available in parish churches, by class and gender. While men and women of the gentry and nobility, along with men of the merchant classes, might read the Bible in private, only noblemen could read aloud. All the rest, male and female, of the degree of yeoman or under, were not to read the Bible at all (Willen, "Women and Religion" 144; Beilin "Introduction" xxvi). During the reigns of Elizabeth and James, Bible reading became a requirement for the faithful, but disputation among those who were not high-ranking scholars or ecclesiastics was still not acceptable. Both monarchs attempted to regulate preaching, thereby simultaneously endeavouring to limit the variety of theological positions and to assert the authority of the monarch as supreme head of the church. During Elizabeth's reign, the bishops instituted measures to ensure an increased level of education among ministers (Haigh 270), but Elizabeth, against the wishes of the bishops, also prohibited "prophesyings," the means by which ministers had been expanding on Scripture beyond the Prayer Book. She believed that such undirected public interpretation would divide people in religious opinion and encourage the "violation of our laws" and "the breach of common order" (qtd. in Solt 94). James also saw theological controversy as a challenge to royal supremacy and a cause of social disorder. With the "Directions Concerning Preachers" (1622), he restricted preachers from "railing" against Puritans or Catholics, from speaking on the duties of the sovereign, and, for any preacher below the rank of bishop, from discussing such theological "hot topics" as predestination or the universality of grace. John Donne, among those divines who supported the directions, wrote:

for Preaching is to make them know things appertaining to their salvation. But when men doe neither, neither Teach, nor Preach, but (as his *Majestie* observes the manner to bee) *To soare in poynts too deepe, To muster up their owne Reading, To display their owne Wit, or Ignorance in meddling with Civill matters,* or (as his *Majestie* addes) *in rude and undecent reviling of persons:* this is that which hath drawn downe his *Majesties* piercing Eye to see it, and his Royall care to correct it. ("Sermon Number 7" 202)

For James, according to Donne, the English Reformation, which brought all knowledge necessary for salvation to the kingdom and would keep it from the Papists and the Puritans, was contained in the two catechisms, the 39 Articles, and in the two books of homilies (202-203). In a context where the extent to which the reading of Christians, whether the unlearned laity or preachers, ought to result in the formation of independent opinions was contested for both religious and political reasons, for women to write about religious reading could certainly be more than an act of conformity to the model of femininity as chaste, silent, and obedient. When women write about such reading it could be an act of identification with a vision of a particular kind of Protestant nation, one in which the common—the female and lower class—reader had some authority to interpret Scripture under divine, rather than human direction.

Related to my consideration of the relationships between gender and religio-political history with regard to women's religious reading and writing is a re-examination of the critical presuppositions that privilege "self-expression" in

women's writing. The texts I am discussing acquire value because their authors are queens, martyrs, and mothers, but also because the authors are women and speak with a "feminine voice" that has its own culturally identifiable and valued attributes: that it was private, unlearned, and pious. This is not the "feminine" voice sought by the kind of scholarship that prefers to see women speaking "like women," a position influenced by the gynocritical approach to women's writing that Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and Elaine Showalter first articulated. In *Ventriloquized Voices*, Elizabeth Harvey argues that gynocriticism, with its dedication to the "historical emergence of a female voice" (20), is problematically applied to Renaissance texts. Because gynocriticism conflates the female voice and the woman author, such criticism is ill-equipped to deal with the anonymous or "cross-dressed" author, or with intertextual writing, all of which have a peculiar and important function in Renaissance texts (24,25). While gynocriticism does not dominate all current criticism of early modern women, it is still strikingly prevalent in discussions of women's religious reading and writing, possibly because there are often few patronage, economic, or gender issues upon which to focus. Aemelia Lanyer's adamant polemic on gender in "Eve's apology" and the appeals for patronage that she attaches to her Passion poem are very much the exception. The pervasiveness of the interest in an authentic, self-referential female voice is understandable because the attention to this form of "voice" is an attempt to comprehend the uniqueness and variety of women's experiences. But this focus is also unfortunate because devotional writing is so immediately unsatisfying according to these terms. Devotional writing is highly citational—the

most common intertext being the Bible—and also tends to lack autobiographical referents, so that the only possible conclusion, according to this perspective, is that women are subsuming their voices in the language of men.

I want to distinguish the female author, the feminine proper name that classifies the text as women's writing and attaches the text to a historical person, from the female voice, which does not necessarily have such a material connection. The voice might be defined, as Jonathan Goldberg does, as the "voice-as-text," the intertextually constructed echo (*Voice 1*). The intertexts that define the quality of the female voice and its faith are multiple, from Deborah the prophet and Mary the virginal singer of a magnificat to Eve the seductress and the wife who learns only from her husband at home, remaining silent in church. Female voices are also, as Elizabeth Harvey points out, adopted by male authors, as Erasmus does in *Praise of Folly* and Donne in "Sapho to Philaenis." Because of the intertextuality of the female voice—the iconic status resulting from the authority attached to inhibiting and enabling Biblical echoes and the possibility of ventriloquism—it comes to represent particular social values: piety, insight, irony, folly, maternity, insatiable desire, and loquaciousness, among other things. Before any one woman commences speaking, the female voice signifies, and the female author is often forced to respond to these values.

In the works that I am discussing, there is a uniformity to the qualities that women ascribe to their voices. The writers of religious works that I discuss consistently identify themselves as unlearned, so that even though there is often good biographical evidence that they are not, the utter conventionality of the self-

representation indicates that there is a performative aspect to writing that does not rest easily with the supposed feminist mode of expression, speaking as a woman. We cannot even assume that a woman writing about such typically female concerns as childcare or housework is "authentically" representing her experience; this too is intertextually constructed through discourses of motherhood and gender.⁴ Suzanne Trill, in a recent reconsideration of her earlier position, also regrets that interest in the authentic female voice at the expense of intertextuality has led to an unfair diminishment of the status of Mary Sidney's *Psalmes*. Unable to deal with the language Sidney uses, that of the Psalms, Petrarchism, and courtly love poetry because it is not our own, we have, she argues, underestimated the significance of Sidney's translations for Protestant confessional practices, the construction of a national English identity, and English poetry ("Spectres" 205). Yet, where Trill abandons the notion of a female voice to talk about Mary Sidney as author, I want to retain the notion that there is a culturally identifiable feminine voice that serves a critical religious and national function, not just through authoritative literary discourses, but also through explicit self-representation by the feminine speaker. In the historical contexts pertinent here, the female author who speaks in a female voice is an effective—not just acceptable—means to convey a social value: the pre-eminence of faith over learning.⁵

But what then is the connection between the female author and the feminine voice? Foucault defines the author through discursive effect when he

writes: "the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within society" (124). The male author who performs the female voice in the public sphere, inscribing it with attributes and constructing it intertextually, is still a male author. His text circulates with all the attendant cultural authority of his material position. The text in a woman's voice, authored by a woman, circulates differently from a ventriloquized text because of the material restrictions placed on female writers—their relative lack of education, diminished claims to the possession of literary property, and tenuous attachments to literary authority—which are in part the result of the negative attributes assigned the female voice. While the text with an unknown or male writer published under a female pseudonym circulates very like the female-authored text, the text that circulates signed by a woman author can annex further significance to the connotations of female authorship. In a period in which the woman who wrote and published was a rare commodity, what she wrote, where and how it was published, and who read it, all add value to the notion of female authorship. When women wrote with female names—when they are female authors as well as female voices, and in the early modern period, so far as we know, women did not take male pseudonyms—they make a direct contribution to the cultural significance attached to "woman."

II

On Being the Weak that Confound the Wise

Developing upon the argument of my previous chapter that part of the very definition of “woman” was unlearnedness—that to be a woman was to possess knowledge that is outside of the boundaries established by the masculine scholar—my discussion of Anne Askew and Katherine Parr will explore how being an unlearned reader becomes a rhetorical advantage. By representing themselves as women unschooled in learning, Askew and Parr engage in a form of rhetorical masking that makes the publication of their works both acceptable and desirable. I use the term “masking,” to suggest a performance, for, indeed, these women were not actually uneducated and were remembered, retrospectively, for their learning; Bathsua Makin, herself ventriloquizing the male voice, presents Askew as a model of female learning, a “person famous for learning and piety” and credits her with sowing the “Seed of Reformation” by her hand (28). The mask is created, in part, not only through the intertextual construction of the author’s feminine voice, but also through gender discourse, and through narratives of their lives; not just known through their own writings, Katherine Parr and Anne Askew are represented repeatedly in sixteenth-century England, with stories of their lives circulating in popular ballads, Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* and John Bale’s additions to Askew’s examinations. These representations coincide with the self-representations of Parr and Askew on the issue of female learning, suggesting that here Parr and Askew have engaged with limiting cultural constructions of their own femininity. Yet, there are powerful

results to this concession. By speaking within the traditional construction of their gender, by performing the role of femininity, women speak for the unlearned in a way that makes them effective advocates for the Reformation. The reformer, like the woman, has placed himself outside of the boundaries of traditional theological knowledge, and must challenge their validity. As a reformer and a woman, the female author becomes oppositional rather than obedient, public rather than private, and active rather than passive; she challenges the boundaries of knowledge about gender.

In *Desiring Women Writing* (1997), Jonathan Goldberg criticises what he sees as a tendency in feminist scholarship devoted to early modern women to see gender identity as "sites of victimage demanding redress." The problem with this, he says, is that "if gender is taken as *eo ipse* oppressive, then there is no way to understand how a woman could ever be empowered enough to write and publish" (11). Even so, disempowering, restrictive constructions of femininity do assist the publication of the writings of Askew and Parr. Wendy Wall has argued that "farewell scenes," narratives which construct and make visible a female self at the "threshold moment of death," provide a point at which women are allowed the authority of authorship (*Imprint* 291). Although Wall's examples are dying mothers, the same might be said of the martyr, for Askew, too, writes because she is about to die, recording her experience not for her children but for her fellow believers, for whom faith in the word is paramount. Parr's work was not published as that of a woman about to die—although her life actually was to end in 1548 after complications from childbirth. But Parr does avow her feminine

weakness and the necessity of obedience, while she asserts her compulsion to write by the intensity of her faith. For his part, Foxe announces that she has suffered for her beliefs (553). Both of these women present writing as a deed of last resort because of their impending demise and the overwhelming urgency of their faith. They do not follow the path to authorship of the author who composes in private a work intended for eventual publication, and in this sense their works conform to debilitating expectations of feminine modesty. But while the extent to which these texts conformed with social expectations by being religious works, suitable for chaste and modest women, explains why the texts could be published, it does not clarify the motives of those responsible for publication.

The reign of Edward saw the most vigorous Protestant reform of any before or after in sixteenth-century England. Edward Seymour had been made Lord Protector of Edward VI, and the Six Articles, under which Askew had been charged with heresy, were repealed.⁶ New evangelical *Homilies* were printed, endowed prayers were suppressed, the laity was allowed communion with both bread and wine, the clergy were allowed to marry, church images were pulled down, and Latin rites were replaced first by one Book of Common Prayer, and then, another, more decisively Protestant (Haigh 168). Richard Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* offers a model by which to argue that women participated in the emergent formation of the English Protestant nation. English ecclesiastical identity, Helgerson proposes, took two forms, the apocalyptic and the apologetic, exemplified respectively by Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Where Foxe celebrated a national community that

was sustained by the circulation of books, especially the vernacular Bible, Hooker challenged the authority of readers to make pronouncements on religion. *Acts and Monuments*, which, as Helgerson says, was one of the great publishing successes of sixteenth-century England, defined a national community inclusive of unlearned men and women, as well as gentlemen and scholars, imaging the nation as readers of the vernacular Bible. He writes of the characters in Foxe's work:

If these people can defeat university-educated men at the very sort of dialectical confrontation for which those men have been specially trained, it is because they speak out of God's word, not out of the imaginings of men. Poverty and simplicity thus join martyrdom as signs of Christ's true church. As Scripture asserts and as Foxe often recalls, 'God hath chosen the foolish and weak things of this world to confound the wise and mighty ones, and things that are not to bring to naught things that are' (8.310) (Helgerson 265).

Although Helgerson does not specifically discuss the place of the publication of writing by women in the formation of this imagined national community of faith, his proposition that poverty, simplicity, and martyrdom were the signs of the true English church can explain the acceptance and popularity of women's religious writing. The women I am discussing, Anne Askew and Katherine Parr, as well as, secondarily, Jane Grey and Catherine Brandon, all find a place in Foxe's tome. Although, with the exception of Jane Grey, who debates Mary Tudor's chaplain, they do not necessarily engage in dialectical confrontation, their

peculiar avoidance of debate nevertheless allows them confrontationally to represent themselves as the foolish and weak that confound the wise. They are the simple readers who signal the truth of the gospel.

The simplicity of their reading is a fiction complicated by their class. Thomas Bentley's *Monument of Matrons* (1582), a devotional work addressed to women readers, is aptly named a monument for its exceptional length, at over 1500 pages, and for providing a crucial witness to the reception of early modern women's writing. Divided into seven "lamps of virginity," the first of which contains prayers and hymns by Biblical women, the second reprints previously published women's writings, several of which are under discussion here: Katherine Parr's *Lamentacion of a Sinner and Prayers Stirring the Mind*, Lady Jane (Grey) Dudley's texts, Queen Elizabeth's translation of Marguerite of Navarre's, "The Glass of the Sinful Soul" and other prayers, and Lady Elizabeth Tyrwhit's *Morning and Evening Praiers* [1574?]. Bentley also prints prayers by Lady Frances Aburgavennie and other anonymous gentlewomen for the first and only time.⁷ The anthology is authorized, Bentley assures his readers, for he works under the guidance of "grave, wise, learned, and godlie Divines, thereunto appointed by authoritie," and that he has the approbation of the bishop of London (B1(v)). Bentley depicts his readers as humble, readers for whom he has added passages from the Bible and carefully organized the book; confusion "is a thing very prejudiciall to so holie an exercise," so he has "digested the same into such a plaine, easie, familiar, and certeine method...to make it profitable to the simple and unlearned reader" (B1(v)). His book is for all women:

a lampe (I saie) for all estates and degrees of women generallie to carrie ever in their hands and hart by the burning light and flaming fire of the reading whereof, their faith, knowledge, zeale, devotion, perseverance in praier, almes deeds, fasting, with the love of God and their brethren, the desire of vertue, and all maner of godlinesse shall be thoroughlie kindled and increased in them. (B2)

Here is the ideal reader, the woman who reads with zeal and devotion, regardless of her class, and hence regardless of her learning. But the complication of the representation of the simple female reader emerges with the representation of the women writers, through whom Bentley occasions his own assumption of the role of author. Describing himself as an unlearned man who might face criticism for attempting to become an author in such a "learned age," and comparing his publication to the gleanings of the Biblical Ruth, Bentley gathers women's writing to provide himself with a mediated authority. He expects their nobility and learnedness—even though they are women—to provide the authority he lacks, although he then uses his position, ironically, to reassert a masculine prerogative to direct female behaviour. The women writers, especially Katherine Parr and Anne Askew, may represent the simple reader through their gender, but they also possess varying forms of cultural authority, as I will show, through being a queen and a martyr.

The simple reader is also a political character in the Reformation period. Henry did not, according to David Scott Kastan, regard the English Bible as a tool of monarchical absolutism, but, in the absence of authoritative mediation, as a

threat to social order (56-59). Kastan uses the title-page woodcut of the Great Bible of 1539 to exemplify the position of the vernacular Bible in English culture. The woodcut places God at the top presenting the Word to the enthroned Henry, who will enact the divine will. Henry passes the *Verbum Dei* to Cranmer and Cromwell, on his left and right, who in turn distribute the word to the clergy. Commoners occupy the bottom of the page, where it is not "Verbum Dei" that issues from their mouths, but "Vivat Rex" and "God Save the Kynge." Those at the bottom do not receive God's word directly from the book but from priests, who transform the word into a sign of royal authority. Therefore, even though Cranmer's preface to the second edition of the Great Bible spoke with pleasure of the availability of the Bible to everyone, "men, wemen, yonge, olde, learned, unlearned, ryche, poore, prestes, laymen, Lordes, Ladyes, offycers, tenauntes, and meane men, virgyns, wyfes[,] wedowes, lawers, merchauntes, artifycers, husbande men, and almaner of persons," Henry made attempts to preclude any socially disruptive effects of individual access to the Scripture, one of the consequences of which was the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion (Cranmer qtd. in Kastan 57). In the period when the works of Anne Askew and Katherine Parr were published, to avow the importance of reading was to engage with a politics in which the intersection of gender, religion, and nationalism was creating conflict at the highest levels of society.

III

Anne Askew's Smile

Neither Parr nor Askew was responsible for the publication of her work. Others first printed their texts in a relatively brief period during the final days of the reign of Henry VIII and the beginning of Edward's reign. Askew's *First Examinacyon* was printed in November 1546 and *The Lattre Examinacyon* in January 1547 by John Bale in Wesel, while Parr's *Lamentacion* was first printed in November 1547 in England (Beilin, "Introduction" xlv; Mueller, "Complications" 25). In addition to the connection predicated upon the almost concurrent printing of their works—although in the interval Henry VIII had died, changing the religious landscape in England—Foxe also construes a relationship between their stories. In *Acts and Monuments*, he places Askew's story almost directly before that of Katherine Parr, with only the tale of the three others who were burned with Askew (John Lacels, John Adams, and Nicholas Belenian) intervening. Foxe's transition between the narratives describes their association through topicality and time: "the course and order as well of the time as the matter of the story doth require now somewhat to treat, likewise, touching the troubles and afflictions of the virtuous and excellent lady queen Katharine Parr" (553). There have been suggestions that Askew was connected to Parr's circle of ladies, although such claims are not fully substantiated. Nevertheless, it is clear that Askew became a focus of legal concern, not just because of her own actions and beliefs, but because Stephen Gardiner, the bishop of Winchester, and Thomas Howard wanted Askew to confess to heresy and to trace support of

that heresy to Parr (King, *English Reformation* 71). Indeed, in Askew's *Lattre Examinacyon*, it was her denial that she had knowledge about Parr's ladies that led to her illegal torture (Askew 127).⁸

Anne Askew represents herself as an unlearned woman, a voice speaking from outside the schools, to a particular purpose in her *Examinations*. Askew, a Lincolnshire gentlewoman, deliberately attracts attention to her faith by putting on a performance of reading for the priests at Lincoln, with whom she disagrees. She goes to church to peruse a Bible: "And as I was in the mynster, readyng upon the Byble, they resorted unto me by ii. and by ii. by v. and by vi. myndyng to have spoken to me, yet went they theyr wayes agayne with out wordes speakyng" (56). In the midst of the controversies of the 1540s over the future of English ecclesiastical practices, Askew's silent performance of commitments that would bring her to martyrdom at Smithfield in 1546 had a local significance that both she and her accusers recognized. Although we do not know exactly when Askew undertook her journey to Lincoln for this purpose, it had to be after 1541 when the Lincoln Cathedral acquired a Bible and was probably later than 1543, when the 1543 Act for the Advancement of True Religion made her reading illegal because she was a woman (Beilin "Introduction" xxvii). As gender, national, and religious politics traverse that Lincoln minster, Askew's public but silent reading becomes a sign of confrontation. She is a woman, and ought not to defy men, and she is making visible the struggle over the site of theological authority; when she will not have priests or bishops interpreting what

she reads as she communes alone with God, she is rejecting not just their authority but, in the eyes of her accusers, that of the king.

Askew's representation of femininity as unlearned, outside of theological controversy, increases the poignancy of Askew's criticism of her opponents. When asked by her examiners why she spoke so few words, Askew responds by saying that "God hath geven me the gyfte of knowledge, but not of utteraunce. And Salomon sayth, that a woman of fewe wordes, is a gyfte from God" (51). She responds to Dr. Standish's desire that she interpret a passage of scripture with: "it was agaynst saynt Paules lernynge, that I beyng a woman, shuld interprete the scriptures, specyallye where so many wyse lerned men were" (54). It is not just that Askew, from the point of view of her examiners, gives the incorrect answers to the questions put to her; with reference to her femininity, she also challenges the legitimacy of the interrogation into which she has been forced. When her examiners ask her whether a mouse might receive God if it ate some of the host that had fallen on the ground, she replies that her interrogator should answer the question himself. Because she is a woman she need not: "And he sayd, it was agaynst the ordre of scoles, that he whych asked the questyon, shuld answere it. I told hym, I was but a woman, and knewe not the course of scholes" (34). She also flouts her accusers by smiling at them: "After that they wylled me to have a prest. And than I smyled" (112). Her smile signifies her explicit refusal to confess to a priest—for as she also explains, she will confess her sins only to God—but also the folly of the question. The result of this exchange is that she is "condemned without a quest," a violation of the rules of

the process, which required that she be examined by a jury (Beilin, "Introduction" xxvi). Askew points to women's exclusion from the scholarly theological debate in which she is engaged, but her examiners refuse to allow the gesture to gender. The implication of Askew's words, however, is that either the interrogators are wrongheaded in their questioning of a foolish woman or the representation of femininity as foolishness is itself erroneous; her gender entraps her accusers.

In the published version of Askew's examinations, John Bale splices his commentary into the text so that he—explicit where Askew is enigmatic—clarifies what Askew meant by her various refusals to answer. Bale reads Askew as a subversive, comedic figure who makes her accusers appear the fools. For him, Askew is a "yonge, tendre, weake, and sycke woman" who suffered more than any man. Her suffering reveals the strength of God, but also the folly of men who were loyal to Henry: "Thynke not therfor but that Christ hath suffered in her, and myghtelye shewed hys power, that in her weakenesse he hath laughed your madde enterpryses to scorne, Psalm 2" (129). Woman, as a site of weakness, reveals God's strength, but as a site of strength, suggests the madness of men who oppose the reformers. Askew, unlike Bale, does not engage in a direct and logical debate, and by that refusal provokes a battle in which femininity becomes a weapon with which to mock the supposed superiority of men and the unreformed theological position that they represent.⁹

Thomas Betteridge, in his article on Askew and Protestant history, makes a promising start in thinking about gender and the writing of history when he

notes that Askew's work is often erroneously placed within a "magisterial Protestant, historical narrative which traditionally has had no place for a woman speaking in public on matters of faith" (265). His point is that later historians, like John Bale, appropriated Askew's work for their own purposes rather than recognizing its own "textual complexity[]and political radicalism" (280). Yet, if Betteridge makes an accurate distinction between the writings of Bale and Askew, he ends up making the politics of Askew's text essentially ineffective in history, or only effective insofar as they are also Bale's politics. This reasserts the historical narrative in which women's voices are silent. But, in spite of Bale's "appropriation," there is evidence to suggest that women's texts did have an historical effect specifically through the femininity of their voices. Women did speak publicly on matters of faith, and it is worth inquiring into the consequences of this gendered discourse for women, their faith, and their country. Betteridge places the radicalism of Askew's text in its refusal of all nonscriptural authorities, but his methodology, which is to place Bale's supplements in relation to sixteenth-century Protestant additions to Lollard texts, does not really allow him to interrogate the effect of gender in the work. He does not consider how Askew's "radicalism" is also the direct result of a gendered identity. Her refusal of all nonscriptural authorities is contingent upon her identity as a woman because it is this position that makes her unlearned and precludes access to more learned authorities. Askew's refusal to answer her examiner's questions is also a part of the gendered ideology of feminine silence, and not just as Betteridge says, Askew's "radically simple understanding of the relationships

between Scripture, believer, and authority" (271). While it might be true, as Betteridge suggests, that Bale needs the answers Askew should have given in order to compose an argument (274), if she had done so, she would have denied her femininity, and Askew's femininity is at least as useful to Bale as her answers might have been. Askew must be a "good woman" to have authority, but given her virtue, the "radical simplicity" of her Protestantism is spoken best in the feminine voice. A "yonge, tendre, weake, and sycke" man might face derision rather than compassion.

Indeed, Askew was a figure of remarkable sympathy, for her story was repeated in Foxe's very popular work, Stow's *Annales* (1592) and Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587). Askew's gender is a crucial part of the appeal of her story, as Robert Parson's counter-martyrology demonstrates. Parson describes her martyrdom as a sexual offence, debunking her status as "good woman," blaming her for corrupting women at court, and calling her a "coy dame, and of very evill fame for wantonnesse," in reference to the fact that she left her husband and children (qtd. in Beilin, "Introduction" xxxviii). "A Ballad of Anne Askew, Intituled I am a Woman poore and Blinde" also appeared in the late sixteenth-century and was printed in 1624. According to Elaine Beilin, it is possible that Askew wrote the ballad, but whether she did or not, it too performs the unlearned feminine voice, beginning: "I am a Woman poore and blinde/and little knowledge remaines in me" (Beilin, "Introduction" xxxix; Askew, "A Ballad" 1,2). The representation of a women as weak, unlearned, and pious does not upset any gender hierarchies, yet Askew's representation of herself according to these

terms becomes distinctly ironic. Behind the mask, Askew is clearly not a figure of weakness or ignorance; she has the physical, intellectual and spiritual strength to confront priests with her reading, to endure torture, to refuse to concede powerful examiners, and to give answers that signal a divine truth valued by many other Protestants.

IV

The Preposterous Comedy of Queen Katherine Parr

Like Anne Askew, Katherine Parr represents herself as an unlettered woman, and attempts to turn protest into comedy. But while Askew's examiners refuse to laugh and her story ends in the tragedy of her execution, Henry VIII concedes the joke to Parr to allow a comic ending. *Prayers Stirring the Mind* (1545), an abridgement of the English translation of the third book of *Imitatio Christi* made by Richard Whitford, a Brigettine monk at Syon Abbey, was Parr's more popular work, having been reprinted fourteen times by 1640 and in Bentley's work (Mueller, "Devotion" 175). Parr published *The Lamentacion of a Sinner* in 1547, shortly after the death of Henry VIII and only a little before her own death in 1548. According to John N. King, at least one manuscript circulated at court, and Catherine Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk, probably provided the copy text for the printed edition ("Patronage" 50).¹⁰ The title page of the first edition notes that it was put in print "at the instant desire of the right gracious lady Caterine duchesse of Suffolke, and the earnest request of the right honourable Lord William Parre, Marquess of Northampton." William Cecil, only

beginning his long political career, also provides a preface to the work in which he affirms his own profit in reading it and expresses his wish that other readers will similarly benefit.¹¹ *Lamentacion of a Sinner* apparently possessed some appeal for these readers. It was subsequently translated into French, reprinted in 1548 and 1563, and along with Parr's *Prayers or Meditations*, included (with the addition of chapter divisions and the excision of the marginal glosses to Scripture) in Thomas Bentley's compendium of women's religious writing, *Monument of Matrones* (1582).

John N. King connects *Lamentacion of a Sinner* to the Protestant reform through these marginal glosses, the work's attacks on the Catholic church, and its representation of Henry VIII as a Moses leading his people out of the captivity of Romish Egypt ("Patronage" 50). But Parr's definitions of knowledge also make her work both more strongly polemical and more interested in gender than has been allowed. *Lamentacion of a Sinner* begins with Parr confessing her sins, one of which is having believed false knowledge. She then goes on to relate how she received forgiveness and to praise God for the true knowledge she has gained. Parr's use of metaphors of ocularity to describe her turn from false knowledge to true serves two purposes, one gendered and one political: the representation of herself as a woman who has gained true understanding from reading and the rendition of a moral judgement about society's definitions of knowledge. In the beginning, she says, she had "a blind guide, called Ignorance, who dimmed mine eyes, that I could never perfectly get any sight of the fair, goodly, straight, and right ways of his doctrine; but continually travelled, uncomfortably, in foul,

wicked, crooked and perverse ways" (33). The transformation of vision is an important part of the work's publication, for the title page repeats the promise that in the work Queen Catherine will be seen "bewailing the ignoraunce of her blind life," and Cecil similarly says that readers will see Catherine "forsaking ignorance, wherein she was blind, to come to knowledge, whereby she may see; removing superstition, wherewith she was smothered, to embrace true religion, wherewith she may revive" (30).

Parr's position on the use of the eye engages with a prominent theological and political dispute over images. One of the signs of false religion, as Parr confesses, is that in her state of blindness she made the wrong use of her literal eyes when she "worshipped visible idols, and images made of men's hands, believing, by them, to have gotten heaven" (34). Henry, however, did not advocate with any enthusiasm the complete rejection of images. According to John Phillips, Henry VIII classified images as either "abused," worshipped, or "unabused," taken only as a sign of remembrance, a distinction also initially accepted by Edward. Cranmer and Gardiner, however, took more extreme positions, with Cranmer believing all images to be tainted with idolatry and Gardiner advocating the instructional use of images in the church as aids to the unlearned. Parr's reference to "visible idols," is somewhat ambiguous, possibly referring only to the "abused" images that had become idols but also conceivably suggesting the idolatry of all visible images. But either way, for her, the Bible—rather than the image—is the source of enlightenment.

Taking a position on the uses of images was a political, as well as theological, issue, as Phillips argues further. Gardiner, who regarded images as a way of impressing the state's authority upon the minds of the illiterate, feared that disrespect of images would result in disrespect of the king's authority. Henry himself would also destroy or retain images according to a political agenda. He dismantled the shrine of Thomas Becket to signify the destruction of the autonomous church Becket represented, while keeping other shrines, taking from them only the money (57-99). Parr, however, reconstructs Henry as a Reformation hero who possessed a perspicuity of vision. She praises God for providing a godly and learned king who had "taken away the veils and mists of errors, and brought us to the knowledge of the truth, by the light of God's word" (49). Henry, like Moses, has delivered his people from the "bondage of Pharoah," the Pope who persecutes true Christians (50).

Less anxious about the unlearned than Gardiner, Parr places the responsibility for social disorder on scholars and clerics, like Gardiner himself, rather than on the reading of the lowly Christian reader. She relates how God mercifully opened her eyes so that she could "behold with the eye of lively faith," an eye with which she sees Christ and her own former blindness, ignorance, and sin. The ignorance of her past is not the result of a failed attempt to learn, but of having acquired the corrupt knowledge recommended by learned men who erroneously believed the "dead, human, historical faith and knowledge, which they have learned in their scholastical books to be the true infused faith and knowledge of Christ" (39, 40). Scholars are a source of social strife, insofar as

the cause of contemporary religious controversies is "the seed of sedition" sown by the devil among those who are not moved by the spirit of God. Carnal pastors, similarly, have misplaced loyalties, loving themselves, the world, and "men's inventions and doctrines before the doctrine of the gospel" (52). Parr reports how she heard from some who were well-versed in Latin that the clergy could persuade others to a belief in "unwritten verities": opinions not founded in Scripture. These people, she reports with some irony, became convinced that clergymen were in the exclusive possession of more epistles than were in the canonical Bible read by everyone else. Not only are such learned men and clergymen wrong and worldly, but they are also a social problem. They do not possess true knowledge about God, speak in a language others cannot understand, neglect the vernacular Bible, and worst of all, deceive the children of light by seeming to be much like them:

For they are clothed with Christ's garment in outer appearance, with a fair show of all godliness and holiness in their words; but they have so shorn, nopped, and turned Christ's garment, and have so disguised themselves that the children of light, beholding them with a spiritual eye, do account and take them for men which have sold their master's garment, and have stolen a piece of every man's garment; yet, by their subtle art, and crafty wits, they have so set these patches and pieces together, that they do make the blind world and carnal men to believe it is Christ's very mantle. (59)

True knowledge is not a motley collection of scraps from various sources that pretends to an undeserved divine authority. If there are, as Parr quotes St. Paul as saying, arts that can be made "checkmate" with Scripture, using human and carnal reasons to interpret Scripture, even philosophy and logic, can result in heretical exegesis. Like the garment of Christ woven of the solid fabric of Scripture, the knowledge of the Christian is unitary, the result of divine illumination rather than extensive education.

Parr addresses criticisms to the learned men who continue to accept unwritten verities, but she speaks on behalf of the unlearned. Comparing theological disputes to a war, Parr also attests to the suffering of controversy's victims, to the confusion of the "poor unlearned person," who is believing "in his own way" instead of in the truth of God's word (51). Confusion will cease only when the precedence of the true doctrine is re-established, but the means to bring this about is pointedly not the restriction of Bible-reading to the elite classes or the retention of images in churches for the edification of the illiterate. For Parr, those who blame dissension on vernacular reading are inhibitors of reformation:

...so it is a lamentable thing to hear, how there are many in the world that do not well digest the reading of Scripture, and do commend and praise ignorance, and say, 'That much knowledge of God's word is the original of all dissension, schisms, and contention; and makes men haughty, proud, and presumptuous, by reading of the same.' This manner of saying is no less than a plain

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For the Spirit of God is the author of his word, and so the Holy Ghost is made the author of evil, which is a most great blasphemy, and, as the scripture said, a sin that shall not be forgiven in this world, neither in the other to come. (57,58)

While educated men have the privilege of learning more than Scripture, they have mistaken their surplus knowledge for truth. The chosen, however, have both a more humble attitude to knowledge and a greater access to truth. They will not be "curious in searching the high mysteries of God, which are not meet for them to know" but can claim access to the highest knowledge of all: understanding of the Word of God received, by the unlearned and learned alike, through the instruction of the Holy Spirit. By rejecting the capacity of tradition to instil theological understanding, and by making divinely illuminated sight the way in which Scripture is truly understood, anyone who is literate, even a woman or a member of the lower classes, can possess knowledge of God.¹² Parr identifies herself with those who, while unlearned, truly see: "we, that are unlettered, remain confused, unless God, of his grace, enlighten our hearts and minds with a heavenly light and knowledge of his will; for we are given, of ourselves, to believe men better than God" (58). The "unlettered" are most likely to be confused and to follow men, but their faith is also exceptionally praiseworthy because God has enlightened their hearts, leaving them at no disadvantage.

For Katherine Parr to place herself in the category of the "unlettered" is somewhat incongruous, however. Katherine's mother was at the court of

Catherine of Aragon, and as one of the children in the royal household, she was educated under the tutorship of Juan Luis Vives after the age of nine (Martienssen 20,21). She had a knowledge of languages, and she also promoted the education of others when she became queen herself. As Queen, she reorganized the royal nursery, making Richard Cox and John Cheke responsible for the education of Prince Edward and appointing William Grindal as tutor to Princess Elizabeth. The school educated the royal children and other children at court and was an important political and humanist centre (McConica 214-218).¹³ Martienssen's conclusion that "by the time Katherine Parr was twelve, she was as well educated as a junior university lecturer would be today" (27) is overly laudatory and based on an uncritical reading of Vives' *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, but relative to her female peers and most of her male subjects, Parr was not ill-educated. Describing herself as "unlettered" is less a statement of the actual level of her learning than a self-representation that draws upon typical gender-appropriate qualities. In her confession, Parr not only associates femininity with ignorance but also with passivity, as she tells women, with regard to their vocation, that they should be obedient wives, silent in church, and soberly dressed (62). Achieving the status of the "good woman" requires conformity to patriarchal strictures, and Parr indicates her place within this category by speaking as an unlearned and obedient woman. But her virtue also provides her with authority in a political matter. Precisely because she is a woman, she cannot have been tainted by corruption of learned Catholicism or the

cause of the controversy among scholars. Her voice is that of divinely-inspired virtue unmediated by the complications of education.

As the pious woman who speaks publicly about reading, Parr also espouses the value of literate piety for the non-elite, in contradistinction to those who saw such reading only as a source of social disorder. By approaching reading differently than those who opposed the reformation, Parr performs a different function than the female figure on the title-page woodcut of the Great Bible. This woman, seated apart from a crowd, has "Vivat Rex" scrolling from her mouth, but while Parr praises Henry, she rejects the priestly intermediaries and would give commoners direct access to the word of God; in her nation, all would say "Verbum Dei." Parr's expressions of feminine confusion, her articulation of obedience as a virtue, and her wish to be directed position her decorously outside theological controversy. But from this position, without invoking anxieties about gender subversion, Parr reproaches clerical leaders, who ought, she says, to know better the way in which God speaks.

In Parr's work, the aims of the Reformation—changing the sites of authority from Catholic theological traditions to the Bible, from images to words, and from Rome to England—intersect with gender distinctions at the value placed on learning. The unlearned woman can become an exemplar of Reformed piety because she is less invested in past theological traditions. Possessing knowledge of God does not, for either the educated or uneducated, necessarily come from learning, but from being guided by the Holy Spirit. Henry did not share this view of society as a community of readers. As Kastan argues:

If the vernacular Bible, in addition to responding to the needs of an insistent English evangelism, was the text that might serve to ground the nation's imperial ambitions and unify its subjects in obedience to the crown, paradoxically it became so largely without the support of either clerical or secular authorities, who from the first feared that an English Bible was as likely to spark dissent as spur devotion. (46)

Although most historians of the Reformation divide society between the elite and the popular, Parr simultaneously occupies both positions. Her femininity allows, even necessitates, that she speak for the unlearned, for the nation with readers at all levels, but her position as queen gives her royal authority, supported by that of Cecil and her brother. Catherine Parr is, after all, an elite woman, a former queen with powerful friends and relatives, and her work, as the dedications indicate, represents their interests, as well as her own. Cecil presents *Lamentacion of a Sinner* as an agent for reform, saying in the preface that he has gained from reading it and expects similar results for others: "William Cecil having taken much profit by the reading of this treatise following, wisheth every christian by the reading thereof, like profit, with increase from God" (29). Within an economy of faith, where the currency is not monetary but spiritual, profit justifies publication, even by a woman. Although Parr represents herself as one "constrained and forced to speak, and write thereof, to mine own confusion and shame, but to the glory and praise of God" (32), the construction of femininity that makes her reluctant to speak, conversely gives her work a higher worth; the

speech of the unlearned devout woman is valuable because it signifies a spiritual purity untainted by the controversy.

Parr's text, published as it was on the cusp of monarchical and religious change, is part of an epistemological conflict in which the methodology for gaining knowledge of God and the representation of the religion of the nation were under dispute. Her voice is intertextual, not only through citation of the Bible, but also through the other publications about her life that simultaneously circulate in culture, especially John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Considering Parr of sufficient consequence to sixteenth-century Protestants to earn a place in the book, Foxe represents her as a reader and even a scholar while relating "what danger she was [in] for the gospel." He describes her as being "very much given to the reading and study of the holy Scriptures" and notes that she retained learned and godly men to instruct her. But, according to Foxe, not only did Parr receive instruction, but she also engaged in theological debates with Henry, in which she would exhort the king to finish the work of reformation that he had begun and to banish the "monstrous idol of Rome"(553,554). For these efforts on behalf of the Protestant cause, Stephen Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, attempts to have her and her ladies (Foxe mentions Tyrwhit, Lane, and Herbert) arrested. Gardiner regards Parr's actions as subversive, both of Henry's patriarchal authority and his royal and intellectual superiority; therefore, Gardiner tells Henry that it was unseemly for a subject to argue with one as learned as he, raising the spectre of treason with the suggestion that one who would go against him in words would do so in deeds. In Foxe's telling, the king is duplicitous,

pretending to go along with Gardiner and his cohorts "belike to prove the bishop's malice, how far it would presume" (557), but Parr diffuses the threat herself when, informed of the plot against her life, she rids herself of the banned books in her possession and submits to Henry.¹⁴ Foxe includes what purports to be the Queen's own words, "The Queen's politic submission to the king," wherein Parr reconstructs her gendered difference from Henry. She refers to her imperfection and weakness as a woman and the superiority of men in the contemplation of heavenly things. The king seems sceptical about the veracity of her claims of weakness and her promise that she will be governed by him, for he is reported to have replied, "you are become a doctor, Kate, to instruct us (as we take it), and not to be instructed or directed by us." But Parr protests that he is mistaken, for it is "preposterous" that a woman would instruct her husband, and she informs him that her arguments were not to change his opinion, but to entertain him in his infirmity and to give her the opportunity to learn from him (559). Patricia Parker notes that "preposterous" connotes

the reversal of *post* for *pre*, back for front, after for before, posterior for prior, end or sequel for beginning. As contemporary definitions make clear, *preposterous* is thus available not only for 'backward' or 'arsieversie' (John Barret) or for 'last done which by rule [should] have ben first' (Richard Huloet), but for any inversion of an order understood as 'proper' and 'natural.' (435,436).

With the use of "preposterous," Parr implicitly demonstrates her awareness that for to her instruct a king would be to reverse the order of nature; but as she

illustrates her awareness of social order, she repudiates not her speech but its significance. The explanation seems to satisfy Henry, for it allows the story to end, like a Shakespearean comedy, with kisses, endearments, and the disgrace of the plotter—and with Henry as a supporter of reform (553-561).

Indeed, Foxe makes Parr's submission seem like a play, in which the theatre is the court and Parr is an actor performing her gender for the good of the Protestant cause; in a world where "the last shall be first," the preposterous reversal figures the Christian transformation of society. Parr's, however, is also a "politic submission" rather than a natural duty. Because she is a woman, Parr can conceivably be without serious intent in intellectual debate, and so she both saves her life and successfully thwarts a conservative attempt to purge reformers from court. But in describing the submission as "politic," Foxe allows Parr to retain her authority as Queen, learned patron, and supporter of humanist and Protestant learning at court, for these are useful to him, as well. Foxe refers to a cultural construction of Parr's gender (which she reiterates in her own work) that makes her theological disputes comical rather than politically dangerous. Because she is a woman and his wife, Henry can ignore the challenge to his authority if he wishes to go along with the jest. In Foxe's account, Parr's performance of the unlearned woman is but a political masquerade with a holy purpose. Parr's representation of the femininity of her voice, her self-deprecatory comments, serve a similar function. Parr's *Lamentacion* and Foxe's report about her do not hold the same relationship to Parr as author, but they do circulate in culture together and both texts claim to present Parr's voice. There

are provocative similarities between these two voices in the particular utility of being a woman, and thereby culturally excluded from learned debates. In *Lamentacion of a Sinner*, Parr engages in debate, not in a point by point disputation, but by criticising the “blind” and learned men who confuse her, reproaching them for a failure to lead. Her reference to herself as unlearned also precludes reciprocal criticisms from those she reproves, for the serious argumentative response would be inappropriate. Furthermore, through the unlearnedness that is a consequence of her femininity, Parr becomes a very good advocate for the particular form of religion she espouses to a popular audience; she has authority because she was a queen, but she can speak of the value of Bible-reading inspired by the spirit of God because she is a woman. Representing herself as an unlearned reader gives divine authority to her experience of conversion and coming to true knowledge; her understanding must be the result of God’s illuminating light, for she, supposedly, has no other education. For Parr, femininity functions, in part, as a mask she can wear, not just to her detriment, but also to her own advantage and to that of her co-religionists.

Because Askew and Parr, according to Foxe, are women who suffered for their faith, those who published their works are engaging in polemic, not by direct argument, but by the implied but necessary conclusion that the affliction of a pious woman indicates the wickedness of her accusers. Representations of the life of Catherine Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk, a prominent patron of reform works, do the same. Brandon was one of the female exiles during the Marian

period, and the tale of her flight was made into a ballad and a play that are printed repeatedly in the seventeenth century.¹⁵ The 1624 printing of the ballad "The most rare and excellent history of the Dutchesse of Suffolkes Calamity," for example, relates how the Duchess marries her servant on the authority of the Word of God, and then, abandoning her land and goods, flees persecution.¹⁶ Her escape to the continent with her husband, nurse, and child is made possible because their poor clothing beguiles the sight of their pursuers. In Germany, they are surprised by thieves and, without money, like Mary and Joseph, can find no room at an inn. They take refuge in a church porch, for which they are arrested, but the Duchess' understanding of Latin proves their true identities, and they receive safe refuge in Poland. Like Brandon, whose Latin allows her to reveal the regal elite beneath indigent clothing, the women writers I am discussing possess the authority of status and learning—even Anne Askew was a gentlewoman—but they publicly represent themselves as poor and weak through performing their gender, the connection between femininity and being unlearned. The disguise, while not thrown off by speaking Latin, is only partial because their status and connections, the source of their authority, are also well-known. While undercover as weak and pious women, they nevertheless can ascribe value to reading and to the vernacular Scripture. The writings of these elite women were popular, and printed not at their own behest but because others thought them useful to their cause. In this period of religious conflict, localised around the intense period of reform of the Edwardian period, the history of gender intersects with the gendering of Reformation history at the

unlearned but devout reader. In the published texts of Askew and Parr, femininity is not simply a limitation that has to be overcome. Not only were their co-religionists anxious to see the works into print, but the public also accepted their writings, which were republished repeatedly and in various forms. Of some cultural importance, the works of these two women participate in a discursive conflict over learning, reading, and piety, effectively expressing the superior value of a mode of reading that is unmediated by learning, but directed by God.

This connection between gender and narratives of reformation history has not been adequately considered. In John N. King's discussion of Parr's text, for example, he notes only that it has a "moderately Protestant tenor," while James McConica, who also sees Parr as a moderate Protestant, concludes: "About her own views we have no evidence except the works she wrote and patronized and those we shall see immediately were purely Erasmian in form" (227). Fitting Parr's work into existing narratives of Reformation history, neither King nor McConica considers the effect of gender in its publication (although Parr's gender might be a factor in McConica's efforts to place her work under the authority of a well-known father and his somewhat baffling conclusion that Parr's views are not at all represented by what she wrote). Janel Mueller, however, is interested in gender and sees the theology of *Lamentacion of a Sinner* as "objectionably Lutheran" and its publication date as a purely gendered phenomenon; it was withheld "from the notice of a violent husband who was sure to disapprove" and published "at the safe interval of nine months after Henry VIII's death" ("Complications" 26,27). In comparison to Askew, Parr is indeed

the moderate. Although she refers to the chosen predestined by God, she does not mention the most contentious doctrine, the doctrine of the sacraments that is the crux of Askew's examinations. Like Mueller, I am interested in the effect of Parr's gender on the publication of her work, but where Mueller sees the fact of publication as a personal triumph of the oppressed woman, I am proposing that gender coincides with a gendering of the Reformation itself.

Elaine Beilin notes something like this intersection of the history of gender with the gendering of history in Askew's *Examinations*, when she argues that "her dialogues are consistently written to reveal issues of power politics between the faiths and between the sexes" ("Anne Askew's Dialogue" 320,321). As Foxe's account of Parr's submission to the king also indicates, the battle over faith is indeed a battle between the sexes. While Parr concedes a point on gender by turning her religious arguments into merry wifely entertainment, she ultimately wins the war for the future of her faith. The writings of Parr and Askew are valuable to men who share their religious vision, in criticism of other men who do not. But writing narratives of confession and examination also, importantly, allows Parr and Askew to describe themselves as subjects capable of intellectual progress and rigorous thought. While not directly controversial on gender issues, the works of Askew and Parr do not accord with the image of the static and obedient female mind that emerges from the humanist texts that I discussed in my previous chapter. They are not, in the end, private women, for their thoughts need to be public to contribute to the polemic of the moment and to represent the value of the Word over that of tradition.

This gendering of history, the figuring of social forces as feminine, may have helped make the publication of works by women, not only possible, but also religiously and politically desirable. The woman reader emblematically represents the dispersal of the Bible to all orders of society and the waning of the exclusivity of church authority; if a woman can read, almost anyone can. Jane Grey, to offer a further illustration, is iconographically depicted as a Protestant reader attached to the Book, specifically the Greek New Testament that she gave her sister. Grey becomes an author because four texts are repeatedly printed attached to her name: an address by Lady Jane—"a right virtuous Woman"—to the eponymous learned man; a catechetical dialogue between Jane and Feckenham, chaplain to Mary; an exhortation that Jane wrote in her Greek New Testament and sent to her sister the night before she died; and her words upon the scaffold. These four texts are collected first in *An Epistle of the Lady Jane to a Learned man of late falne from the truth of Gods word* and published in 1554, during the reign of Mary—which probably explains why the book lacks a regular title page identifying the printer or publisher. As with Katherine Parr and Anne Askew, Jane Grey's story and her text are repeated in various permutations, including that of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, Bentley's *Monument of Matrones*, and a broadside ballad.¹⁷ Like the works of Askew and Grey, too, in explicating the falsity of the learning of men, Grey's epistle to Feckenham polemically pronounces that he has knowledge (but not grace) because he has neglected the law of the Lord, "to folow the vaine tradicions of men" (Grey Aiii). While Feckenham may have much with his a "great gift of

utterance,” he is absolutely lacking in what is truly valuable because he does not see: he does not believe in justification by faith, that there are only two sacraments—of which the bread is not the “very body and bloude” but a reminder of Christ’s death—or that faith can only be grounded on God’s word and not on the church. As Jane Grey tells him, he must become a better reader and have God “open the eyes of your hart to this truth” (Grey Bv(v)). In the ballad’s account of her story, the Bible represents the truth of her faith, a reality her executioners fail to see:

She gave the Lieutenant her booke,
 which was covered all with golde,
 Praied hym therein to looke,
 for his sake that Judas [solde?] (Dudley)

A reader with a valuable book, Jane Grey and her Bible emblemize the faith she avows.

Being the representative of the foolish and weak things of the world that will confound the wise is undoubtedly less complicated for a woman, for whom the construction of gendered identity is not tied to being learned and powerful. While the constitution of femininity through the exclusion from educated knowledge allows women to advocate reform and to accrue value to themselves by being thought of as good, it does little to alter the tenuous hold that women had on claims to the category of learned knowledge. Yet, the utility of this pious feminine voice does have some positive consequences for the female author. These texts repeat traditional notions of femininity, as the authors construct their

voices according to ideas of weakness, meekness, and simplicity. In this regard, they do not subvert gender hierarchies. But as these qualities also define a particular vision of reformed religious faith, the socially acceptable text becomes powerful in ways that are not contained in the original representation of the female writer. Even when speaking in the traditional voice of the unlearned women, and even when not explicitly advocating alternative interpretations of Scripture on the matter of gender, these women writers are not precisely repeating the version of femininity they are claiming to represent. The woman author becomes an example to all, a leader rather than one of the led. When Parr or Askew (or Grey) challenge the men who occupy a different religious position, they also establish a space of gender conflict in which the tradition of women's silence and obedience as much as the tradition of Catholicism is hazarded.

V

Anne Wheathill's "Imagined Community"

Little is known about Anne Wheathill, except that she is the author of *Handfull of Holesome (though homelie) Hearbs* (1584) and that, as she identifies herself in her preface to her female readers, she was a gentlewoman and unmarried at the time of writing. The appellation "gentlewoman," however, may be as much a rhetorical performance as an indication of Wheathill's real status, for as Colin B. Atkinson and Jo B. Atkinson note, the title may indicate nothing more than the printer's desire to reassure his audience that the writer was

educated.¹⁸ Patrick Cullen's introduction to a facsimile reprint of the work also notes the absence of dedications to well-placed contemporaries. The only affiliation Wheathill represents herself as having, he says, is with the community of the faithful, "which may say as much about who she was as anything else" (x). Atkinson and Atkinson, from their reading of the work's theology, also classify her as a predestinarian and member of the Church of England, associations that are buttressed by the identity of her printer, Henry Denham. Having acquired in the 1570s the privilege of printing the Psalter and all books of private prayers in English and Latin, Denham was an important printer of sixteenth-century religious books, including Bentley's *Monument of Matrons* (Atkinson and Atkinson 660-663). Cullen observes, as well, that Denham's printing is noted for its clarity and beauty, and indeed, with patterned borders on each page, Wheathill's *Handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs* is an attractive little book.¹⁹ The work draws together a number of pertinent issues related to faith and learning: the gendering of the acquisition of knowledge through the regulation of female eyes and the gathering of a Protestant community around reading. Bringing together the history of gender, with her representation of herself as one who knows, and the gendering of history, with the depiction of a congregation of believers communing about the word, Wheathill's work suggests something of the involvement of non-elite women in the English Reformation.

Like the other women writers I have been discussing in this chapter, Wheathill distinguishes between learning and religion and uses the consequent intersection between femininity and ignorance of scholarship to avow a version of

faith in which unlearned reading is more blessed than scholarly theological study. In her "Epistle Dedicatorie," Wheathill represents her book as a collection of "grose hearbs; which I have presumed to gather out of the garden of Gods most holie word" (aij(v)). Countering the scorn of the learned, whom she expects may judge her "grose and unwise; in presuming, without the counsell or helpe of anie, to take such an enterprise, in hand," she asserts:

nevertheles, as GOD dooth know, I have doone it with a good zeale, according to the weakenes of my knowledge and capacitie. And although they be not so pleasant in taste, as they can find out, to whom God hath given the spirit of learning: yet doo I trust, this small handfull of grose hearbs, holesome in operations and workeing, shall be no lesse acceptable before the maiestie of almightie God than the fragrant floures of others, gathered with more understanding. (aij(v), Aiiij)

By claiming to write from zeal rather than skill, from devotion rather than education, Wheathill gives value to her work; it is a work that God should find acceptable, and consequently, ought to be permitted by men. The learned, Wheathill continues, have not sought "with a more willing hart and fervent mind; nor more to the advancement of Gods glorie" (aiij). With her use of the herb trope to figure her work, along with this representation of herself as unlearned, Wheathill feminises her work. The kitchen garden, which produces herbs, possesses as much worth as the more decorative flower garden; her work is

wholesome and useful, and surely as acceptable as the (merely) fragrant flowers of the learned.

There is evidence, however, that Wheathill's reference to a lack of learning, as we have seen throughout this chapter, is less than an absolute fact. Patrick Cullen has high praise for the skill of her work: "It is the work of someone who has thoroughly immersed herself in, and mastered, the cadence of the best English religious prose of her age—of the biblical translators and of the Book of Common Prayer." He adds, that if Wheathill is not learned in the sense that Hooker and Becon are, her work displays a knowledge of allegorical and typological exegesis (xi). Atkinson and Atkinson also argue that Wheathill uses the hexameral tradition to structure her work, which they describe as a "complex intellectual tradition usually associated only with the most subtle and skilled male writers" (671,672). While such assessments could be a product of the desires of contemporary critics to validate early modern women's writing through "learnedness," thus demonstrating the continued authority of this discourse, for a woman to possess education while disavowing it through a female voice is not unique to Wheathill. As Atkinson and Atkinson also point out, Wheathill's references to the weakness of her knowledge could well be but a convention of female modesty.

With the convention in which feminine modesty is allied to faith and distanced from learning, women writers ality of the association of religion with modesty does not necessarily mean that women who made such claims were unlearned. Elizabeth Joceline's husband, Towrell Joceline, presents *The*

Mothers Legacie, to her unborne childe (1624) for publication by noting the absence of learning from her writing: “these lines scarcely showing one sparke of the elementary fire of her secular learning: this her Candle being rather lighted from the lampe of the Sanctuary” (A6v). But he then goes on to praise Elizabeth for hiding her study of morality, history, foreign languages, and poetry: “Of all which knowledge shee was very sparing in her discourses, as possessing it rather to hide, than boast of” (A7v).²⁰ The eulogy functions like a transparent veil, at once concealing and revealing, teasingly attaching the authority of learnedness to the text while presenting its author as modest and chaste. The publication of piety guarantees female chastity, whereas the publication of learning threatens it, but learning itself, when veiled, helps signal the authority of the author: so, too, with Anne Wheathill, the appellation gentlewoman, her prose style, and the hexameral tradition. But as I have shown, when Parr and Askew portray themselves as unlearned women, they also put the convention to work avowing a faith that is less entrenched in past traditions and gives greater importance to the literate piety of the less privileged. For Wheathill, as well, the affirmation of the weakness of her knowledge and the strength of her zeal—conventional enough feminine declamations—become an expression of what is important in faith itself.

But even as Wheathill distances herself from learning, she depicts herself as one who knows. Similar to Katherine Parr, Anne Wheathill uses metaphors of blindness and sight to relate the development of her understanding of God and

to criticise more worldly definitions of knowledge. Through asking for illumination, she censures the knowledge of the world:

Lighten the eie of my hart and understanding, with the light of thy grace and comfort, thereby expelling the darknes of ignorance.

Lighten also one other eie of my soule, which is the eie of affection.

The sight of this eie is so dimme, that it hath no perfect and true judgement; yea it is so blinded with the vanities of this world, that one thing in appearance seemeth to be twentie. (4,5)

With one eye, Wheathill expels the darkness of ignorance and with the other, banishes the confusion of phantasmagorical vanities that make one thing appear as twenty, as if in a hall of mirrors. As in I Corinthians 13: 12 "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known," Wheathill sets a limited worldly vision against a truer divinely-assisted counterpart.

Expressing knowledge through metaphors of vision is fraught with gender conflict because of the gendering of metaphysical vision and the regulation of physical sight. Augustine, for example, demarcates the eyes of the body from the eyes of the soul with his narrative of a journey towards divine understanding through the contemplation of beauty. As in Plato's allegory of the cave, Augustine gradually progresses, passing from bodies to the soul so that he gains knowledge of perception, then reasoning, and judgement; because he, in turn, possesses a mind, like in kind to the immutable and eternal truth above that is drawn to itself, he attains glimpses of infinity (*Republic* 227-235; *Confessions*

7.17.23). Genevieve Lloyd, however, has argued that in Plato (as in the later attempts to harmonize Greek philosophy with the Christian theology of Philo, Augustine, and Aquinas) form, or the highest good, was associated with maleness and matter with femaleness. Although Augustine, for one, says that the sexes are spiritually equal and rejects the inferior reason of women, femininity remains the symbol of the inferior corporeality that must be ruled by the symbolically masculine soul. Because of her physical difference, woman is that which must be overcome. Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium* provides a contemporary illustration when he describes a soul divided, in which one light, the natural, "descends into body" and seeks procreation, while another, the divine, seeks God. The natural light in the body can be "an abyss" of forgetfulness and sensuality, but with maturity and the purging of the senses through learning, it can also learn to see the natural order of things and, in turn, come to desire God. The soul who seeks, while metaphorically feminine, is that of a man; women enter the narrative only as the objects of the inferior corporeal desire that seeks generation (207). As Lloyd summarizes: "The 'male bias', if we can call it that, of past philosophical thought about Reason goes deeper than that. It is not a question simply of the applicability to women of neutrally specified ideals of rationality, but rather of the genderization of the ideals themselves. An exclusion or transcending of the feminine is built into past ideals of Reason as the sovereign human character trait" (37). Wheathill does not critique this tradition of thought in the way that Lloyd or Luce Irigaray do, but she also does not gender matter and form, material and ideal through the feminine and

masculine. When she writes of the journey of the soul, the pious eyes are attached to a female body. Not matter to be overcome, her female flesh celebrates her faith. She describes herself as being "rapt with the desire therof [of God's majesty], that my hart and my flesh rejoiceth in nothing but in thee alone" (31). Beholding God, though now "but darkelie as in a glasse," ends in seeing God face to face, God as he is. This vision offers both a fulfilment of desire in which she is replenished with an abundance of all things, made to be like God, and a promise of the perpetual pleasure of longing: "of which sight they shall never be satisfied; such joie and love shall they conceive of the sight of thy glorious majestie" (31,32). Wheathill's work represents a woman not as the object of corporeal desire, but as a desiring subject who reads to attain knowledge of God. The ubiquitous language of religious vision, a lexicon that is both intellectual, as Katherine Parr also demonstrates, and erotic, provides Wheathill with the terms to describe herself as knowing and desiring.

For a woman to claim to possess knowledge that she has gained through her eyes is no insignificant accomplishment. In devotional books for women, as in the education and conduct books I discussed in my first chapter, women's physical sight was subject to control. In Joseph Hall's meditations, femininity embodies the carnal gaze that is diametrically opposed to his spiritual way of looking at God. Hall compares transcendent vision, "looking through a glass darkly" to see the face of God, to a vain woman's sight: "the proudest dame shall not more ply her glass to look upon that face of hers which she thinks beautiful than I shall gaze upon the clearest glass of my thoughts to see that face of God

which I know to be infinitely fair and glorious" (194). The woman's sight is proud and corporeal, contrasting to his own intellectual and spiritual gaze; the first is negative, the second the ideal (although it is surely as narcissistic for Hall to claim to see God in his mind!). More materially, in the fifth book of Bentley's *Monument*, prayers of conduct (which offer such requests as "I beseech thee give me grace to behave myself") give explicit directives for the eye: "Take from me a wanton eie, and let me not gaze upon the beautie or comely personage of ani man" (5:2). Very like Richard Braithwait's *The English Gentlewoman, A Rule of Good Life*, St. Bernard's guide for anchoresses (translated into English in 1633 and printed at Douai for English Catholic women living on the continent) warns women against being ensnared by their eyes and tells them to "make a covenant with your eies, least you see anything unawares, which may turne to your prejudice. Have a care likewise that death enter not into your soul by the windowes of your eies" (182).²¹ While Ficino could regard looking at the beauty of women as the medium by which men could be led to God, for a woman to look is a lure towards death and corruption.

While Wheathill is not transgressing these conventions of female vision by gazing at men, she does look at God, a kind of vision that both articulates her capacity to know God and allows her to evade masculine authority. Her gaze is disembodied, in so far as it is Wheathill's metaphysical eyes that are engaged in seeing God in a glass, but the gaze does have material consequences. If God watches her, and she watches God, no one else matters: "I respect no man, but set thee alwaies before me, as the chiefe helper and judge of my doings" (11).

Men will not be allowed to evaluate her doings, and she will not defer to them in their interpretations of Scripture. Even as she acknowledges that ministers “speake for thee thy secreats,” she adds that “thou unlockest the understanding of the things pronounced” (81). The speech of ministers is a “rehearsal” that is nothing without the light that God gives to the mind of the hearer. As one whose eyes God has opened, Wheathill claims the authority to create knowledge—thereby displacing authority from preacher to reader—and to belong to the community of those written in the book of life (66).

This authority is otherworldly, but it also gives her a way in which to express an immediate earthly struggle. Like Jacob, whose name she says means “the feare of beholder of God,” she will be a “strong wrestler against mine enimies in this world, that I may after this life behold thy incomprehenisible deitie, to the full contentation both of my soule and bodie” (33v, 34). John Donne, on the other hand, approaches the story of Jacob and the angel as an illustration of the necessity of seeking God in church under the direction of a minister and of the dangers of seeking God in solitude. He asks, rhetorically: “That solitarines, & dereliction, and abandoning of others, disposes us best for God, who accompanies us most alone? May I not remember, & apply to; that though God came not to Jacob, till he found him alone, yet when he found him alone, hee wrestled with him, and lamed him?” (*Devotions* 27). When God wrestles with the solitary supplicant, the Christian’s conscience is put “out of joynt,” and he cannot look on God as he would in the “consolation of his temporall or spiritual servants, and ordinances” (28). While Wheathill offers prayers for the protection

of the church, she is not wary of personal and private reflection. Through the immediacy of the connection between God and herself, her soul and the souls of other women have value. Likened to the widow's mite, the body and soul offered to the service of God are more esteemed than the gifts of rich men (56v,57). Wheathill asserts an alternative system of value, so that she is one who sees, knows, desires, and—obedient to God—need accede nothing to men.

The ability to see is contiguous to the legitimacy of being seen; both the female gaze and the gaze at the female are sexualised, as I demonstrated in my first chapter. Although Wheathill, like Katherine Parr, turns to Scripture to justify the publication of her work, she does not have the same class position or the powerful witness to her work's edifying potential that Parr has in William Cecil and her brother. Instead, Wheathill cites a Biblical precedent for the public female voice, the woman who calls out to Christ in the streets (Matt 15:22-28); as the woman of Canaan appealed to Christ for assistance for her daughter and was answered, although his (patriarchal) disciples would have sent her away, Wheathill, too, will cry out and Christ will attend to her and satisfy her desires (19). This proven divine willingness to listen to women, to be hailed in the street, was also cited in other prayer books and, in so far as it resists cultural dictums to silence, privatised domesticity, and controlled religious and intellectual desire, it might go some distance in authorising female speech.²² The right to speak to Christ, however, does not necessarily justify speaking of him before men. Paul, after all, had required that women not speak in Church but learn from their husbands at home (1 Cor. 14:35). In the face of this restriction, Wheathill draws

upon the possibilities of edifying profit for fellow believers, as Cecil does for Parr.

She writes of the necessity of bold speech and prays for increased faith:

But through the helpe of thy grace, Lord, I will speake nothing, but that I firmelie do beleewe, and that which I do beleewe; I will by no meanes hide, but speake boldlie: for I know, that who so dooth confesse thee before men, him wilt thou confesse before thy father which is in heaven. Faith causeth me to love thee for thine own sake, above all creatures. Love causeth me to confesse thee before all the world, and for thy sake to worke towards my neighbour, as thou haste comand me. (63)

The need to confess Christ before men, indeed before the whole world, is an incontrovertible argument for the necessity of public speech. Not only is it not unchaste to speak, it is virtually required of God, since she must speak of her faith before men or Christ will not speak of her in heaven (Matt 10:32,33). To hide, like the turtle, would be ungrateful, and if she were to remain at home, she would not be telling her neighbours of God, as she ought to be. She asks, furthermore, that God publicly reveal his mercy to her, "even in the sight of the children of men, that they may know and see how gracious and mercifull thou art" (89v). Being visible is necessary for the creation of the godly community because its members recognise each other through the public signs of God's grace. God, who himself seems like a master of surveillance, able to see all things past, present, and future, will also cause "us," the elect, to be known to others. According to Wheathill's reasoning, authoritatively found in Scripture,

neither she nor her writing—because of the faith that it represents—ought to be hidden from the world.

Being visible is essential to the book's expressed purpose, the gathering of readers around her book. In the "epistle dedicatory," she imagines a fellowship of like-minded believers. Not only do these "brethren and sisters in the Lord" legitimise her book as labour when Wheathill exacts approval from them for having avoided idleness by writing, but the readers also form a community when she suggests that from reading her book, both strangers and acquaintances will become friends as they "taste these grose hearbs with me." Her brothers and sisters, drawn together by the food she has provided, are the elect chosen by Christ, "who moisteneth all his elect with his most pretious blood" and gives "us all a sweete taste in him" (aiij(v)). For this fellowship, united sacramentally by reading, eating, and blood, Wheathill desires an increase in faith, and she prays that through inspiration from above, they all may meet together in the kingdom of God. Readers congregate around the wholesome, nutritive values that the woman's writing represents; submission to the judgement of the learned is unnecessary, for such knowledge, while valuable, may be more spectacular than useful and more "fragrant" than "wholesome." Zeal, devotion, and the simple labour of reading the Bible equal learning in value.

As a religious writer, Wheathill is indicating that she is chaste and that she has not been idle. The emphasis on reading itself may reiterate this connection, for as Dorothy Leigh comments, the chaste wife is "alwayes either reading, meditating, or practising some good thing which shee hath learned in Scripture"

(30,31). But the notion of religious zeal, through which Wheathill authorizes her work because of her exclusion from more culturally powerful forms of knowledge, alters the site of authority in religion from learning and tradition to the Word read by the divinely inspired reader. Her religious position and her gender are intertwined. Her commitment to tell her neighbours, her willingness to have Christ publicly reveal her to be one of the elect, and her publication of her work attest to an evangelical impulse to disseminate her particular version of religious faith. The community of godly readers, within which Wheathill places her text, both justifies the publication of her writing and envisions the church in a particular way. It is not enough to gather at church under the auspices of an institution when the critical religious experience is the understanding of divine favour exhibited by its members. This impulse toward the personal, however, also enables the disruption of certain aspects of the social construction of femininity. Wheathill is not private, passive, or silent, and promising obedience to God can preclude her from necessary obedience to men.

The character of the chaste woman reader is a member of the cast in the production of England as a Protestant community of believers and readers. If the nation is an "imagined community," as Benedict Anderson now famously defined it, Wheathill is imagining a community by uniting readers who do not know each other at the printed book and delimiting the boundaries of the community by the concept of election (6,7). Although Anderson argues that nationalism did not emerge until the end of the eighteenth-century when hierarchically-organized government declined, it does seem that the image of England as a community of

readers has a nationalist impetus. At the emergence of a Protestant nation, the female reader becomes one of the signs of difference from the Catholicism of France and Spain and a constituent of the social order of the imagined nation. The title page of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* illustrates such a definition. At the bottom of the page, to the left of God on the side of the damned, there are Catholics gathered around a priest and praying with their rosaries, while on the right, the side of the martyrs and angels, there are groups of people who are either assembled around a book or kneeling in prayer to God. Two seated women occupy the centre front of this frame, one with a book in her lap while another, with a child, looks on. Thomas Bentley, similarly, places the female readers and writers of his *Monument of Matrones* within an imagined national church. Dedicating the book to Queen Elizabeth, he praises the writing of the queens and gentlewomen that he prints because their industry—the "time...wits...substance ...and... bodies" they have spent in study—has served "the common benefit of their cuntry" (B1). The common benefit is the increase in piety of all women, even the uneducated. With what Helgerson called the "apocalyptic" vision of nation, and competing with some of Elizabeth's anxieties about the extent of unlearned reading, Foxe, Bentley, and Wheathill represent reading as crucial, not only for the elite members of a society but also for its most humble.

At the same time, it is important to remember that Bentley's image of readers from "all estates and degrees of women generallie" (B2) and Wheathill's fellowship of readers is an ideal. English society was certainly not so uniformly

literate that all citizens and Christians could participate. Tying the Reformation to nationalism through the coalition between Protestantism and print-capitalism, Benedict Anderson argues that this convergence created a large new reading public, "not least among merchants and women, who typically knew little or no Latin—and simultaneously mobilized them for politico-religious purposes" (40). Anne Askew, Katherine Parr, and Anne Wheathill were not passive recipients of the social transformation but actively advocated that the lower classes and women reading Scripture, insisting that the Protestant nation figure itself, in part, through their version of piety. Legitimizing their voices, this intersection between gender and religion, in which vernacular, literate piety becomes a political value, does offer some benefit to actual women. Faith provides them with a language in which to make claims to knowledge, to represent their subjectivity, and to justify speaking publicly. Wheathill's work, unlike that of Parr and Askew, has not been remembered, but the logic that made the works of more famous women publishable—the importance of edification and the value of the feminine voice when it is constructed to represent piety and reading rather than learning—also enables Wheathill's efforts to publish her own prayers. While the religious writings of the works that I have considered in this chapter rarely, if at all, directly consider questions of gender, the conjunction of the female voice, useful in the gendered politics of the Reformation, with writings by women involves women's voices in politics. Obliquely amplified through politics, women can question the capacities of female authors to possess knowledge of the divine and to write publicly.

Endnotes

¹ That only eighteen of the 163 books specifically addressed to women can actually be classified as devotional is probably explained by the fact that the most important religious book was the Bible, and this, needless to say, was not addressed particularly to an audience of women.

² It is also important to note that the Stubbes work that Jones points to is not actually authored by Katherine. It is published under the name of Phillip Stubbes, and while it is a work that is conveying her supposed dying words, the mediating function of Phillip in relating his wife's biography ought not to be removed.

³ For example, in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688*, the editors have included a number of articles on writers such as Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, and Marvell in which the "politics" of the title is taken to include that which has to do with national identity, colonialism, and ecclesiastical and governmental structure. In the article by Helen Wilcox, on women readers of Herbert's *Temple*, politics is that of gender and women reading a male-authored text. In another volume of essays taking an historicist approach to religion, *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, edited by Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger, Michael Schoenfeldt's essay on Aemelia Lanyer differs from the rest as the only essay in the volume on a woman writer, again taking gender to be the site of historicist analysis. The essays by Schoenfeldt and Wilcox, and the volumes of essays in which they are published, are both useful and important, but I do want to suggest that there may be a politics of another sort to questions of gender and religion that has not yet been explored.

⁴ But to be clear: I am not saying that there is never anything "feminist" in women talking about children. Because there is now a public world of work that was established according to social expectations of men, for women to speak about those very traditional concerns, especially childcare, is a radical kind of speech.

To demand that employers, companies, and institutions be more sympathetic to family responsibilities of workers requires a transformation of the public/private male/female division.

⁵ Caroline Field Levander, considering the representation of and responses to the sound of women's voices, makes a somewhat similar argument about the function of female voices in political discourse in nineteenth-century America. She argues that because we have assumed women's voices were private, we have underestimated their public role. Women's voices, in her view, did the political work of helping the American nation understand itself as the middle class emerged.

⁶ The Six Articles had been ratified by Henry in 1539. They maintained the Catholic doctrines of a belief in the "real presence" of Christ in the eucharist, "lay communion by bread only; the celibacy of priesthood, and the irrevocability of a vow of chastity; the legitimacy of private masses not celebrated in a consecrated place; and the necessity of auricular confession" (McQuade 3,4).

⁷ The third "lampe" offers prayers of and for Queen Elizabeth, and the fourth, prayers for every occasion of the day and year. With the final three books, Bentley moves towards conduct literature, printing in the fifth book what might be called prayers of conduct, where, for example, a maid prays that she will be chaste and a young woman that she will be a sober and obedient wife. In the sixth lamp, Bentley lays out the duties of women in various vocations, while in the seventh he alphabetically lists exemplary women of Scripture.

⁸ The second examination was not a court proceeding like the first, but a recounting of having been called before Privy Council. Because the Privy Council dealt with the safety of the realm, it was not bound by law in its treatment of prisoners (McQuade 8,9).

⁹ Patricia Crawford cites the similar example of Alice Driver, a Marian martyr, who ascribes a greater value to her unlearned piety than to the learning of her accusers. Driver mocked her antagonists by saying: "You are not able to resist

the Spirit of God in me, a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up in the University, as you have been, but I have driven the plough before my father many a time (I thank God)" (qtd. in Crawford, *Women and Religion* 34).

¹⁰ In *English Reformation Literature*, King also notes that Brandon was "the great Protestant patroness." Along with Mary Fitzroy, Duchess of Richmond, Brandon was part of a circle of ladies around Catherine Parr who sympathised with Protestants more radical than Henry VIII. Thomas Wilson served as tutor to her sons, Hugh Latimer was chaplain at her estate, and she likely sponsored the printing of the Apocrypha, the New Testament, and works by Latimer, Tyndale, and others in 1548 and 1549 (105). William Parr was Katherine's brother, the Earl of Essex, and a member of the Privy Council ("William Parr" *DNB*).

¹¹ Cecil had a long career serving English monarchs, lasting until near the end of Elizabeth's reign. At this time, he was husband to Mildred Cecil (one of the four celebrated learned daughters of Anthony Cooke, preceptor to Edward VI), and after September 1548, secretary to the Lord Protector, Edward Seymour ("Cecil" in *DNB*).

¹² The contrast between the blindness of the knowledge of men and the sight that comes from knowledge of God is common enough. Thomas Bentley includes a prayer by Lady Frances Aburgavennie in which she asks that God "light thou the dull sighted eies of my mind" so that she will understand his teachings and do his commands (2:145). Sight is not only being able to see but also having the eyes aimed in the proper direction. The eyes should "have their chiefest contemplation and delight in perusing and reading thy sacred Gospel," but instead, dimmed by the "dark mists of Sathan, ...they are occupied in the beholding of mundane and transitorie pleasures" (2:181). A work translated from French by a Mistress Dorcas Martin, "An Instruction for all Christians," also in Bentley's *Monument*, includes a scholar's prayer in which the scholar asks that God will "illuminate my understanding, (which it self is blind) that it may

comprehend the learning which shall be taught me" (2:227). Nicholas Breton's *Auscipante Jehova* (1597), addressed to Mary (Sidney), Countess of Pembroke and other gentlewomen readers, is a work of prayers composed in the voices of godly women in the Bible. In repeating Mary Magdalen's prayer, the female supplicants are to confess with Mary Magdalen how sin blinded them, and how they wandered "still out of the way," and how "now sweet Lord, being cleared of my blindness, by the light of thy holy word, and seeing the gates of thy grace open to the passage of the Repentaunt among the hopes of the faithfull, I beg an almes of thy mercy: I reed oh Lord of Mary Magdalens great grace" (26, 26v). The process is twofold: the illumination of the eyes is necessary for understanding the word, and the word itself is light that brings understanding and true knowledge.

¹³ Maria Dowling offers an alternative view when she argues that Katherine Parr's reputation as a learned woman has been greatly exaggerated. She suggests that Parr was not well-educated as a child, that she was neither the head of reform nor the director of a royal nursery, and that she displays an "anti-intellectual streak." However, I am not arguing she was "head of reform" and Dowling may be reacting against the adulation of previous historians—probably Martiensen, although she does not identify him by name—that made her the director of a royal nursery. My argument is only that Parr thought education important and organized the nursery in such a way that it reflected new humanist education. Dowling also takes Parr's statements in *The Lamentation of a Sinner* against learning at face value, without considering the gendered conventionality of such modest statements. Even if Dowling is right in saying that Parr was not well-educated as a child, according to her own account of Latin letters exchanged between Parr and Edward where the prince compliments her on her progress in Latin grammar and literature and writing, Parr was still learned even if she did not attain this as a child (235,236).

¹⁴ A Royal Proclamation of 1546 forbade all men and women, no matter what

their estate, from possessing Tyndale's New Testament, Coverdale's translation of the Bible, or any book by Frith, Tyndale, Wycliffe, Joye, Roy, Basil, Bale, Barnes, Coverdale, Turner or Tracy (Wilson 89).

¹⁵ Although it is difficult to determine the number of women among the exiles, for they were only listed indirectly through their husbands or sons, Sherrin Marshall Wyntjes estimates that women probably comprised about one-fourth of the total number (184). The play *The Life of the Dutches of Suffolke, as it hath beene divers times acted*, by Thomas Drue was printed in 1631 and 1636.

¹⁶ After her first husband, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, died in 1545, Catherine Brandon married Richard Bertie, her gentleman usher, in 1552. He was far below her in rank, but he had attended Oxford and the position of gentleman usher meant that he was of good birth and lineage and that he would walk ahead of his mistress in ceremonial processions. When they returned to England, he sat in Parliament as one of the knights for Lincoln, and he wrote the narrative of the troubles of Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk that is printed in Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (Read 89; "Bertie, Richard" *DNB*).

¹⁷ Bentley reprints several of the texts: the prayer of Lady Jane Grey a little before she died, the epistle to her sister, written "the night before she suffered in the end of the New Testament in Greek," and her last words, "Lord, unto thy hands I commend my spirit," an abridgement of the earlier text which constructs her as a distinctly Christ-like character. A broadside ballad, keen to demonstrate that Jane was not a traitor but an innocent at the mercy of her father, also picks up elements of these texts to tell Jane Grey's story. A seventeenth-century edition, printed in 1615, 1629, and 1636 [*STC* 7281,7281.5,7282], uses editorial additions to fashion the four texts into a narrative of the last events of her life. The status of the letters, catechism, and dialogue as Grey's literary property is questionable, for they were printed after her death and the texts differ, not just with the editorial additions, but with small differences in the texts that are represented as Grey's own.

The construction of Jane Grey as a reader continued beyond the sixteenth century. Nicholas Rowe also published "Lady Jane Grey; A Tragedy in Five Acts" in 1715, in which Jane's character demonstrates her innocence of treason and her interest in reading. That Jane read Plato, as Ascham's *Scholemaster* mentions, indicates that she is otherworldly and contemplative as she hears that her courtiers abandon her for Mary. In the play's conclusion, a tableau of Jane reading similarly indicates her readiness for death. The stage direction to Act 5, scene 2 sets the scene—"Lady Jane Grey discovered kneeling at her devotion; a light and a book placed on a table before her"—and the image is etched on the first page of the play, where Grey is shown reading a book, inscribed in large letters as the "Holy Bible." *The Tablette Booke of Ladye Mary Keyes, owne sister to the misfortunate Lade Jane Dudlie; in which will be founde A Faithfull Historie of alle the Troubels that did com to them and their Kinsfolke* also contains the story of Jane Grey. It was printed in London in 1861, and is, according to the *British Museum Catalogue*, the work of Flora F. Wylde (who seemed to specialize in specious autobiographies, for she is also noted as the author of *The Autobiography of Flora McDonald* (1870), *The Life and Wonderful Adventures of "Totty Testuda," an autobiography* (1873), and a three volume work, *The Widow Unmasked* (1875). The work does not mention its author, however, and instead writes a fiction of its origins. The introduction claims the book is a tablet book found among the papers of Lady Mary Keys, Jane Grey's sister, and suggests that it had been printed in 1604 (it having been deemed too impolitic for publication during Elizabeth's reign, since the book criticizes Elizabeth for breaking up the marriage of Mary, who was extremely short, with Elizabeth's very large, but godly, groom). Supposedly, the book had lately been discovered at a countryhouse and now receives a nineteenth-century printing. In this book, too, Jane's reading is an important part of her character, for it repeats the words of Ascham and Thomas Chaloner about her and says that she was often reading her Greek New Testament.

¹⁸ They make this argument with reference to Betty Travitsky's work on Isabella Whitney, where Travitsky argues that although Whitney is also described as a "yonge Gentilwoman," her letters indicate that she laboured at menial tasks not generally associated with one of that status ("The 'Wyll'" 78).

¹⁹ Atkinson and Atkinson also point to the involvement of another printer, John Day, in the project. While the colophon at the end is Denham's, the printer's mark is Day's (661).

²⁰ Anthony Stafford's patronage appeal to Theophila Coke for his prayer book, *The Femall Glory*, functions within the same gendered codes of propriety. He reveals the extent of her learning (and his own) when he notes that he could have written for her in Latin, French, or Italian because she is a woman of some learning, "as much" he tells hers, "as the want of an Academicke education, and the manifold divertments to your sexe, permit." But even while his praise unveils that learning, he commends her for displaying none of this "treasure;" her "modesty keeps the key, and shuts out Ostentation" (a4v).

²¹ See Chapter One, note 35.

²² Other women also used such Biblical precedents for public female speech. Thomas Bentley includes a prayer by an unnamed gentlewoman who, citing the Psalms, asks that God listen to her "voice of wofull mournder" and consider her meditation. She continues: "Oh harken thou unto my praiers that go not out of fained lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence, and let thine eies look upon the thing that is equall" (215,216). She, like the Psalmist, will call on God and be heard. In Nicholas Breton's *Auscipante Jehova*, the suit of the Canaanite woman to Christ cites approvingly the case of the woman of Syrophenissa who called out to Christ for a cure for her daughter (15,15v), and the mother of James and John who petitioned Christ (20v-21v). Although in both cases he stresses the humility of the supplicant, these narratives reiterate that Christ responds to the requests of women. Although Thomas Sorocold's *Supplications of Saints. A Booke of Prayers* is not addressed exclusively to

women readers, it contains a number of prayers for women and of these, the "maid's prayer" begins with an epigraph from 1 Samuel 23:24 "Let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speake in thine audience, and heare the words of thine hand-mayd" (356).

Chapter Three

Sons and Mothers: The Gender(ed) Politics of Maternal Advice in the Works of Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Grymeston

She having neither brother nor sister, nor other companion of her age, spent her whole time in reading; to which she gave herself so much that she frequently read all night; so as her mother was fain to forbid her servants to let her have candles, which command they turned to their own profit, and let themselves be hired by her to let her have them, selling them to her at half a crown a piece, so was she bent to reading; and she not having money so free, was to owe it to them, and in this fashion was she in debt a hundred pound afore she was twelve year old, which with two hundred more [afore] for the like bargains and promises she paid on her wedding day; this will not seem strange to those who knew her well. When she was twelve year old, her father (who loved much to have her read, and she as much to please him) gave her Calvin's Institutions and bid her read it, against which she had so many objections, and found in him so many contradictions, and with all of them she still went to her father, that he said, "This girl hath a spirit averse from Calvin."

The Lady Falkland: Her Life, 187, 188

Differing from devotional works primarily because of the author's declaration that she writes for her children, the mother's advice book, as Elaine Beilin, Wendy Wall, and Valerie Wayne have argued, was another form in which it was possible for women to transgress prohibitions against publication.¹ Elizabeth Grymeston's *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives* (1604), Dorothy Leigh's *The Mother's Blessing* (1616), Elizabeth Clinton's *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie* (1622) and Elizabeth Joceline's *The Mothers Legacie, to her unborne childe* (1624) all belong to this genre.² The category could also include *The Mother's Counsell* (1623) authored by the unknown M.R. and *The Mother's Blessing* (1602) by Nicholas Breton, although these are not necessarily by women. I will focus on the works by Grymeston and Leigh because, in provocatively different ways, they both present reading as integral to devotion. Grymeston and Leigh also wrote for their sons, one consequence of which is the explicit analysis of the gendering of reading, writing, and piety. In addition to examining the gender politics of these

works, I will also explore connections between gender, reading, and religious politics and argue that the feminine voice of the mother allows women to engage with public, national religious issues.

Because of Grymeston and Leigh's filial audience, I will first explore briefly some of the issues related to early modern representations of mothers as educators of their sons. In this respect, motherhood is, in part, a reiteration of the gendered difference between faith and learning. Mothers were considered to be a formative source of moral instruction, especially within the "spiritualized household," the ideology of the domestic sphere, prominent in seventeenth-century English culture and influenced by earlier humanist writings, that made the family the primary unit of religious education.³ Juan Luis Vives, for one, attests to the powerful sway that mothers had over their children. He writes in *Instruction of a Christian Woman* that because children love and imitate their mothers, "it lyeth more in the mother, than men ween, to make the conditions of the chyl dren. For she may make them whether she wyll, very good, or very badde" (112v). Within the privacy of the family that was, as Margo Todd says, the "seminary of church and commonwealth," the mother's daily care for her children gave her an influential role as a teacher of religion and morality (23).

There were, however, chronological and topical limitations on this guidance. Contingent upon the belief that "the soul both affects and is affected by the body," as Erasmus says in his colloquy "Puerpera"(1526), the mother was thought to contribute best to the development of her son, not by teaching him his letters, which was his father's responsibility, but by nursing him and thereby

giving him a healthy body and a virtuous soul ("New Mother" 273).⁴ Even though literate women commonly did catechize their children and teach them to read, suggesting that in practice motherhood was not an exclusively physical influence, they still did not often teach their sons to be scholars. Maternal instruction of upper-class boys did not extend past the age of seven, when boys began to be educated by tutors and schoolmasters, and it did not include scholarly topics like Latin and Greek (Crawford "Construction" 12).⁵ Kenneth Charlton, in his study of women as educators, notes only two examples of mothers who instructed their sons in Latin: Lady Mary Coke and Lady Brilliana Harley ("Mothers" 154). If the home could be compared to a seminary, it could not be likened to a grammar school or university; moral instruction was not scholarly education. While mothers made a compelling contribution to the former, especially through their material care, they were usually excluded from the latter.

This circumscription of the mother-son relationship can be attributed to restrictions on female education that made mothers simply unable to offer literate instruction and also, more fundamentally, to cultural anxieties about gender difference. The mother's exceptional capacity to form a child's character made her a potential threat both to the development of gender difference in her son and to the patriarchal authority of her husband. William Gouge, for example, attests to the effectiveness of a mother's love and daily care at instilling morality in young children—and to her ability to undermine the father's spiritual leadership—when he observes that "if father and mother be of divers religions, most of the

children will follow the mother" (546). The compulsion that makes a boy follow his mother in religion could also prevent him from becoming a scholar. Humanists, such as Erasmus, Elyot, Vives, and Ascham, express fears that mothers and their love will turn boys from the rigours, reason, and discipline that they associate with scholarship and masculinity toward the life of delicacy, flattery, and foolishness that they attribute to women (Ascham, *Scholemaster* 21-23; Elyot, 33; Erasmus, *Education*, 55). Vives, in particular, connects his own ability to become a scholar to his mother's disinclination to reveal her love for him—to a concealing of her influence—and he reports on another scholar's gratitude for his mother's death. If she had not died, this other man is to have said, he would have remained at home "among dicing, drabbes, delicates, and pleasures, as I begonne" (116,116v). Symbolized by the ceremony of breeching, the rejection of qualities and influences deemed feminine and the commencement of a scholarly education indicate the beginnings of a boy's difference from his mother.⁶

Humanist educational discourses demarcate gender difference, in part, by superimposing the boundaries of learnedness upon those of gender. Patricia Parker has noted the presence of anxieties about impotence and effeminization in humanist representations of the scholar, tracing them to the abandonment of traditional militaristic signs of masculinity; having relocated manliness in the more feminine world of words, knowledge of Latin ensures that the scholar will be sufficiently unlike women ("Gender" 337-364). The foolish is feminine, while the scholarly is what men know—as Erasmus suggests when he urges the Christian

Prince to shun the stories of Arthur and Lancelot because they are “utterly illiterate, foolish, and on the level of old wives’ tales” (*Christian* 61). The inconsistent representation of the male scholar’s mother as both the source of seductive laxity and of moral good perpetuates the exclusion of women from the category of knowledge most associated with power, that of humanist scholarship. Mothers are simply the other against which the scholar constructed his identity as vigorous, manly, and learned.

II

Leigh, Copious Reading, and the Voice in the Closet

Although Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing* (1616) was written after Elizabeth Grymeston’s *Meditations Miscelanea Memoratives* (1604), I will discuss *The Mothers Blessing* first; the content of the work, especially Leigh’s interest in reading and her disputational approach to religion, gives the work much in common with the sixteenth-century reformation works that I discussed in my previous chapter. She, too, writes to effect religious reform. Dorothy Leigh was the daughter of Robert Kempe, Esq. of Essex and Elizabeth Higham, and, although she married Ralph Leigh, a gentleman from Essex, she wrote *The Mothers Blessing* after she had become a widow (Sizemore 58). She was also probably a Puritan, as the content of her text suggests (Poole 75,76). Leigh’s primary concerns are reading and private prayer, but, not wholly disinterested in worldly affairs, she also advises her sons on household matters—their choice of wives, the governance of servants and family, the particular sins of rich men, the

avoidance of idleness and covetousness, the sin of prodigality, and the right use of goods. Although the work was published posthumously, Leigh's dedication of the first nine chapters of her book to outlining seven justifications for writing and her appeal for patronage to the Princess Elizabeth imply an intent to publish. With her initial chapters, Leigh explains that because of her maternal affection, she writes to encourage her sons to labour for their own souls, to write their own works, and to instruct their own children and give them good names. She also wants to arm them against poverty and a fear of death. Printed, as well, so that other women might read her book, her work is supposed to encourage women to "labour to come in the second," to seek Christ and to teach their children of him. But while Leigh does exert considerable energy in justifying her work, an indication that her culture's permissiveness even towards religious or maternal compositions was not to be taken for granted, *The Mothers Blessing* was enormously popular; it was printed and reprinted at least nineteen times between 1616 and 1640, making it, according to one critic, "the seventeenth century's best selling text authored by a woman" (Feroli 89). Popular by any standard, *The Mothers Blessing* was not only tolerated by its audience but purchased, repeatedly. In this chapter, I will consider those aspects of Leigh's voice that are socially constructed as feminine and consequently situate her work in the private sphere—the address to her sons as a mother, her attention to vernacular reading (the mother tongue), and her advocacy for private prayer. With these issues, gendered feminine within her faith community, Leigh strengthens the feminine voice and fortifies her private space against intruders. Yet, reading and prayer

are also matters of public concern in early modern England; reading, particularly when undertaken by the lower orders or in the absence of official direction, and private, extemporary prayer, unformed by the church prayer book, could become, some feared, sources of social disorder. Because of this intersection between femininity and the gendering of politics, and because of the way in which Leigh regards her sons as if they were a public audience, Leigh becomes an effective advocate for issues central to her faith community, within her family and to the book-buying public.

Speaking to her sons, George, John, and William, Leigh considers the propriety of women's writing and the extent of women's education. Redressing their presumed concerns about the legitimacy of their mother's writing, Leigh tells her sons that if she had not published her writing, one of them might have been denied the opportunity to read it; if it remains but a single manuscript, never multiplying as a printed book, it will be read only by the eldest and not by the younger sons (A6). Leigh also assumes that writing itself may be called into question when she accounts for why she has not, "according to the usuall custome of women, exhort[ed] you by word and admonitions, rather then be [sic] writing: a thing so unusuall among us" (4). Maternal affection explains both. Love so makes her forget herself that she does not care "what you or any shall thinke of mee, if among many words I may write but one sentence, which may make you labor for the spirituall food of the soule, which must be gathered every day out of the Word" (5). Her sons, when they "come to bee of judgement," may blame her for writing to them, and it is only because Leigh will soon be dead that

her writing is necessary and their condemnation can be deferred: "since Nature telleth mee, that I cannot long bee heere to speake unto you, and this my minde will continue long after mee in writing" (12). Leigh substantiates the oppositional relationship between her sons and herself when she implies their gendered difference from her in matters of education. God has shown, she says, "great mercie...toward you, in making you men, and placing you amongst the wise, where you may learne the true written Word of God" (15). They will also be able to learn "the seven liberall sciences, whereby you shall have at least a superficial sight in all things," and "write and speake the Word of God, without offending any" (15,16). In a world that places restrictions on both women's education and their writing, many, including her sons, may derogate her project. But the importance of communicating her faith to her children supersedes any punishment that might be meted out either in the court of public opinion or by her family.

The two major concerns of Leigh's work are reading and private prayer, but her struggle for authority is not a wholly separate issue. With her representation of reading, Leigh presents a method of reading and considers its importance within a social context in ways that are important to Puritan politics. For Leigh, good books are essential to the expression of faith; whether the Christian desires to read books or to write them, both actions denote a love of words, which in turn expresses a love of God. Addressing her sons, Leigh makes writing the work of the Christian: "Marvell not why I write: for I wonder, that every one which hath heard of him, doth not write what Christ hath done for

us" (88,89). Given Christ's sacrifices for humanity, all believers should write so that others will know. Even this, however, would not be all that he deserves: "If all the Sea were Inke, and all the Iron in the World were pennes, and all the creatures Writers, they could never declare the great benefites, the great blessings, and the great mercies given unto us in Christ" (91,92). In the midst of this imperative to copia, her book, though small, is necessary. There are, Leigh admits, those who would criticize her equation of the multiplication of texts with a heightened revelation of grace, but they are miserly sceptics who believe there are already too many books with too little reading. Some complain that many godly books only "mould in some mens studies" for want of reading (4), and there are also "many that are angry, because there are so many bookes" (92). To this acrimonious anonymous group, Leigh addresses a vehement defense of reading: "Reading good bookes worketh a mans heart to godliness; for even as the fire warmeth the waxe, and maketh it fit to receive a good fashion; even so good books, written of the mercies of God in Christ, are the way to Christ, and teach us how to shun the way that leades from Christ" (92). Leigh denounces the book-haters by calling them ignorant, lovers of the world, enemies to God, and earthly-minded. Her apology for books ultimately conflates production and consumption, for writing godly books is to be as highly regarded as hearing and reading: "Now hee that loves not writing of Bookes, nor hearing of Sermons, hee hath little leasure, and lesse desire to pray: ...for Sermons, and reading good Bookes, are the only means to bring a man to prayer, and prayer is the onely meanes to helpe us to the mercies of God in Christ" (96,97 [misnumbered 79]). If writing a

book is as legitimate a demonstration of devotion as reading, listening, or praying, then the author need not be learned. Piety is the best reason to read and reason enough to write.

When pious Christians peruse their books, their reading is an immediate, intuitive spiritual activity rather than an intertextual or rational process. In contrast, many editions of the Geneva Bible included a Ramistic table similarly entitled "How to take profite by reading of the Holy Scriptures," which lists seven articles of advice for successful reading: to pray for understanding; to read in a way compatible to one's calling in life; to understand the end and purpose that Scripture serves; to remember that Scripture contains matter concerning the worship of God, governance, family, the private life, and the common life; to reject those senses of Scripture contrary to the creeds and commandments; to consider the coherence of the text, the time in which it was written, the manner of speech proper to Scripture, and the agreement of one place in Scripture with another; and finally, to take opportunity to read interpreters, to talk to those who can open Scripture, and to hear preaching (iv). Eugene Kintgen notes that these instructions, especially their recommendation of comparative and contextual reading practices, are similar to those found in books giving instructions on preaching (*Reading* 135). Hooker also stressed the importance of the last item, the authorities, to the interpretation of Scripture: "For whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the Scripture be therein the ground of our belief; yet the authority of man is, if we mark it, the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture" (174). When "the vulgar

sort" begin to believe that their opinions on Scripture are as valid as those of wise and learned men, it is an "insolency [which] must be repressed, or it will be the very bane of the Christian religion" (178). In comparison, Leigh's method for profitable reading is more singular, dependent not on intertextual comparison but on divine illumination. While she does believe that the Bible offers advice on government, family, and private life, the only interpretive tool she requires her reader to take up is prayer. Her sons must ask for divine assistance, understand the example offered, and then follow it in daily life.

Leigh is interested in the place of literate piety in society, within the family and within the public sphere. The sixth reason that Leigh gives her sons for writing is to "entreate and desire you, and in some sort to command you, that all your children, be they Males or Females, may in their youth learne to reade the Bible in their owne Mother tongue" (24). Speaking with a maternal voice, Leigh is a good advocate for the mother tongue, the language in which she speaks and that in which she would have all her descendants literate. Teaching children to read in the vernacular is as essential to their spiritual development as baptism, and if other parents ask one of them to be a witness at the baptizing of a child, they ought to make it a condition of their support that the child will be taught to read well enough to read the Bible (24-26). Literacy also has wider social consequences. Children should spend the time between the ages of four and ten at learning to read, "in which time they are not able to doe any good in the Commonwealth, but to learne how to serve God, their King and Country, by reading" (47). In my first chapter, where I distinguished between literacy and

education, I argued that one might be literate without necessarily being educated and that being educated was the position of greater social import. In my second chapter, I also noted that English monarchs, including James I, were somewhat suspicious of reading amongst the lower orders of society. Leigh, however, argues that the literacy which allows one to read Scripture and write about it is not a source of disorder but a significant contribution to the social good. Education, too, is worthwhile, for she advises her sons to raise their children in "Schooles of learning, if you bee able, and they fit for it," but the vocation of following God is of paramount importance (48). It is by their literacy, not their learning, that children become at once better Christians and better citizens. Leigh recommends that servants, too, should be taught to read, but she defines the consequences more narrowly through obedience and labour. With the Ten Commandments as the test, servants should study until they can read them. Able to read by themselves, the servants will then spend their "idle time in reading, that so they may come the better to knowe the will of God written in his Word" (59). For Leigh, the evangelical objective of encouraging people at all levels of society, male and female, to become readers of the Bible has a social purpose. Children, presumably of the gentry, learn to serve the king, and servants have their idle time occupied with a new form of labour.

This image of the nation, an England with readers at all levels of society, is not self-evident or uncontroversial. Richard Helgerson argues that while the English church early in the reign of Elizabeth had an oppositional identity in confrontation with the external Catholic enemy, by the time Hooker wrote *Laws*

of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, the established church was not the voice of reform but of conservatism.⁷ In response to the internal threat of Presbyterianism, Hooker argued that the Christian would experience God most profoundly in church under the auspices of the state (271-280). For Leigh, however, understanding God is the consequence, not of the activities of the church, but of the soul that seeks God on its own. In the chapter entitled, "How to reade with profit," she recommends that before beginning to read, one should pray, lifting up heart, soul, and mind to God, in public or in private. One must also pray for an understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit before hearing sermons (97 [misnumbered as 79]). This private prayer takes spiritual precedence over public. She insists: "but of private prayer never fayle, and desire God for Christs sake, to inlighten your understandings, to sanctifie your hearts, and to make them fit to receive the good seed of his Word, and to give you grace to bring forth fruit to Gods glorie" (102).

Private prayer, then, is Dorothy Leigh's second great concern. She has chapters recommending frequent and regular private prayer, explaining its necessity, benefits, "preeminence," and delineating the dangers of forgetting. Imagining a potentially catastrophic environment, she argues for the necessity of private devotion. The most excellent virtue of private prayer, she argues, is that "no man by any means can deprive a man of it" (104). Should public prayer become impossible, one's Bible be taken away, preachers banished, and the church dissipated, private prayer remains and the Christian can still have the great comfort of conference with God (104,105). Private prayer is also the

ingredient that purifies public worship, the sign of the true Christian, for "there are none Godly, but those that pray privately and truly to God, according to his Word" (110). The wicked man can read the Bible, attend Church, and speak of faith "as if he had come presently from heaven," but only the godly will dare to speak openly before God (111). Assembling with other believers is good, for Leigh does support public prayers and receiving the sacrament in church, but the observances mean little unless they are accompanied by private, inward holiness; the outward expressions of public devotion cannot preclude hypocrisy as private devotion can.

Leigh's advocacy of private devotion has consequences both for religious and gender politics. Richard Strier has argued that the politics of Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1623) are "not in the politics of the *Devotions* but in the devotion of the *Devotions*" (99).⁸ By this he means that Donne's work is political, less for what it says about government and state, than for its Arminian religious position—its stance in favour of ceremony and against Calvinism. Strier states: "The *Devotions* are a sustained paean to religious non-immediacy, to the importance of means, helps, assistances, and ordinances" (105). Such a "paean" is "political" because it envisions the church less as a godly community than as a physical structure and a clergy-led institution. Noting that Donne presents the Biblical incident in which Jacob wrestles with an angel as a warning against private prayer, Strier argues that Donne resents and fears the enforced privacy required by his illness (103,104). Strier, however, may overemphasize Donne's rejection of the private. Although Donne does

distinguish between the holiness of the house and that of the church, the heart is the holiest place:

...heere in thy lower house, though thou fillest all, yet art otherwise in some roomes thereof, then in others, otherwise in the Church, then in my Chamber, and otherwise in thy Sacraments, then in my Prayers, so though thou bee alwayes present, and alwayes, working in every roome of this thy House, my body, yet I humbly beseech thee to manifest alwayes a more effectuall presence in my heart, then in the other Offices. (60)

These distinctions among holy places are, according to Strier, a polemic against the private. Donne, however, concludes with the heart, which is private, personal, and unmediated. This interest Donne shares with Leigh.

Nevertheless, Strier's point that the type of devotion one advocates is a political question does bear upon Leigh's work. Leigh gives precedence to private devotion, and in so doing, she signals a vision of the church life in which ecclesiastical authorities are less important to defining the spiritual lives of English people than their reading of the Bible and allowing for a place for women beyond the surveillance of men.

In her advocacy of private prayer, social constructions of Leigh's gender intersect with those of her religion in that private prayer had been represented by others in feminine terms. Private space is, for Joseph Hall, feminine space, and when devotion becomes private it becomes feminine, in opposition to the worldly activity of the public life of men. In *The Art of Divine Meditation*, Hall says that to

ascend the "mount of contemplation" one must leave household and public cares at the closet door. The closed door marks a temporary renunciation—to abandon the world completely would also be impious—that keeps thoughts of barns, count-books, coffers, and journeys from interfering with thoughts of God (76). Like the woman, the supplicant is not a businessman. Also like the woman, he is a bride. Unwilling to come to her in the presence of the multitude, Christ meets his bride in the prayer of the private closet, apart from the "visible country of men" (80). Daniel Featley in *Ancilla Pietatis; or, the Hand-Maid to Private Devotion* similarly feminises private prayer by describing it as if it were a chaste woman: "For private devotion (to shun ostentation, and hyposcristie in heavenly things) alwayes shuts her selfe up in her closet, desiring no eye to see her, but her Fathers in secret...She resembles the strange plant in Plinie, which buds inwardly and shooteth forth no bud, blossome or leaf outwardly. For if private Devotion cometh once to be knowne, it ceaseth to be private" (2,3). Like the chaste woman in being most virtuous when never seen, the femininity of private devotion signifies its purity and otherworldliness for men who will return to their public duties.

The voice of private prayer is the feminised voice, murmuring in the privacy of the closet; in this sense, Dorothy Leigh's recommendations of private prayer are congruent with the cultural construction of her gender. Yet, her representation of the consequences of this form of prayer differs in terms of both religion and gender. Neither Featley nor Hall could conceivably be called Puritans, and, indeed, they devoted energy to combating Puritan influence. And

when Leigh figures private prayer in the intimate spatial terms of the chamber, she refers neither to Christ as a lover nor to her devotions as chastely secret. Rather, she proposes that private devotion become public for an evangelical purpose that is also useful to her as a woman and writer. She tells her sons of the traffic between public and private when she recommends that after they read the story of Job, they follow his example in serving and loving God: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see his good workes, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven. Heere you may see you must glorify God, and you must leave an example to the Church" (103). Bringing personal godliness to the public eye benefits other Christians and glorifies God. Such lights shine before men burning the fuel of private prayer. Like Hall, Leigh takes her instructions for prayer from Matthew 6:6,7: "When thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly" (117). Yet, whereas Hall preferred the enclosed room because it was without worldly encumbrances, Leigh favors it because private devotion becomes public and because the private space of devotion is without surveillance, both of which are significant for women who were simultaneously denied access to the public sphere and to privacy, within the private sphere. Shutting the door absolutely separates the supplicant from the world so that, beyond the visual and aural supervision of men, she possesses perfect solitude within the private sphere. In private, she can confess sins to God without having others know of them: "no body shall know, what is betwixt thee and me" (134). Leigh's representation of private prayer provides

her with both a physical privacy, a room of her own, and a reason for writing publicly: her light, too, should shine before men. In this sacralized public sphere—the public life of governance—her writing has a devotional value, the approbation of God, and merit for her family and other Christians.

Not only does private prayer give women a private space, but it also gives them a legitimate voice. Private prayer, as Leigh describes it, is a creative act, generating individualizing self-referential speech: “privat praier is for every mans private use; and therefore there is no certaine rule, neither can words be set downe what we should say” (151). Because each person is troubled by his or her own particular sin, prayers composed by others cannot express true repentance. Leigh’s position is characteristic of Puritans, for whom prayer was supposed to express personal hopes and concerns in the individual’s own words. Set prayer, for both preachers and parishioners, was regarded as a human invention and could become an idolatrous image (Hambrick-Stowe 50). Daniel Featley, however, only disparages extemporary prayer, suspiciously noting its potential for coarseness when “sharpnesse of wit, and true eloquence are gifts of God, and therefore best of all to be employed in holy things” (23). Eloquence, however, is a gender and class-specific attainment, with the consequence that Featley’s prerequisite allows only those who are properly educated to compose their own prayers. The rest will be readers and will not constitute themselves before God. Leigh’s argument for extemporary prayer is also a religio-political value which diminishes the authority of the prayer book, and Leigh is conscious of her politics. Just as when learning to read, children serve both Christ and

king, in meditation, one can show one's self "a good member of Jesus Christ, a faithful subject to thy prince, and alwaies fit to governe in the Christian commonwealth" (22). The private space and the unauthorized prayer are assuredly within the king's dominion, but their devotion makes them fit, capable of possessing power.

Milton's Adam and Eve, in *Paradise Lost* 4.724-735 and 5.153-208, pray with a similar social politics. Milton introduces the morning hymn:

Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid
 In various style, for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Thir Maker, in fit strains pronounc't or sung
 Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
 Flow'd from their lips, in Prose or numerous Verse,
 More tuneable than needed Lute or Harp
 To add more sweetness... (5.145-152).

With the spontaneity of their orisons, Milton distinguishes the prayers of Adam and Eve from the liturgical practices of the English and Catholic churches. By a miracle possible in the perfect harmony of prelapsarian love and innocence, Adam and Eve compose together a hymn of praise. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski writes that the longer passage from Book 5 encompasses many kinds of hymns: "classical narrative or literary hymns in 'proselike' hexameters; chanted biblical psalms with their patterns of rhythmic repetition; classical lyric hymns (choral and monodic) used in public worship; and Christian hymns and anthems both

liturgical and vernacular" (*Paradise* 203). Their "unpremeditated" offerings are, in any case, articulate, eloquent, and intertextual, as well as pious.

Because they are said together at the door of the bower as a ritualistic commencement and conclusion to the day's labours, these prayers are also a form of domestic speech.⁹ Diane McColley remarks: "The church of Adam and Eve is never far from heaven, meets twice dailiy, and improvises a new liturgy each time" (136). The church of Adam and Eve is also not far from home. Milton is careful about the space in which Adam and Eve pray, placing them each time just outside their bower in a liminal place defined in relationship to both church and house. When they pray, they emerge from under the "shady arborous roof" (5.137) to pray "under op'n Sky" (4.721) and "come to open sight/Of day-spring, and the Sun" (5.138,139). With the repetition of "open," Milton suggests an exuberance to prelapsarian public space and the complete absence of guile in Adam and Eve; because they have nothing to hide, no need of private confession, public space itself is innocent, concealing nothing.

Here, and only here, at the bower's doorstep and in unison with Adam, Eve's speech is legitimate and eloquent. Milton's Eve possesses most of the conventionally ideal attributes of the early modern woman, for Milton imbues her with a willingness to avow obedience, emphasizes her housewifery, and names her a mother, virtually before motherhood's invention. In other forums, her speech is much less welcome. At Raphael's discursive lunch, she is silent and then absent, departing precisely when Raphael turns from theology to "studious thoughts abstruse" (8.40). This absence is, furthermore, made innocent when

the narrator attributes her exit to her gender, in a passage that echoes the Pauline dictum that women ought to be silent in church and learn from their husbands at home (8.52-54). But this most conventionally feminine Eve, if only in the context of familial devotions, is also a poet. Milton allows the feminine voice that speaks of faith in a domestic context to be legitimate and eloquent in ways that he otherwise precludes.

Leigh shares with Milton an interest in domestic extemporary prayer, those prayers composed by sincere Christians at home. Charles Hambrick-Stowe argues in his study of Puritan piety that, in this, Puritan devotion was iconoclastic. By devaluing public forms of worship and encouraging literacy, Puritans destroyed exclusive spiritual authority (45-49). Although Milton would take this position to a more extreme conclusion, with a republicanism that Leigh clearly rejects, Leigh and Milton nevertheless occupy a similar political position. They diminish the importance of the institutional church—and the monarch—to the definition and expression of one's spiritual life. Yet, the gender politics of Leigh and Milton are quite different. Both validate—to different degrees—the female devotional voice within a domestic context, but Milton pacifies and sanctifies the very gender differences about which Leigh complains. While Milton suggests that the perfect prelapsarian woman is less interested in learning from an angel than in gardening, Leigh is not entirely satisfied with the restricted opportunities for education and speaking that are her lot. She notes her difficulties in getting a public audience and remarks on how her sons may receive a better education that she did. Neither does Leigh expect that her future daughters-in-law will pray

only with their husbands. She does not require of them the eloquence that Milton implicitly values with the skill of his poetry, and in so doing, gives those who are less educated than he greater opportunities for expression. What would Milton's Eve have been able to say if her voice had been constructed, not from Milton's education, but from the more limited learning allotted most early modern women? The difference between the prayers voiced by Milton's Eve and those of Dorothy Leigh demonstrate how aesthetic requirements, Adam and Eve's "prompt eloquence," have material roots in class and gender. Whatever the degree of her piety, Leigh never had the opportunities for formal study or leisured reading that Milton did. When Leigh values private prayer for its sincerity and truth, rather than for its eloquence, she adopts not only the view of a Puritan, but a gendered position. Only the prelapsarian Adam and Eve and the educated are capable of the standard that Adam and Eve set. What are the rest to do? That Milton does not ask this question implies a lack of interest in popular religious politics. Daniel Featley, for his part, would turn the unlearned back to prayer books. Dorothy Leigh, however, legitimates what she, and others like her, have to say because pious writing is a valuable devotional activity, whatever one's eloquence.

Not only do Leigh's concerns for literacy and the social order and for private prayer situate Leigh's text within the religious and gender politics of her time, so too does her insistent anti-Catholicism. As with her concerns about reading and prayer, Leigh addresses her position first to her sons, making anti-Catholicism a family matter. Leigh expresses her concerns about Catholic expressions of faith when she gives advice about the naming of children and the

choice of a wife. She tells the younger Leighs that they should give their own children Scriptural names so that they will read of their namesakes in the Bible and follow Scriptural exempla in virtue instead of worshipping Mary or images (44). Those who use images of saints, who "look[] upon a painted piece of paper, or a carved stone," even for memorative purposes, almost inevitably become idolaters. They "by little and little have at last worshipped the workes of their own hands" (44,45). When her sons choose wives, no matter how wealthy the women may be, they should choose wives for whom prayer does not involve the superstitions of saints, Latin, or purgatory (50,51). True prayer, as she later reiterates, contains none of these, nor the use of the rosary or requests for the intervention of Mary. Prayer, rather, is the result of reading, of searching the scripture to see how Christ taught his disciples to pray (114-117).

Delineating the problems she sees with the Catholic church serves two purposes for Leigh. It indicates her faith, and it provides a plank for the platform from which she would address a public audience. Anthony Milton has argued that both Puritans and establishment divines in early seventeenth-century England expressed anti-Catholic views, which even created bonds of sympathy between them. A manifestation of true religion, publication of anti-papal writing indicated a commitment to faith, helped to confirm the faith of readers, and was believed to prevent conversion (35-39). For Puritans, going further, anti-papery was a sign of election: "Opposition to popery was thus *ipso facto* godly; the puritan commitment to further reformation implied a constant state of conflict with the forces represented by the papal enemy" (36). Through her anti-Catholicism,

Dorothy Leigh confers an authority on herself as a godly woman that augments that which she possesses as a mother.

The voice speaking against Catholic merges with that of the preacher. Although Leigh expresses her anti-Catholicism through her maternal concerns, she associates her criticisms of the Catholic church with the voice of the preacher:

Me thinks if I were a man, and a Preacher of Gods Word, as (I hope) some of you shall bee, and I pray God, for Christs sake, you may, I surely perswade my selfe, that through Gods grace I should bring many to pray rightly, which now pray unadvisedly, or not at all. But those that have gotten a custome to pray after the invention of men, and contrary to the word of God, as to pray to Saints, to pray to Angels, to pray to our Lady, to pray in a tongue they understand not, to pray to the dead, to pray for the dead, to pray to goe to Purgatory. (130,131)

The corrections she would make, if she were a man, would entail not only the rejection of images in the Catholic church, but also, implicitly in the Church of England, within which images might be tolerated if they were used without abuse. John Phillips notes that while Puritans thought images might cause men to "confound aesthetic pleasure with supernatural grace," prominent divines, such as John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes, argued that images could be used without abuse (143;149,150). Yet, if Leigh is not a man, the very possibility that one of her sons might become a preacher is enough to provide her with a

medium through which to expound upon the direction in which church and society ought to go and to express what she would say had her gender been different. One of Leigh's sons, William Leigh, actually did become the rector or curate of Groton, Suffolk in 1626, having been appointed by John Winthrop before he emigrated to America (Sizemore 58). By opposing other forms of prayer, Leigh demonstrates her own godliness, her commitment to help her sons in their faith, and her concern for the church. For her, being a Puritan is more than a form of religious faith; it provides the materials for building a public voice.

Kristen Poole has argued that Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Joceline use the ostensible privacy of maternal advice, the conceptualization of the texts as a private exchange between mother and child, to legitimate publication; Leigh and Joceline create a "liminal authorial space which is neither private nor fully public" to "deflect opposition to women writing" (72). Leigh creates this authorial space, Poole suggests, by speaking only to her sons, by refusing to address directly the public audience of her work, and by using the Bible and the pain of childbirth as sources of authority (73). I would add, however, that writing to sons contributes to the content and terms of her public voice in a way that writing to daughters could not. If a mother's advice is not to be explicitly contestatory, writing to daughters can require the restatement of restrictions on women, as exemplified in Elizabeth Joceline's direction to her husband that if she should be delivered of a daughter, the girl should be brought up to know the Bible and housewifery. Although Joceline qualifies her claim that "other learning a woman needs not" by saying that she admires it in those with "discretion," it is clear that writing to a

daughter proscribes the mother's speech (B3v). Writing to a son, on the other hand, can expand it. Because boys require more knowledge to live in both the public and private worlds, writing to a boy enables the mother to speak on a more extensive range of topics. Predicating her discussion of faith on the maternal function of raising pious sons allows her to issue forth upon public issues; she informs them and the world of her vision for ecclesiastical change, of the centrality of personal reading and private prayer to a more rigorously Protestant church. Although Leigh strategically places her voice in the public sphere through the construction of the feminine voice as private, she ultimately speaks about matters of public concern.

Leigh's concern for national issues was not entirely exceptional, for the female voices represented in devotional books often included prayers on social topics. Prayers could ask for divine assistance in time of war and with continuing the reformation among nobles, magistrates, universities, and the people. They could also offer thanksgiving after events such as the 1588 defeat of the Spanish or the Gunpowder Plot.¹⁰ These prayers seem to point in two contradictory directions. On the one hand, they reinforce the necessity of obedience within the social hierarchy and, on the other, they generate a discourse of social criticism. Such political prayers are not only expected of men, but also of women, for Thomas Bentley's *Monument of Matrones* is full of similar prayers. The book includes prayers by Queen Elizabeth, written in her time of imprisonment in the Tower (1:35,36), and the entire "Third Lampe of Virginity" is composed of prayers by Elizabeth or for her. The fourth book, which offers

occasional prayers, suggests that women might also pray for the deliverance of the people in time of war, for Elizabeth in time of rebellion, for her just governance, and for her preservation from dissembling friends. Women should also give thanks for the suppression of "the late rebellion." (4:683-727).

Monument of Matrones also contains a dialogue between a mother and daughter, purporting to provide instruction in prayer, in which the mother prays for blessings for the universal church, that civil magistrates will serve with truth and righteousness, that bishops and pastors will feed the flock, that the number of true preachers will be increased, that universities and schools will be lights and nurses to the country and aid in this increase, that subjects will obey, and that discipline will be established in the church through a speedy and perfect reformation. To all of this, the daughter replies, "amen." (732ff).¹¹ While these prayers do not criticize the Queen, their request for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the magistrates suggest an interest in public affairs. They also take an oppositional stance because they suggest that the reformation is incomplete; the church still has superstitions, and the magistrates are not all enlightened. Even in Bentley's work, which devotes a significant number of pages to delineating rules of feminine conduct that are in no way remarkable for their feminism, the mother does not demonstrate unquestioning obedience to all authority.¹²

Nicholas Breton also uses the mother's voice to comment on society in a work with the same title as Dorothy Leigh's. His *The Mother's Blessing* was printed in 1602 and 1621. Pointing to this text as the origin of the mother's

advice book, Kristen Poole argues that Breton's text "paved the way for women to enter into the same discourse of advice" (70). However, it is not at all clear how a man masquerading as a mother could be an enabling force for women since it is the female author, and not the female voice, whose chastity is endangered in public speaking; we would not assume that Donne's having written "Sappho to Philaenis" in a female voice made it easier for women to write erotic poetry. *The Mother's Blessing* only partly masks Breton's identity. No name appears on the title page in either edition, while the appeal for patronage in the first edition is signed by "Nich. Breton," and the preface to the reader in the second is signed N.B. Rather than arguing that *The Mother's Blessing* provides a legitimacy to female authors, I would suggest that it is a good illustration of the qualities through which the maternal voice was socially constructed. Breton notes that he writes because he wishes to provide virtuous poetry in an age devoid of it, and his ventriloquization of the maternal voice helps shore up the moral efficacy of his book. The poem begins with "My sonne, my sonne, my best beloved sonne,/Hear my deare son, what careful charge I leave," and goes on to offer advice on, among other things, work, wisdom, learning, service to princes, and decorous behaviour that includes avoiding playing cards, riding horses to death, eating and drinking excessively, dancing country jigs, and being a "common lover." This mother's voice, like the female devotional voice, also finds its authority not in learning but in piety. The mother tells her son: "Mine owne deare Sonne, I am no deepe divine,/But what my God hath taught me, that

I teach thee" (Dv). The origin of moral authority is with God, and the mother claims a direct access to that source.¹³

What God has taught Breton's fictional maternal character, however, is addressed to its specific historical situation as well as being generically edifying. Breton changes in the 1621 edition the guidance proffered in the 1602 version with regard to learning and service to princes. In the first edition, the advice to "Flee Machivile his vile instructions" was followed by the direction to confound the devil with the Word of God. The second edition informs the young man, instead, that he should show reverence and respect to churchmen and magistrates. An apology for the national church and its authorities replaces the apocalyptic battle with the devil in which the Word is a weapon. Yet, the advice on keeping secrets, also added in the second edition, is spoken with a cynicism about institutional authority that partly undermines the apologetic thrust:

Be carefull ever, least at any time
 The opinion of thy wit transport thee so,
 As to traduce good men in odious rime,
 No therin thinke it is thy part to show
 The times abuse, or how state-matters go;
 With Kings and Great men 'tis ill making sport,
 For the Star-Chamber is a dangerous court. (C2v)

The mother speaks for social quietude, as maternal concern that her son will come to harm requires her to tell her son not to offend those in power. But the mother is also registering a complaint about the danger resulting from contact

with great men. Breton notes in some detail the consequences of traducing men in rhyme:

And wisemen say, it much more credit beares
 To be held simply plaine without disgrace,
 Then to be counted wittie without eares,
 With shoulders lasht, or stigmatized face,
 Or head in hole, in publique Market-plac
 Such wit, my sonne, never desire to have,
 As shal at once make thee both foole and knave. (C3v)

Even in advocating a politic acquiescence, the mother's voice indicates a social problem; wit should not be met with severed ears, lashed shoulders, a stigmatized face, or the head in the hole. The mother is not herself confronted with these dangers—because she is a mother, her wit will not transport her into public speech—but from outside the boundaries of public exchange she can register, through her solicitude, the harm of punishment.

The fusion of the maternal, the pious, and the private in Dorothy Leigh's work similarly places it in the midst of public concerns. Drawing attention to Leigh's dedication to Elizabeth Stuart, Valerie Wayne makes a provocative suggestion about the particular political engagement of *The Mothers Blessing*. Wayne argues that Princess Elizabeth may have "offered the political-religious occasion for the Protestant books written in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century" because Puritans were aligning themselves with her as a criticism of James I, whose support for Protestantism was weakening (62).

This may have contributed to the attraction of later editions of the book, but in 1616, Elizabeth was not quite the heroine of European Protestantism that she would become nor was she famous as a mother, having as yet given birth to only one of her thirteen children.¹⁴ Even so, support for Elizabeth might be gauged by the fact that prayers for Elizabeth and her husband the Elector Palatine were regularly said in churches (Anthony Milton 43). And there was, according to David Norbrook, an oppositional national politics attached to supporting Elizabeth (21).¹⁵

Wayne's suggestion cannot be applied too broadly to Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* because the initial publication of the work preceded the full flowering of the Puritan politics surrounding Elizabeth Stuart. But it is clear that Elizabeth Stuart does serve a gendered function that cannot wholly be separated from the faith of the nation. Leigh describes Elizabeth as the royal, Protestant protectress of her work. Having resolved, by writing, the anxiety that her children would have no knowledge of God, Leigh describes how she was confronted with a second set of concerns, that her children would be too young to receive her text, she too old to keep it, men too "wise to direct it too," and the world "too wicked to endure it." Elizabeth herself assuaged these cares, when Leigh looked up to heaven and saw her looking down. Because the princess' name is on the book, it will not blow away and Leigh's aim, of defending and propagating God's church and true religion, will be accomplished ("Epistle Dedicatory"). The status of the princess provides an anchor to her text, counteracting the weightlessness, transience, and diminished authority that result from being a woman writer. The

prefatory address also places the wisdom of men in some doubt, for their supposed sagacity caused them to ignore a text that Elizabeth, ironically, would protect. Along with legitimating her writing, Leigh's dedication to Elizabeth suggests that the work confronts an audience that includes more members of society than just her children. Neither "true religion" nor "God's church" have stable definitions, and Leigh's work provides them with a particular meaning, one in which truth is found in private prayer and reading Scripture. Leigh's dedication to Elizabeth, like her interest in private prayer and the literacy of her children, is appropriate for her as a woman writer. But the work and dedication together authorize a work that advocates the value of a nation of readers, a church which strenuously avoids the remnants of Catholicism, and a family in which everyone is responsible for his or her own spiritual health.

III

"His Open Side Our Book": Education, Meditation, and Elizabeth Grymeston

Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives (1604) is a collection of meditations, penitential psalms, and proverbs written and compiled by Elizabeth Grymeston for the guidance of her son Bernye after her death. First published posthumously at the request of William Smith, a reader who found it edifying, it includes a "madrigal" response by Bernye and was reprinted in 1605/6, [1608?] and 1618 with several additional chapters.¹⁶ Ruth Hughey and Philip Hereford have accumulated evidence that suggests that Grymeston was a Catholic: her name appears on the recusancy roles of 1592/93; her husband Christopher attended

Caius College, Cambridge at a time when the master was said to be “popishly minded”; Christopher’s parents, Dorothy and Thomas Grymeston of Yorkshire, were also Catholic; her work includes a dedicatory sonnet by Simon Grahame, poetry by Robert Southwell, and the translations of penitential psalms by Versteegan, all of whom were Catholic; and more tangentially, she was also distantly related, through her father, to Southwell (71-83). Although Hughey and Hereford claim that Elizabeth’s parents, Martin and Margaret Bernye, were probably conformists since they held the advowson of the church of St. Andrew in Gunton, B.Y. Fletcher and C.W. Sizemore have, more recently, provided evidence that Elizabeth’s father was also Catholic. Martin Bernye was accused of recusancy in 1587, and in 1595, he lost his commission as Justice of the Peace when a servant alleged that he attended mass with Christopher Grymeston, at Gunton Hall, one of Bernye’s properties (53).¹⁷

Elizabeth Grymeston’s Catholicism is one of her differences from later authors of mother’s advice books. The style of her advice is another. While the collection of proverbs and the prefatory address to Bernye are explicitly directive, the meditations are contemplative, requiring the involvement of the imagination rather than obedience. Creating an intertextuality which Dorothy Leigh would not have condoned, *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives* does not venerate the Bible as the sole source of meditative material. It transforms secular and religious writing from a variety of authorities into a miscellany of poetry and prose, meditations, and advice. Nevertheless, while the works of Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Grymeston are distinct in form and religion, the authors occupy a

similar discursive position as mothers writing to sons. Leigh used her sons as a medium through which to speak for the preacher, thereby extending the range of female speech to include a public audience. For Grymeston, writing to a son allows her to speak as a scholar. She presents herself as an educated woman who can address verbal advice of a particularly literary quality to Bernye, a young man old enough to require counsel about marriage and scholarly enough to write a poem in response. Through being necessary to Bernye she can fashion a positive intellectual, spiritual, and social identity for herself as author, mother, and woman.¹⁸ She fashions an identity for Bernye in which masculinity is not dependent upon her absence or the expurgation of femininity from his life as he grows up. While Leigh, speaking from the chamber, uses the private feminine voice to advocate private prayer, scripture-reading, and literacy, Grymeston uses the feminine voice to speak for Catholicism. Concerned with the materiality of faith and intertextuality in meditation, she might be said to speak from the priest hide, the secret places cleverly concealed in the architecture of houses in which women, who were responsible for all things domestic, could hide vestments, altar cloths, chalices, popish books, and even priests to preserve them in times of trouble (Hodgetts 1-20). An author who self-consciously considers disguise, Grymeston describes herself as "a wits Camelion,/That any authour's colour can put on" (A3v). For her, the poetics of privacy function in two ways, with regard to gender and with regard to religion.

Although she inhabits a culture that considered it immodest for a woman to make a show of her learning, Grymeston's citations allow her to write a work

that is simultaneously devotional, maternal, and learned. In the preface to the work, Grymeston represents herself as a mother and offers practical maternal advice. She provides Bernye with guidance in moral living and marriage, telling him to marry a woman of the same rank, of moderate beauty, at an appropriate time (A3v,A4). She also distances herself from learning, in a way typical of her female contemporaries. While claiming that there is no better way for a mother to “manifest hir affection, than in advising hir children out of hir owne experience” (A3), she expresses this experience in the words of other writers, informing Bernye that “thou maiest happily thinke that if every Philosopher fetched his sentence, these leaves would be left without lines” (A3v). The eloquence of these “philosophers” has more value than what she calls her own “broken stile.” Mothers were, after all, to instruct their sons more by nurturing strong and virtuous bodies than by providing a literate education, and so Grymeston professes to provide the white pages upon which others write. Expecting that it will give Bernye greater confidence in her guidance, she transfers the authority from herself to other writers. She cites by name Chrystostome (C2v), Pindarus (from whom she quotes in Greek (C3)), and Ambrose (C3v), and includes texts by an unnamed array of her contemporaries, including Robert Southwell, Richard Rowlands, and many of the authors in the miscellany *Englands Parnassus* (1600).¹⁹

While this deference to the philosophers expresses her humility as a mother and woman writer, her writing amply demonstrates that the scholarly category of education that the philosophers and authors represent is actually

within her experience. Rather than separating religion from learning, as was typical in descriptions of women's piety, Grymeston integrates them in a way more characteristic of upper-class male education, for whom theology was, according to Deborah Shuger, a "disciplinary matrix" of learned discourses (4). The maternal advice book is like a tapestry into which she can weave evidence of her learning. Within the broad category of religious discourse, she uses language that is both learned and literary to prove that such knowledge is not exclusively for men. Education is important for men—for she tells Bernye "without learning man is but as an immortall beast" (A3v)—as it is for women. Her "mother('s) tongue" can speak some Latin and a little Greek, as well as the vernacular.

While conduct books presented women's religious reading, not as a ground for scholarly exploration but as a method of behavioural control, Grymeston writes of faith as if it were indeed a matrix; from the seeds of various sources she generates a book and an authorial identity. She makes the secular poetry of Virgil and Pindarus, among others, applicable in a sacred context, revealing her ability to judge what is good for herself, without the "wyse and sad men" whom Vives would have guiding women's reading to keep them chaste (12v). She also demonstrates her active and creative engagement with what she has read by altering the texts that she cites. With the exception of those men she mentions by name—Chrystostome (C2v), Pindarus, from whom she quotes in Greek (C3), and Ambrose (C3v)—Grymeston detaches the citations from their authors, as her primary source *Englands Parnassus* (1600) had not done.²⁰

Furthermore, if the “philosophers” and poets did come to fetch their sentences, they might not recognize them: Rowlands’ psalms are in reversed order; Southwell’s poem has been broken up and placed in the midst of prose passages; individual words have been changed, as Beilin and Hughey and Hereford have noted; and all the poetry has been placed in different contexts. The citations do the work Grymeston wants of them, not that which they did in their original poems (Beilin, *Redeeming* 269, 270; Hughey 85-9). So, although she writes within the culturally prescribed paradigm of motherhood as a moral influence, she uses its opportunities for authority to place herself surreptitiously within literary and educated culture. She speaks as an active and accomplished reader and an intellectual agent. Because she is something of a scholar herself, she can directly contribute to making one of her son, ensuring that he will not define himself in opposition to her or require her silence and absence.

Grymeston also writes a positive social and moral identity for herself by inserting her maternal love into Bernye’s education. Grymeston, very much like Dorothy Leigh and humanist scholars, describes a mother’s love as a critical impetus in creating the moral character of her child. She tells Bernye:

My dearest sonne, there is nothing so strong as the force of love;
there is no love so forcible as the love of an affectionate mother to
hir naturall childe: there is no mother can either more affectionately
shew hir nature, or more naturally manifest hir affection, than in
advising hir children out of hir owne experience, to eschue evill, and
encline them to do that which is good. (A3)

Even though Grymeston is not writing for a public audience—unlike Elizabeth Joceline and Dorothy Leigh, she does not self-consciously defend the publication of her work—maternal love does provide a reason for writing. Yet, so does her imminent death, and as Wendy Wall has argued, her absence may be one of the premises that makes the public presence of her writing acceptable (286,287).

Maternal love was attended by anxieties that it would become coddling and thereby impede a boy's maturation into masculinity, so the very force of maternal love, ironically, could necessitate a mother's absence. As Mary Beth Rose writes: "Since the mother would remove one from what is conceived as the world of action—the public, socialized world—the best mother is an absent or a dead mother" (301).²¹

Because maternal love was not invariably a complete justification for a mother's influence, Grymeston's resolute and particular definition of her love for Bernye is key to her assertion of her presence in her son's life. Conceding no benefit to her absence, she instead depicts love as a catalyst, rather than a hindrance, to her son's social development. Her love is an instrument of discipline to which Bernye, described as a brash and reckless youth with a "violent spirit," should submit in order to learn deliberation and to be "seasoned with these precepts." She tells him:

And because that it is incident to quicke spirits to commit rash attempts: as ever the love of a mother may challenge the performance of her demand of a dutifull childe; be a bridle to thy self, to restraine thee from doing that which indeed thou maiest

doe: that thou maiest the better forbear that which in trueth thou
oughtest not to doe. (A4v-B)

The bridle was a common image of self-government, as in Plato's *Phaedrus*, but it was also an image with particular gender connotations (*Phaedrus* 256). The early modern gentlemen, like the charioteer in Plato's dialogue, had to possess self-discipline, as Lyndal Roper and Copélia Kahn have shown; without discipline the required displays of strength and action could become the excess of violence and rashness. Women, however, were more akin to Plato's vicious horse, associated with appetite and body. Like the horse, too wild to control itself, a woman needed ever-present moral direction. The scold's bridle, discussed by Lynda E. Boose, threatened literal, physical control, while conduct books and education treatises asserted that husbands, fathers, and tutors would guide girls and women; whatever their age, they lacked the capacity to make independent moral judgements. By comparing her love to a bridle, Grymeston can demonstrate her own maturity and her ability to be the self-controlling guide. Even so, her writing about maternal love is not outside of early modern anxieties about parental affection; as the historian Ralph Houlbrooke suggests of familial tenderness: "it was for a long time held undesirable to allow it untrammelled expression" (140).²² Grymeston, too, values restraint, but she insists upon an important difference. Her love will be expressed. Her love is like that of God, a physician who will lance a wound to heal it and who "if he see thou be softened by the world thy naturall nurse,... can annoint her teate with the bitterness of discontent to weane thee from hir" (Dv). Softness and delicacy, terms

associated with femininity, are still morally dangerous, but these are not all that mothers have to offer. Grymeston, like God, has a moral rationale for her love. By redefining maternal love in a way that dissolves the dichotomy between the expression of maternal emotion and the development of masculine discipline, she can make her love, and therefore herself, necessary to, rather than necessarily excised from, the education of an adolescent male.

That Grymeston writes religious meditations for her son also functions within dominant ideologies of maternal moral education and virtuous female speech. But just as her moral instruction reveals her participation in a domain of knowledge from which women tended to be excluded, she bequeaths a faith to Bernye that includes attributes of femininity and maternity. In discussions of motherhood, the maternal body was an important source of spiritual influence, and Grymeston, too, relates motherhood and spirituality to the corporeal. Through metaphors, her meditations connect divine activities to those of mothers and attend to the suffering of Christ in a way that transforms the silent corporeal maternal influence into a devotional experience conceptually related to motherhood. Twice Grymeston makes a woman's contemplation of death before childbirth an exemplary way to live. She suggests that one ought to be like the pregnant woman, who muses on her delivery, and think about life as a way to death, so as to face it without fear (C2v). When life is such a study in preparation for death, it can be endured, like the pains in childbirth, because the result is a new birth: "he feares not his cold sweats, nor forgoing gripes, but taketh them as throwes in childe-bed, by which our soule is brought out of a lothsome body into

eternall felicitie" (D2v). These comparisons establish a hierarchy of soul over body, of spiritual over material, but they also create an imaginative sympathy between the "he" who lives and the women who suffer pain in labour. Instead of regarding the female body, with its ability to give birth, as the origin of weak reason, Grymeston writes it as a way of knowing and understanding the abstract concept of redemption.²³ Even in disparaging the body as loathsome, the metaphor is affective and embodying, creating a bond of sympathy between the meditator and mothers.

Grymeston also relates motherhood to faith in a description of Christ. Chapter XI, "Morning Meditation, with sixteene sobs of a sorrowfull spirit," interpolates prose passages based on Psalms 6 and 103 with poetry from Southwell's "St. Peter's Complaint," from which she quotes:

Christ health of fever'd soule, heaven of the mind,
 Force of the feeble, nurse of infant loves,
 Guide to the wandring foot, light to the blind,
 Whom weeping winnes, repentant sorow moves,
 Father in care, mother in tender hart,
 Revive and save me slaine with sinfull dart. (E3; Southwell St.
 Peter's"
 751-757)

As an instrument of God's mercy, an androgynous Christ tenderly nurtures and nurses the weak like a mother and cares like a father. Figuring Christ as partially maternal runs counter to the general trend of the Reformation which was,

according to Patricia Crawford, to make all aspects of the Trinity exclusively masculine (*Women and Religion* 10-17). Grymeston's citation recalls an earlier tradition noted by Caroline Walker Bynum in *Jesus as Mother*. Bynum argues that the medieval Cistercian writers she studies use idealized images of motherhood to emphasize the emotion and humanity of Christ in an affective form of spirituality or to figure their authority as affectionate, nurturing, and accessible (110-169). The latter practice continues in the early modern period with the Puritans who, according to David Leverenz, represent the nurturing work of ministers as maternal and figure the good church as the mother—and the church of Rome as the whore (138-148). The Jesuit Southwell, similarly, describes the church as a mother, but with a different polemical intent: "He cannot have God for his father that refuseth to profess the Catholic Church for his mother" ("Epistle 18). The figure of Christ—rather than church—as mother, to which Grymeston refers, is more unusual in the early modern period. Using it allows Grymeston to ascribe worth to her work as a mother, for she can connect her care to that of Christ. When metaphors of gender describe the invisible to make it known—more typically in speaking of God as Father—the comparison offers a way of extending the power relations of the family into heaven, and consequently for justifying those relations on earth.²⁴ Grymeston, however, writes a way of knowing God that relates the ideal to mothering, nurturing, and suffering which, in turn, must assert and renew the importance of these values in society. If God is also the ultimate sign of authority, the comparison gives

mothering divine authorization and makes divinity more like women, not an exclusively masculine power over them.

Grymeston's gendering of the spiritual through language also affects how Bernye can become a Christian man. She compares the soul to women, again in a way that requires his imaginative sympathy with them. The soul, she tells Bernye, is like a widow (B3), Noah's innocent female dove (B3v), and a beautiful woman: "Thou hast a silly, poore, yet powerfull soule, a soule of noble substance, of exceeding beautie, inspired by God the Father; redeemed by God the Sonne; sanctified by God the holy Ghost: this is the careful charge committed to thy charge to keepe hir" (B3). The representation of the soul as feminine can be explained, as Joan M. Ferrante argues, partly by the gender of the noun, *anima*, and partly by the traditional qualities ascribed to it (37). Like the good woman, the soul is gentle and simple and possesses a beauty that must be protected. Grymeston reiterates inherited gender metaphors to make the abstract and invisible known, but she also does not undermine the representation of femininity as a positive value by referring to corresponding anti-feminist traditions; just as fallen angels, Adam, and Judas—rather than the more typical Eve—provide the concrete examples of sinners, no masculine *spiritus*, or higher rational soul, appears to rule the soul. When Grymeston tells her son of his feminine soul, she is implicitly suggesting a fundamental way in which he is like her. Ben Jonson's depiction of his recently deceased son provides a pointed contrast, for he also makes his son's soul like him. This young soul appears, not as feminine, but in "manlie shape" which, as Ronald Huebert suggests, indicates

that for Jonson “the shape of the immortal soul is the perfection of manliness” (31). Bernye Grymeston is not being told to attain a moral good that is masculine or to fashion himself upon the rejection of femininity. Rather, he must learn to care for what has been explicitly declared to be a good and feminine part of himself. The message is a contentious one, for that a son could become like his mother is the possibility education is supposed to preclude.

Grymeston’s words, because they are addressed to her son and because they are religious meditations, challenge the usual relationships among maternity, spirituality, and education. The silent communication of morality through material care was contrasted with and surpassed by the textual instruction of male humanist tutors. In her meditations, however, Grymeston speaks that maternal corporeal influence, writing it into words that make motherhood a literate, as well as physical and emotional, value. The idea of Christ as God-incarnate and as logos rests upon an analogous crux of body and language. In Chapter IX, “That Affliction is the coate of a Christian,” Grymeston makes the crucifixion central to education by turning the event, and particularly the body, into a lesson:

[L]et the Mount Calvarie be our schoole, the crosse our pulpit, the crucifixe our meditation, his wounds our letters, his lashes our commaes, his nailes our full-points, his open side our booke, and *Scire Christum crucifixum*, our whole lesson. (D3)²⁵

As the body becomes word, the wounds transfigure into letters and the open side into a book, other texts—the literal letters and books—are abandoned. But the

metaphors that transform the body into word do not desert the material for the abstract. The text of Christ's body also remains corporeal in order to supersede all texts that are merely language. This makes reading an experience of the body, at once material and spiritual, literal and figurative, present and beyond. The viscerality of a mother's spiritual instruction finds an analogy in Christ because he, too, instructs through his body. Rather than presenting corporeal maternal virtue as a silent ground upon which the scholarly education of a son will be articulated, which requires an opposition between physical and textual, Grymeston makes the body of Christ, as the mother's body had been, the whole lesson; the corporeal is still a tutorial, but now the mother is speaking it.

IIIa

The Book of the Crucifix, Intertextuality, and Gender: A Digression

Because Katherine Parr uses a similar comparison between Christ and a book in *Lamentacion of a Sinner*, I will return, for a moment, to her work in order further to consider feminine voices and intertextuality. Parr writes:

Therefore, to learn to know truly our sins is to study in the book of the
 the
 crucifix, by continual conversation in faith...this crucifix is the book
 wherein God hath included all things, and hath compendiously
 wrtten therein all truth profitable and necessary for our salvation.
 Therefore let us endeavour ourselves to study this book, that we,

being enlightened with the Spirit of God, may give him thanks for so great a benefit. (42)

Janel Mueller traces Parr's "book of the crucifix" metaphor to a sermon by John Fisher preached on a Good Friday, probably between 1531 and 1534—and certainly before 1535, when Fisher and Thomas More were executed for refusing to swear the Oath of Supremacy. Describing Parr's metaphor, Mueller notes that it "remains consistently theological and phenomenological" while Fisher's is more "graphic and pictorial" ("Complications" 33). Fisher draws on earlier Franciscan devotional practices and places greater emphasis on the image, while Parr brings the metaphor into Protestant print culture with her greater interest in the book ("Complications" 33-37). Grymeston's comparison between Christ and book uses the wounds more as Fisher does when he writes: "I mean by these capital letters the great wounds of his body, in his handes, and in hys feete, and in his side" (396). So, although Parr and Grymeston both transpose the experience of the cross into an education, Grymeston makes the body of Christ the text and lesson where Parr sees Christ as already word, a text disengaged from the material body.

The recurrence of a similar metaphor in the texts of Parr and Grymeston and Mueller's thoughtful discussion of Parr's text generate further questions about women's writing and female voices. In a 1988 article, "A Tudor Queen Finds a Voice," Mueller identified the questions of concern to her: "How was Parr as a woman—specifically, as Tudor Queen and wife—able to find voice in her *Lamentation* at all? To what extent and in what connection does the voice of the

Lamentation become an identifiably feminine one?" (16) Her conclusion at this time is that Parr's gender accounts for the literary distance between her text and those of Latimer, Tyndale, Brinkelow, and others who provide her models. Parr's voice is "muted," she concludes, but the "femininity of Parr's voice" nevertheless emerges (42). In a 1997 article, Mueller reconsiders this position, relating how she was required to dismiss her "feminist scholar's hypothesis about its [the metaphor's] autobiographical expressiveness" ("Complications" 31). This time, instead of attributing the difference of Parr's text from her model to gender, she suggests, rightly I think, that it is the result of the difference between the Protestant and Catholic religions. But having placed the feminist critic's interest in the biographical, when Mueller is confronted with intertextuality and disappointed by the "utter paucity of ... autoreferential markings," she can only conclude that religion is more important than gender in reading Parr ("Complications" 31,32).

But does intertextuality necessarily mean the presence of a less authentically "feminine voice?" This is a crucial question to answer with regard to Grymeston's text. With the exception of the introduction, it is almost entirely composed of citations. But there are at least two crucial ways in which gender is integrated into Grymeston's intertextuality. First, Mueller predicates her definition of intertextuality upon influence; she is concerned to demonstrate that Parr might actually have read Fisher's text, and she sees material, historical context (race, class, and gender) as a way of ceasing the "specter of an infinite regress of signifiers in play" ("Complications" 24). Intertextuality, however, is

more usually about the unstable signifier. According to Julia Kristeva's famous articulation, it is not about the study of sources, but should be defined as the "transposition of one (or several) sign system (s) into another" (59,60). If we look at gender not as a "tether" but as another intertext, a sign system constructed through the name of the author, Parr's gender must come into play. Parr's text is placed in public as the work of a female author and queen. Although the story of Grymeston's life does not circulate in culture in the way that Katherine Parr's does, even when Grymeston speaks as a mother and woman, she engages with gendered discourses of female authority, motherhood, and piety. The collision between the female name and the words of her text helps to define and redefine what it means to be a "woman."

Citation may also be gendered by what is not cited. In Fisher's sermon, for example, femininity is repeatedly associated with vanity. He addresses women to reprove them for having more concern about blemishes on their faces than on their souls, and—developing a pun on soul and sole—for being more ashamed of a "soule myrie shoo" than a "stincking soule" (402). Parr refers to none of this. Grymeston, too, cites selectively and in favour of women. From "St. Peter's Complaint," she chooses the passage in which women are most like Christ and excludes the extended section in which Peter attributes his denial of Christ to a woman's question (325-444). With the exception of Mary, women in Southwell's poem are the source of men's woe. Peter even laments that while David, Solomon, and Samson had been lured to sin by beautiful women, he is worse than they because a homely woman was the "author" of his death.

Being the author of damnation is the only "authorship" Southwell allows women, for only men participate in the exchange of words with Christ. To describe the relationship between Christ and Peter, Southwell makes Christ's eyes the centre of love, little worlds revealing to Peter his own sinfulness and "pierc[ing] his heart with healing wound" (446). Peter declares as Christ looks upon him

O eies, whose glaunces are a silent speech

In cyphred words, high misteries disclosing:

Which with a look all sciences can teach,

Whose textes to faithfull heartes need little glosing:

Witness Unworthy I, who in a looke,

Learn more by rote, then all the scribes by booke (385-390)

The reciprocal gaze between Christ and Peter offers a kind of a knowledge that is transcendent and literate, but without need of interpretation. It is beyond the knowledge of men, but only men can access it.

Grymeston did not include the negative representations of femininity from Southwell's poem, but instead takes up the ostensibly ungendered notion that Christ is available to all Christians. Yet, the theoretically ungendered is gendered in material praxis. When Parr and Grymeston compare the crucifix to a book or lesson, whatever the precise earlier sources for the metaphor, they did not have the same access to the vehicle of the metaphor as did men of the same class. Christ is like a school which, unlike all other schools in England, a woman can attend. Similarly, if Parr's book of the crucifix contains all things, by reading she

can claim to possess the same knowledge as those who have read many other books as well. Because of this gender dynamic in material culture, there must be gendered connotations to a woman's description of the crucifixion as a school or book. The versions of female identity that result from the metaphors used by Parr and Grymeston are different, as are some of the details of their theologies. Parr writes a female speaker who emphasises access to intellect and language, while Grymeston is more concerned with the material and corporeal. For each, however, the metaphor ascribes value to the knowledge to which they have access.

■

Further, Grymeston's focus on the senses, emotions, and the material, which makes her representation of faith, education, and motherhood different from her contemporaries, also allows her to use language for a distinct maternal purpose. For Grymeston, meditation upon the Word is necessary, but learning about God through the senses is also important, as it is in Southwell's poem. Grymeston mentions the commonplace that meditation is "the eye wherewith we see God" (B2), and in chapters two and three, expressed respectively "in the person of Heraclitus, who alwaies wept" and "the person of Dives in the torments of hell" (B2v,B4), dramatic speakers ask for particular emotional and sensual responses. The devil of the third chapter, for example, recounts the effects of hell on his senses as a cautionary example: his eyes are afflicted with the fearful sights of "griesely divels," his ears with the "hideous noise of damned spirits," his nose with the stink of "filth," and his taste with "want" (B4v). According to Louis

Martz, this technique of meditation through the senses and "imagining the place" is characteristic of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, composed 1521-1541 and widely influential in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries. Indeed, Ignatius' work seems to provide the model for Grymeston's. His mediator, too, should see hell in his imagination and then ask for an interior sense of the pain suffered by the damned, to see the fires of hell, hear their cries, smell the sulphur and rot, taste hell's bitterness, and touch the flames (66-69). This way of understanding theological concepts does not preclude reason, but it also does not involve exegetical analysis, just as the eyes of Southwell's Christ are a text that needs "little glosing." The mediator, according to Martz, has an affective way of knowing that applies the senses to the work of theological understanding (27-32; 71-75).

This use of the senses in meditation, as well as attention to the body and suffering, can be related to, but not reduced to, the images and methods that Grymeston's Catholicism makes available to her. Barbara Lewalski and others have argued that these properties distinguish Catholic from Protestant meditation (*Protestant* 148,149).²⁶ Diane Willen, differentiating Elizabeth Grymeston from the Protestant writers of mother's advice books, also attributes what she sees as Grymeston's lack of emphasis on literacy and Scriptures to her Catholicism ("Women and Religion" 155). While it is true that Grymeston does not become an advocate for Bible-reading as Dorothy Leigh does, I do not quite agree that Grymeston is unconcerned with literacy; her extensive citations incorporate both the literate and the literary. But she does use her literacy differently. The

affective potential in religious language, which can create emotional bonds among the speaker, the reader, and the object of meditation, facilitates a relationship between Elizabeth and Bernye. She tells him:

I leave thee this portable *veni mecum* for thy Counsellor, in which thou maiest see the true portrature of thy mothers minde, and finde something either to resolve thee in thy doubts, or comfort thee in thy distresse; hoping, that being my last speeches, they will be better kept in the conservance of thy memorie; which I desire thou wilt make a Register of heavenly meditations. (A3,A3v)

The meditations are a "*veni mecum*," a portable motherly presence, and her words perpetuate her love and influence. Bernye responds in kind, writing in his "madrigall" of receiving "deadly wounds" from her meditations, as well as being healed. He tells her: "how oft the strokes of sounding keyes hath slaine,/As oft the looks of your kind eies restores my life againe" (E4v). Elizabeth and Bernye use the powerful sacred effect of the eyes to create a relationship between them. Instead of depicting female eyes as Southwell does, as "Earthes necessarie evils, captivating thralles/Now murdring with your tongs, now with your glances" (321,322), or writing an exclusively masculine exchange between Christ and Peter, Elizabeth and Bernye write a visual exchange in which female eyes are the source of redemption and healing. Bernye's poem affirms the value of his mother's writing through describing the effect she has had upon his senses. The sounds that he has heard, the touches that have wounded him, and the looks that she has imparted, judge and then restore him.

IV

The Voice from the Priest Hide

I want finally to discuss Elizabeth Grymeston as a specifically Catholic woman reader and writer and to consider the way in which her text privatizes the religious controversies in the texts she has read. To do this, I will first argue that the Catholic woman, as mother and reader, was peculiarly important to her faith community. There are qualifications to this statement. Obviously, Catholic women were not necessarily more pious than those who were Protestant. As Patricia Crawford argues, women's class position and the amount of leisure time they had for devotion caused a greater differentiation in the character of women's daily expressions of piety than their theological positions (*Women and Religion* 76). Neither were Protestant women unimportant in their church. Diane Willen notes that if the state's sanction of the role of Protestant women in transferring religious culture makes it seem less dramatic than the role of Catholic women, Protestant women's advocacy for literacy had transformative cultural implications ("Women and Religion" 156). Nevertheless, although Catholic gentlewomen occupied a position within their families that was similar to their Protestant counterparts, they occupied a different societal position;²⁷ in a Protestant state, their families could not be microcosms of the nation in which they lived.

The involvement of women in controversy between Catholics and Protestants evolved through their gender social roles. Women who refused to attend the established church could be fined under the Act of Uniformity of 1559,

although because of the married woman's legal position as a *femme covert* and resistance by male householders to the state's intrusion into their household matters, women were not punished as often as men (Aveling 59-66; Rowlands 158,159). Marie B. Rowlands describes the relationship between Catholic families and English society when she writes: "[t]he paterfamilias maintained a public stance of accommodation, ensuring not only the survival of Catholicism but its continuing social status. The women—precisely because they had no public role and were protected to some extent by public opinion—were able to engage in resistance" (162). Resistance could take the form of sheltering priests, proselytising neighbours, keeping feast and fast days within the household, and providing the vessels for the conduct of mass when a priest was available.²⁸ As John Bossy says, "...Mass on Sunday, or more often, was as domestic as fish on Friday" (127). A few women were executed for sheltering priests (as was the fate of Margaret Ward, Anne Line, and Margaret Clitherow), and Parliament did express some concern about women's activities, passing a law in 1593 (the year in which Elizabeth Grymeston's name appears on the recusancy roles) that attempted better to regulate their activities by imposing a fine of £10 per month on men who harboured recusants.

The efforts of Catholic women to educate their children in piety could also be characterized as resistant. This aspect of motherhood assumed additional importance in Catholic society and became the focus of legal concern. Education was supposed to be Protestant, and indeed, as Rosemary O'Day argues, "education was an essential agent in the defeat of Catholicism and the

conversion of the people to a distinctively English form of Protestantism" (75). Catholics, therefore, were not supposed to work as school teachers or tutors or to send their children abroad to learn (Aveling 149). Although many did send their children to St. Omer or Douai, to receive a Catholic education, religious education at home was the primary way to pass Catholicism from one generation to the next. (Aveling, 59-66, 141-163; Rowlands 158-162).²⁹ Even for the children of the minority of the gentry who were sent abroad to be educated or to enter religious orders, the mother's instruction was crucial. John Bossy reports that a quarter of the boys who entered college in Rome gave credit to their mothers for their religion (157) and Patricia Crawford that "[t]he records of admission of men and women to religious orders abroad show that maternal persuasion was influential" (*Women and Religion* 61). The effectiveness of maternal influence may have contributed to the laws, passed in 1593 and in 1624, that contained clauses requiring the removal of a recusant's children at the age of seven (or in the case of the 1624 bill, the age of nine) (Bossy 163). These were not commonly enforced, but when they were, upper-class families without fathers were the most vulnerable to legal intervention. The children of Elizabeth Cary, Countess of Falkland, for example, were removed from her and taken to a Protestant household when she and her husband separated. When the widow of the Duke of Buckingham became a Catholic, Charles I also removed her children from her care (Bossy, 162-163; Crawford, "Construction" 12).

The cultural construction of the female reader as pious and passive could also confer a particular social consequence on Catholic women readers. Of the

eighteen devotional texts addressed to women listed by Suzanne Hull, five deal with Catholic issues: Richard [Rowland] Versteegan's *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes* (1601), which is cited by Grymeston; Sir Edward Hoby's *A Letter to Mr. T.H.* (1609); Richard Broughton's *A Manual of Praiers used by the Fathers of the Primitive Church* (1618); *A Rule of Good Life* (1633); and Anthony Stafford's *The Femall Glory* (1635). The texts by Versteegan, Broughton, and the pseudo-Bernardian *Rule* are Catholic devotional works, while Stafford's prayers restore the worship of Mary to the Church of England, and Hoby's polemic answers one Theophilus Higgons' defense of Catholicism. Each of these texts places its female readers outside of the religious controversy with which their authors engage, and they imagine women readers to be in need of guidance or protection from heresy. Rather than expecting women to respond with their own antagonistic arguments, they anticipate that women will merely follow what they have been told. Hoby, for example, says that he writes to contradict Higgons because he is concerned about the "poore weake inveigled Ladies" Higgons has led astray. Higgons imagines that the ladies are "peering into this letter," and consequently uses them to signal the simplicity and purity of his arguments. The pretext of the female reader signifies the truth of the argument because for women readers, who are easily confused, he will write only what he can justify.³⁰

Versteegan and Broughton evoke the pious gullibility of female readers for more overtly political purposes. With some irony, Richard Broughton attempts to outsmart Protestants. He notes how Church Fathers, also accepted by

Protestants, supported praying to saints, Mary, and angels; revered relics; believed in prayers for the dead, transubstantiation, and the supremacy of the pope; and rejected justification by faith alone.³¹ As he explicitly states, his delineation of the major Catholic-Protestant doctrinal differences is meant to be both controversial and socially transformative. It is also addressed to an audience of women: Queen Anne and her ladies. Broughton explains why he has dedicated his work to them:

not to make you patrons of the praiers of Sainctes, and their holy faith, but to make them Patrones unto you: not to constitute you judges of the honour which is due to the High Queene and Ladie in Heaven, but to make you ladies there: nor to make your unlearned sexe umpeare over the whole church of God, but to procure you to be true members of that holie companie, forth of which there is no salvation ...[and that their lords] by this and your example, to learn and do the honours and duties they owe to others." (7)

This appeal for patronage refuses to allow the women a position of judgment over what they read. Because of their unlearnedness, they ought not to be judges of the honour due Mary or umpires over the church of God. By following, not by deciding what is true, they will be made ladies in heaven and members of the "holie companie." Broughton's aim with this work is less to increase female devotion than to change the church of England. He expects that through the example provided by the ladies, influenced by Broughton's book, the lords of England, including its king, will be converted. Other Catholic writers also saw

Queen Anne as a co-religionist and addressed works to her in hopes of furthering the Catholic cause; "R.W." presented his *Dialogues of S. Gregorie* to her because she was known to import Catholic books of devotion, and Michael Walpole urged her to return England to Catholicism and, like Esther, to appeal to James on behalf of Catholics (Lewalski, *Writing Women* 22). Broughton's image of his female readers draws on two constructions of femininity, that women are more easily led and that they are seductive, both of which he will put to good political effect. They will follow his cause and allure their husbands to it for him.

Elizabeth Cary's English translation of Jean Davy Du Perron's *The Reply of the Most Illustrious Cardinall of Perron, to the answeare of the most excellent King of Great Britaine* (1630) provides another dramatic example of the political function of Catholic women.³² Cary, however, does not premise women's activities on their gullibility. Cary conceals her identity as the translator, not signing the work and stating: "I desire to have noe more guest at of me, but that I am a Catholique, and a Woman" (a~2(v)). The biography by one of her daughters identifies her as the translator, and the attribution is accepted by the *Short Title Catalogue* (*Lady Falkland* 206). A polemical work, the *Reply* was printed at Douai and smuggled into England, where it was suppressed by Archbishop Abbott and burned—although a few copies escaped this fate (Weller and Ferguson 11). The adulation directed at the translator in the various introductory poems suggests that Cary's position is crucial to its English printing. Although Father Leander de S. Marino, seemingly responsible for the publication, writes in "An Admonition to the Reader," of a conflict between a learned display

and Cary's gender (e7), Cary, herself, addresses the work to an audience of scholars: "I will not make use of that worne-out forme of saying, I printed it against my will, mooved by the importunitie of Friends: I was moved to it by my beleefe, that it might make those English that understand not French, whereof there are maine [sic], even in our universities, read Perron" (a-2(v)). She understands Perron, and his true Catholic message, better than men in universities. In addition to having a female translator the work also appeals to a female patron, Queen Henrietta Maria. The request for the Queen's patronage, like the lengthy descriptions of the Catholic woman translator, presents women as effective advocates for Catholicism. Cary's dedication describes Queen Henrietta Maria as the only possible patron for the work because she has herself been translated. She is both French, and fit to own "an ornament of your country," and the Queen of England, and so "fittest to patronize the making him an English man" (a2). Cary recognizes that gaining the present King of England as an audience for the work is politically problematic, for "the misfortune of our times, hath made it a presumption, to give the Inheritance of this worke (that was sent to the Father in French) to the Sonne in English" (a2). While writing to Charles is difficult, addressing the translation to the present Queen, the former king's daughter-in-law, removes the taint of presumption. She is "fittest to receive it for him, who are such a parte of him, as none can make you two, other then one" (a2). Because the two are one flesh, the work addressed to Queen Henrietta Maria is expected to reach Charles.

Together, the royal patron and gentlewoman translator, can overcome the problems of both gender and religion:

And for the honor of my Sexe, let me saie it, you are a woeman, though farr above other wemen, therefore fittest to protect a womans worke, if plaine translation where there is nothing aimed at, but rightlie to expresse the Authors intention may be called a worke. And last (to crowne your other additions) you are a Catholicke, and a zealous one, and therefore fittest to receive the dedication of a Catholicke-worke. (a2)

The female translator, eschewing intentions of her own to furnish the work for an English audience, colludes with her patron to perpetuate a debate between a French Catholic theologian and an English protestant monarch after both of the original participants had died.

Richard Rowlands' *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes* (1601) is also addressed to Catholic women and further illustrates the import of being a Catholic woman reader in early seventeenth-century England. Although Rowlands, an English recusant, published his work in Antwerp in 1601 under the name of Versteegan, Elizabeth Grymeston had access to it, as demonstrated by her inclusion of his translations of the Psalms in *Meditatons, Miscelanea Memoratives*. In addition to the psalm translations, Rowlands' volume contains texts that praise Mary and female saints, argue for a Catholic theology of the sacraments, and obliquely defend the Catholic church: "No good man ever did new Church erect" (96). Rowlands presents a series of allegorical "dream

visions," that need to be decoded, although this is not a difficult enterprise. He coyly mocks "John and Martin," notes various betrayals and moral failures of the Reformation, and ominously offers the maxims that suggest those who cause others harm will also injure themselves and that sway does not long endure (109-112). With these allegories, Rowlands is not offering his female readers a private, apolitical faith, but articulating a wish to alter the relationship between church and state. Furthermore, he expects his women readers to be capable of decoding his allegories. That Grymeston, a member of its intended audience, had a copy of *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes* suggests that she was connected to a community of other Catholic readers who could provide her with a book printed in Belgium. Because her book includes a fragment of Rowland's work, albeit the least controversial, for that community of readers, for readers who recognize the source, it may come trailing clouds of Catholic politics.

Just as Grymeston's book subtly points to the exiled text, it also remembers the Jesuit, in Loyola, and the Catholic martyr, in Southwell. Citing these texts, or any texts other than the Bible, is also a method of composition with which many Puritans would not agree because it suggests that non-Scriptural books may provide the words for meditation. But Elizabeth Grymeston's book cannot really be publicly characterized as controversial. Like most devotional works, her book is acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants: she makes only one reference to the pope and discusses no theological controversies such as church government, the sacraments, or justification by

faith. Yet, Grymeston's intertextuality has both a public and private face. By keeping the more controversial elements of some of her sources private, Grymeston demonstrates a way for Catholics to be publicly loyal English subjects and Catholics. The public voice speaks a shared piety, while preserving difference in private. Her Catholic sources inhabit the same space as texts from the miscellany *Englands Parnassus* (1600). Without conflict, her faith mingles with the Englishness of the poets from a miscellany published with a nationalist aim.

The later editions of the work similarly conjoin faith to loyalty. In the second and remaining editions, printed probably in 1605 or 6, 1608, and 1618, there are six additional chapters. Although the second edition, like all of these subsequent editions, has no date on the title page, Hughey and Hereford place the publication date as either in 1605 or the beginning of 1606, so that this edition was published either immediately before or immediately following the exposure of the Gunpowder Plot. There is no explanation for why these chapters were not initially published, but whatever the reason, and whether Elizabeth Grymeston actually wrote them or not, they are authored by her.³³ Because of them, we see a mother's voice speaking at some length about political issues such as the swearing of oaths, martyrology, and treason. The first of the added chapters can be read as a defence of Catholic martyrs and coincides with a continuing debate between Catholics and Protestants about martyrology (Solt 147-153; Raspa xiii-xxxvii). The other chapters address sins absolutely striking for their relevance to Catholics in 1605. After November

1605, suspicion of hidden Catholic treason increased, and as a result, Parliament passed two recusancy statutes, one of which prohibited Catholic recusants from educating their own children and required recusants to take, not only the Oath of Supremacy of 1559, but also an oath of allegiance. Grymeston defends martyrs of the "Catholicke Church," who were converted by baptism, the sacraments, and reading God's word, and notes how their torments are their triumphs (1606 E2,E2v), urges obedience to kings, whether just or unjust, supports orderliness, and describes original sin as treason and murder as a crime against the king. The law, integral to order, is associated with the good, while sin is the disruption of legal process. Judges are told to be just, witnesses truthful, and lawyers, for their part, should leave off informing falsely (F7-F8v). The added chapters conclude with a poke at the legal profession: "Caesarius reports of a Lawyer, who falling sicke, it was found he had no tongue in his head; of which the Physicians could give no other reason, but that he had solde it in his health" (F8v).³⁴

For the Catholic gentleman, public life frequently conflicted with the private. Queen Elizabeth had avowed that she did not wish to make windows into men's hearts, meaning that the theological positions of her subjects could remain private so long as their public behaviour was loyal. Recusants took up the pledge, but because the Catholic church had excommunicated the Queen in 1570, and an English statute of 1585 had made it treason to re-enter England as a priest, the separation of public and private at the point of faith was always unstable, especially in times of conflict. According to Ronald J. Corthell, for the

English state, the crux of the problem with Catholics was less doctrinal difference than the fear that Catholic subjects might be serving the Queen while possessing a secret loyalty to another (287-289). Katharine Eisaman Maus aptly describes the situation as being one in which there is a "paranoid anxiety that good outward behaviour is merely the cloak and pretext for subversive conspiracies" (83).

On quests for subversive conspiracies, the state did attempt to uncover secrets of the domestic space. Father Gerard, who would later become a martyr, identifies domestic intrusions as one of the factors leading to the Gunpowder Plot. He states: "What a thing is it for a Catholic gentleman to have his house suddenly beset on all sides with a number of men in arms." The pursuivants, he complains, would invade the house, running up stairs and into chambers with drawn swords, opening all the doors, and with cunning means, go searching for "secret places" (36). While he describes this as frightening for the weaker sort of women and children, it is also a problem for the male householder, for whom the house ought to be his "castle" and not liable to state invasion.

Women were not only terrified, however. They could also effectively ward off invaders to conceal the secrets of the house. A Mrs. Heywood, for example, used her farthingale to block the searchers' view while the Jesuit John Gerard climbed into his hiding place. And an eleven year old Frances Burroughs told the searchers that they had to put away their swords, or else, she said, "my mother will die, for she cannot endure to see a naked sword!" On the pretext of helping her swooning mother, she hid the priests (Hodgetts 19, 153). In these examples, the performance of femininity, the reiteration of material attributes and

typical weaknesses, protects and conceals. Grymeston's book is like the woman who stands at the door, protesting her femininity while protecting her faith. Grymeston's voice clearly proclaims that there are no subversive conspiracies in her house. Because the mother's voice is the voice of privacy, above all else, and because Grymeston is ostensibly speaking only to her son, she is well able to disclose that her family is both pious and loyal in private. Male voices cannot serve the same function because men are the ones under suspicion. The men in her family identify themselves with the publication. Bernye includes a madrigal response in which he reflects upon the value of his mother's words, and the second edition also has the Grymeston family crest which Hughey and Hereford suggest may have been added by Christopher. The crest displays their status as gentry, a class position that must also have aided Grymeston in publishing and learning to write. But it is Grymeston's gendered identity that best enables her to write assurances that neither she nor her immediate family would conspire against the state. She is not subversive—that term by which we place value on past politics—but she is nevertheless remarkable. By speaking for faith and the social order, she explores in some detail legal and political issues with which she is theoretically not supposed to be concerned.

There are questions about the politics of women's religious writing that remain in need of exploration. While it is perfectly plausible for critics to consider the politics of Donne's devotions, women's writing has been preserved within a protective apolitical cocoon, as critics repeat the early modern dogma that women were creatures of the private sphere. Attending only to the strategies by

which women could make the publication of their work acceptable (although this is, of course, very important), neglects the issue of why people would want to publish or purchase works by women. That the work appeals to a particular religious politics is one possible answer. By writing as mothers, Grymeston and Leigh, to different degrees, reiterate the traditional construction of their gender as unlearned, maternal, and devout. But as a consequence of the force of their conviction, the differing styles of their arguments, and the way in which they make visible the advantages of masculinity, their representations of femininity and maternity exceed that which is only chaste, silent, obedient, and maternally moral. Both Grymeston and Leigh use the maternal voice to place women within the disputes of ecclesiastical politics and to offer a vision, both Puritan and Catholic, of church and national religious community that is not the dominant vision proposed by Hooker or James I but is nevertheless important to their own readers.

Endnotes

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- ¹ Beilin, *Redeeming Eve* 266-271; Wall, 283-296; Wayne, "Advice" 65-66.
- ² *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie*, however, was not addressed to children, but to the Countess' daughter-in-law. It is a treatise encouraging her to breast-feed.
- ³ Although Christopher Hill described this domestic ideology as a Puritan phenomenon, Margo Todd disputes this thesis, arguing for its pre-Reformation humanist roots and noting that English Anglicans and Catholics followed similar theories of household education (Todd, 18-34; Hill, 443-481).
- ⁴ For more on the transmission of moral characteristics through milk, see Fildes 112.
- ⁵ See also Willen, "Women and Religion" 149-150 and Houlbroke, 148.
- ⁶ For a discussion of breeching, see Anthony Fletcher 297, 340.
- ⁷ Books 1-4 were published in 1593, but Books 6, 7, and 8 were not published until 1648 and 1661-2 (McGrade 12).
- ⁸ Strier takes issues with Annabel Patterson's argument in *Censorship and Interpretation* and David Norbrook's assertion in "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters" that Donne opposed the king. While I am agreeing with Strier that there is a kind of politics in the avowal of public or private devotion, this should not be taken to mean that I find the arguments of the others unconvincing. There is more complexity to their arguments than Strier allows.
- ⁹ See for example the popular devotional texts by Thomas Sorocold and Daniel Featley, as well as the mother's advice book by Elizabeth Joceline. Joceline tells her child to meditate in the morning and evening and structures her advice according to the activities of the day.
- ¹⁰ Thomas Sorocold's book of prayers includes a large number of prayers for families, in which the family is pray for the monarch, for ministers and bishops, for Oxford, Cambridge and the Inns of Court, grammar schools, the city, and friends. In one section, such matters are framed as part of the householder's prayer. The householder prays for the purging of his understanding so that he may read, hear, and understand the word, and for his wife, children and servants. He asks for the prospering of his labour and blessings for King James, Queen Anne, Prince Charles, ministers, councils, nobles, magistrates, and the people. The book also has prayers for particular public events: petitions for help in time of war, the thanksgiving prayers of Queen Elizabeth for the overthrow of the Spanish in 1588 and the success of the navy in 1596, and a prayer

of thanksgiving for the delivery of the Parliament from the Gunpowder Treason of 1605. With the third edition of his work on private devotion, Daniel Featley adds a prayer of thanksgiving for the events of November 1605 (noted in 6th edition, 1639). This passage, however, has a particular legal purpose. He places the book of Esther beside the Act of Parliament which requires everyone in England to report to the Parish church, thereby attributing scriptural sanction to a social obligation (6th ed., 479-497).

¹¹ The same ideas are repeated in the prayer for families in the evening. They are to pray for the Church, especially for those who are persecuted, for England and Ireland, the Queen and Commonwealth, the establishment of a Church in which there is no superstition and idolatry, the defense of the Queen from conspiracies and rebellions, the enlightenment of the magistrates by the Holy Spirit, and blessing for Oxford and Cambridge (985,986).

¹² Atkinson and Stoneman's discussion of the prayers on the subject of childbirth from book five of *The Monument of Matrones* also demonstrates that becoming a mother was a crucial concern in women's religious lives. Unlike the *Book of Common Prayer*, which deals only with churching, Bentley's collection includes prayers for women in labour, prayers of thanksgiving after labour, prayers for difficult birth or death, and prayers for the midwife and the baby.

¹³ Nicholas Breton also ventriloquized female voices on other occasions. In "Engendering Penitence," Suzanne Trill notes how in *Marie Magdalens Love* (1595) and *The Pilgrimage to Paradise, joyned with The Countesse of Penbrookes love* (1592) Breton expresses penance through a female voice. She argues: "Appropriating a female voice facilitates the articulation of desire for God within the 'normative' discourses of heterosexual desire. Adopting a female voice, therefore, enables Breton to articulate such a desire without confronting its homosocial implications. The gendered distinctions in Breton's articulation of religious desire suggest that 'feminine' characteristics are vital and enviable qualities in the pursuit of an intimate relationship with Christ" (41).

¹⁴ In 1613, Elizabeth had married Frederick of Bohemia, who was made the King of Bohemia in 1619. It was only then that conflict between Catholics and Protestants intensified, for the Catholic Hapsburg empire regarded his acceptance of the position as an affront; thus began the Thirty Year's War, which contributed, in 1620, to Elizabeth and Frederick forced flight from Prague. They would take refuge in the Hague, where they would remain for the rest of their lives. James consistently refused to come to their

aid, to help the Protestant cause in Europe, or to allow Elizabeth to return to England. He feared that her presence in England would instigate opposition among Puritans to the Spanish marriage he was attempting to arrange for Prince Charles (Bergeron 151-154).

¹⁵ He takes evidence for his view that Donne was not always an "absolutist" from his enthusiasm for his diplomatic mission to Germany to settle the conflict between Catholics and Protestants and from his support for European Protestantism (21).

¹⁶ In his preface, Smith identifies himself as a servant to Grymeston's sister-in-law and brother. Smith says that when his mistress sent him to fetch her music lessons, he found Elizabeth Grymeston's meditations. He read them, found them edifying, had them published by friends, and now seeks to mollify his master for this transgression by making Elizabeth Grymeston the patron to her work.

¹⁷ Aveling reports that Catholic gentry frequently held property rights over Protestant churches and could be lay rectors, which gave them the responsibility for paying the parson or the parish church warden (143-145).

¹⁸ Although we do not know how old Bernye was in 1604 when the work was first published, Grymeston's advice about marriage and the published response by Bernye, "A Madrigall made by Berny Grymeston upon the conceit of his mothers play to the former ditties" suggest that he is an adolescent rather than a child. In any case, the oldest that he might have been is twenty because if Grymeston, as we know, was born sometime before 1563, married by 1584, and dead by 1604, she was married for 20 years, and if we assume post-marital conception, even if he were the eldest child, he could be only 20.

¹⁹ I have been able to identify the following citations, and correlate them between Grymeston's text (1604) and *England's Parnassus (EP)*: Spenser (B2v:EP 282; B4: EP 45; C2v: EP 167; C3: EP 321) Lodge (B3:EP 320; C:EP 168) Sir John Davies (B3:EP 276; Dv: "Nosce Teipsum") Drayton (B3v:EP 273; C:EP 230; D3v: EP 272) Sackville (B4v: EP 133) Harington, trans. (Cv: EP 121); Daniel (Cv; C2v: EP 50) Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (C2v: EP 50) Sylvester (D: EP 206). She also quotes from Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas *La Semaine* (A4v) and cites lines very like John Davies of Hereford's "The Holy Roode" (D3), neither of which I could find in *Englands Parnassus*. Hereford's poem, however, was not published until 1609 so there may be another source. To this list Hughey and Hereford add Gregory, Jerome, Augustine, Seneca, and Terence, but they do not identify the pages.

²⁰ Hughey and Hereford identify *Englands Parnassus* as Grymeston's source (84).

²¹ Patricia Crawford has argued: "the strength of her maternal feeling allowed Elizabeth Grymeston to retain the status of a good woman while acting in a radical way by publishing her work" ("Construction" 28). While I agree that writing as a mother was indeed one stance through which to maintain the status of the "good woman," it was not invariably true that the maternal influence was thought to be good. Maternal advice requires a justification.

²² Fletcher (340) makes a similar point. Linda A. Pollock offers a useful outline of the argument made by Lawrence Stone, Phillipe Ariès and others that families lacked affection and that parents and schools treated children harshly. Pollock rigorously disputes these ideas but does not distinguish between fathers and mothers as parents (1-67).

²³ For discussions of the relationship between the female body and the mind, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex* and Maclean.

²⁴ This conclusion is influenced by Gordon Teskey's discussion of allegory in "Allegory, Materialism, Violence."

²⁵ The comparison between Christ and the book can also be found in earlier works such as *Meditation on the Life and Passion of Christ* and *The Charter of Christ*. See Richard Firth Green 257-263. I am grateful to Professor Green for drawing this to my attention. Grymeston's use of this image is more precisely paralleled in "The Holy Rood or Christes Crosse," by John Davies, although this poem was not published until 1609.

²⁶ See also Marie B. Rowlands (163,164) and Crawford, *Women and Religion* (93).

²⁷ I use the word "gentlewomen" deliberately. While until the middle of the reign of Elizabeth I, there had been recusants among yeoman and husbandmen, by the 1590's Catholicism was confined to the houses of the gentry. Most common people did not have access to priests, who had protection in gentry houses (Haigh 265,266).

²⁸ Historians of English Catholicism have long agreed on the importance of women to English Catholicism in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. John Bossy calls this period a "matriarchy," (153,158) and agrees with A.L. Rowse's earlier assessment that Catholicism in England was the result of the result of men's "weak-kneed evasion of patriarchal responsibility" (155). Although Bossy very usefully outlines the social circumstances (also cited by Marie B. Rowland) that made Catholic women important, his conclusion is predicated upon the notion that history is properly the story

of men. Bossy, again accepting Rowse's views, figures the intrusion of women in this narrative as comedy, drawing upon the image of the henpecked husband and the aggressive wife (153). But, as Diane Willen points out, Catholic women, as much as Protestant, lived in a patriarchal society ("Women and Religion" 153); this was no matriarchy. Catholic women's effectiveness as advocates for their faith arises, not from any exceptional power, but from their traditional feminine functions as housewives, mothers, and passive readers. For more on anti-Catholic legislation and its effects, see Aveling, 141-163. Aveling points out numerous ways in which the laws were not enforced, and argues that by the 1630s the state regarded Catholics as "cows to be cherished and milked." (157).

²⁹ The rules could be undermined in several ways. Margaret Clitherow harboured a Catholic schoolmaster to teach her children along with priests. There were Catholics teaching schools, as indicated by the arrests of Margaret Ford for recusancy and teaching children in 1619, 1631, and 1634/5. Christopher Grymeston's experience of Cambridge under a Catholic master was not a singular experience. O'Day suggests that college living arrangements could serve recusant interests (170, 194; Aveling, 146-149).

³⁰ Stafford deploys the female reader, and her supposed need for female exemplars to guide her behaviour, to justify his controversial argument for a return to the veneration of Mary. Commencing in a concern for female behaviour, the work expands into panegyrics on Mary and explications of Marian theology. Ostensibly writing a biography of Mary, Stafford remarks upon her early life as a nun, her perpetual virginity, her life as a widow after the virgin birth, and her assumption into heaven. Stafford is also requiring the acceptance of non-Scriptural authorities. According to Danielle Clarke, Queen Henrietta Maria's devotion to the Virgin Mary was a site of doctrinal and political tension. Stafford's *The Femall Glory*, in part because it did not claim to be a Catholic text and had the approval of Laud's chaplains, became one of the most important and contentious texts to venerate Mary. *A Rule of Good Life* is a translation of a work thought to be by Bernard for Dame Francis Gawen, abbess of an English order at Cambray.

³¹ Anthony Milton says that during the reign of James I, divines of all doctrinal positions appealed to the authority of church fathers because they could demonstrate the congruence of the Church of England with the past. Puritans used a rhetoric of support for Scripture alone more strongly, but everyone regarded Church Fathers as authorities

that buttressed the authority of Scripture (273).

³² The provenance and purpose of the text is explained in a letter by Perron to Mr. Causabon. Perron states that Causabon showed King James a letter Perron had written to Causabon. James had replied publicly to Perron's letter, and this work is Perron's response to James. The work is a defense and definition of Catholic theology, in which Perron explains, with respect, that contrary to James' own claim, James is not a Catholic (1-11).

³³ Hughey and Hereford assert that these additions must be by Grymeston because they repeat themes found in the other chapters, and continue to alter quotations to make them point to these themes (89-91). The added chapters, however, have a remarkably different style, altogether abandoning dramatic voices, poetry, and proverbs, and quoting most often from the Latin Bible and church fathers like Augustine and Gregory. The voice of these chapters makes no reference to itself as a mother or to the mother-son relationship, and cites with none of the feminine interestedness of the other chapters. Here, when faith is represented as a relationship between God and men and compared to that between fathers and sons, women are effectively excluded from faith (D5(v),D6,D8). Although the chapter chastising lasciviousness does make it the sin of men—"Many of our swaggering youths, that drie their bones with chamber worke, are growne to thinke Lechery no vice, nor Rape no sine, terming it *Magnatum ludum*"—the sin itself is metaphorically femininized, described as "covering the face of the earth with her leprosie, and Syren like enchanting every man of what degree soever: and where she gets entertainment, she never ceaseth stil spending body and goods: from a brutish beginning she brings them to be a beggarly end" (E4v). None of these points constitutes firm evidence of another writer's involvement, but the difference does need to be noted. If they are actually by Elizabeth Grymeston, we also do not know why they were not initially published.

³⁴ There were restrictions on the publication of Catholic books in England at the time. Many of them had to be printed on secret presses in England or at locations in Europe (Douai, S. Omer, Paris, and Antwerp) where there were scholarly, religious, or secular communities of English Catholics, but Grymeston's work does not seem to have faced such regulations. *Miscelanea* is not listed in Allison and Rogers catalogue of books by Catholics, although Versteegan's *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes* printed at Antwerp (1601) and Southwell's *S. Peters Complaint*, S. Omer, 1616 (although

a later edition than the one Grymeston must have read) are. The first edition of *St. Peters Complaint* (1595) was also printed by John Windet, who published other Catholic writers (Allison and Rogers 229, 366,467).

Chapter Four

Manuscripts and Print

in Lady Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania*

*Hee may owr profit, and our Tuter prove
In whom alone wee doe this power finde,
To joine two harts as in one frame to move;
Two bodies, butt one soule to rule the minde;*

*Eyes which must care to one deere object bind
Eares to each others speech as if above
All else they sweet, and learned were; this kind
Content of lovers wittniseth true love,*

*Itt doth enrich the witts, and make you see
That in your self, which you knew nott before,
Forcing you to admire such guifts showld bee
Hid from your knowledge, yet in you the store;*

*Millions of thes adorne the throne of Love,
How blest bee they then, who his favours prove.*

Lady Mary Wroth,
"Sonnet 6," from "A Crowne of Sonnets"

By writing her romance, *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania* (1621), Mary Wroth chose a genre that was peculiarly and problematically associated with women readers. Male authors frequently addressed prose romances to women, while writers of conduct books made inveighing against the romance, as well as other types of prose fiction, a staple of their directions on the behaviour and education of women. With my discussion of Mary Wroth's romance, I will consider how this crucial connection between romance and female sexuality is also informed by the changing cultural position of the genre. In particular, I am interested in how Mary Wroth's romance is enmeshed in the shift from manuscript to print culture, with both the coterie and print culture being central to her writing life. This chapter will argue that with the compulsive attention that Wroth directs towards the writing and reading practices of manuscript culture,

including the production and exchange of handwritten texts, ciphers, and household reading. Wroth offers examples of gendered reading practices that enable women to become writers, even for male readers.

Although the friction between manuscript and print culture will be the focus of this chapter, I will first consider briefly the intertwining of vernacularity, religion, class, and nationalism into anxieties about women reading romances. In *Instruction of a Christian Woman*, Juan Luis Vives disapproves of books about war and love written in the mother tongue on both sexual and intellectual grounds. He contends that when a woman thinks about armour she “drinketh poyson in her hart” (10) and may be “quickened into vyce” (11); he asserts, as well, that romances are “bokes but ydel men wrote unlearned, and set al upon filthe and viciousness, in whome I wonder what shuld delite men, but that vice pleaseth them so moche” (10v). While Vives also does not want women to read Ovid, his focus is on romances from Spain, France, Flanders, and England and those tales that have been translated from Latin into the vernacular (10v).¹ Henrich Bullinger, in *The Christen State of Matrimony* (1541), similarly suggests that romances should not be a part of women’s education because of the power of evil words to corrupt. Focusing on vernacular texts, he equates “Bokes of Robyn hode, Beves of Hampton, Troylus, and such like fables” with foolish ribald talking and says that they “do but kindle iniyers (?) lyke lyes, and wanton love, which ought not in youthe wythe theyr fyrst spettle to be dronken in, lest they ever remayne in them” (lxxxvii (v)). Richard Mulcaster and Richard Braithwait, for their part, reject the foreign. Mulcaster claims that Ariosto and Boccaccio are

“over heavie to wymen” and so should be avoided like other Italian works (*Positions* 172), while Richard Braithwait warns that Italian stories offer detrimental examples of people with wandering fancies (141). He will have women avoid books “treating of light subjects,” among which he includes “Venus and Adonis” and stories such as the rape of Ganimede and Lais in Euripides.² The particular sexual corruption caused by prohibited books—frequently, although not always, English translations of continental works—associates wantonness, lightness, and wandering with both the foreign and the vernacular.

The Englishness of the writer offers no hedge against these hazards, however. Francis Meres regards *Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwicke*, and *Arthur*, among others, as corrupting influences, while Thomas Powell in *Tom of all trades, or the plaine path-way to preferment* (1631) opposes the reading of *The Arcadia*. Powell’s narrator advises a gentleman of declining fortune how to train his children for useful employment. For the daughters, he offers the following recommendation:

In stead of Song and Musicke, let them learne Cookery and Laundrie. And in stead of reading Sir *Philip Sidneys Arcadia* , let them read the grounds of good houswifery. I like not a female Poetress at any hand. Let greater personages glory in their skill in musicke, the posture of their bodies, their knowledge in languages, the greatnesse, and freedome of their spirits: and their arts in arreigning of mens affections, at their flattering faces. This is not the way to breed a private Gentlemans daughter. (G3)

Powell's prohibitions on reading the *Arcadia*, converging with a repugnance for the woman writer, constitute reading as a constituent of an inappropriate desire to emulate the upper classes. Elite women, with their knowledge of music, literature, and art, are neither chaste nor submissive enough to be worthy exemplars to the impoverished gentleman's daughter.³

Women were not, however, the only readers to be dissuaded from perusing an English or Spanish romance; the young, both gentlemen and maids, are also said to be endangered by them. For William Vaughan, author of the *Golden Fleece* (1626), books like the "*Mirroir of Knighthood, the Knights of the Round Table, Palmerin de Oliva* and the like rabblement, devised no doubt by the Devill" are "idle, and time-wasting Bookes" (qtd. in Thomas 267). Roger Ascham goes further in adding the specific charge of Catholicism to those of idleness and immorality. In both *Toxophilus* (1545) and *Schoolmaster* (1570), Ascham associates romances with sloth, popery, violence, and adultery. He complains in *Toxophilus* that romances, being read by both boys and girls, were written in abbeys and monasteries—a "very lickely and fit fruite of such an ydle and blynde kinde of lyvyng"—and lead "onely to manslaughter and baudrye" (xiv-xv). In *Schoolmaster*, he repeats these criticisms and further censures them as tales of reasonless killing and adultery (81). Lord Beaufort, of Ben Jonson's *The New Inn* (1631), in this vein, is praised for having a library that contains no romances. Lovel comments on the contents of Beaufort's study by saying that he had no "Arthurs, nor no Rosicleers,/No Knights o' the Sun, nor Amadis de Gauls,/Primalions, and Pantagruels, public nothings,/Abortives of the fabulous

dark cloister,/Sent out to poison courts, and infest manners" (1.6.124-128).⁴

Like Jonson in regarding the romance as political poison, Francis Meres' section on reading in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) compares the influence of romances to that of Machiavelli. He agrees with "the Lord de la Nouve" that the books of *Amadis de Gaule* are as dangerous for youth as the works of Machiavelli are for adults and then compiles a list of censored books that includes *Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwicke*, *Arthur*, *The Mirror of Knighthood*, and others (268v).⁵

Not only do these condemnations of romance draw upon cultural anxieties about sexuality, class, foreignness and religion, but they also imply several things about the process of reading. One group of readers—male, adult, and frequently scholarly—declares itself to be competent to make judgements for others. These readers believe that the text's site of production, along with the scenes of battle that a work might contain, delimits the text's significance; the texts produced by monks must be perverse and the battles can be read in only one way: they exemplify "manslaughter," not valour. While Sidney presumes some readers will be able to find examples of courage in *Amadis*, this way of reading seems to be possible only for the strong reader. Unskilled, weak readers (young and female) are believed simply to identify with characters in narratives and to follow their examples. These weak readers are thought to be passive participants in the exchange between reader and text and will not be able to distinguish between the worthy and unworthy role model. Such prohibitions against romance reading presuppose that reading possesses a powerful affect, that readers will regard characters as exempla, and, as I suggested in my first

chapter, that the content and result of reading are not in the (weak) reader's thoughts about the text but in the text itself; weak readers do not generate their own analyses.

Even defenders of romance draw upon the same presuppositions, similarly suggesting that readers will respond to characters paradigmatically. But they regard the content of the tales differently. For Margaret Tyler, who translated the first book of Diego Ortunez' *The Mirror of Deeds and Knighthood* (1578), the romance provides a worthy model of masculinity:

The cheife matter therein contained is of exploits of wars, & the parties therein named, are especially renowned for their magnanimity & courage. The authors purpose appeareth to be this, to animate thereby, and to set on fire the iustie courages of young gentlemen, to the aduancement of their line, by ensuing such like steps. (Aiii)

The matter has a "manlinesse" and is "matter more manlike than becommeth my sexe" (Aiii), and Tyler she does not perceive herself as the audience for these exploits: "yet to report of armes is not so odious but yet it may be borne withal, not onely in you men which your selues are fighters, but in us women, to whom the benefit in equal part apperteineth of your victories" (Aiiiv). Male readers may learn of virtue by the examples of valour, and women will be praised by their association with such men. While Tyler defends her translation by suggesting that women will benefit when men read her book, Judith Man describes her translation from French of John Barclay's *An Epitome of the History of Faire*

Argenis and Polyarchus as a work exemplifying female virtue. Although the content is typical romance fare, with tales of combat, mistaken identity, and the pursuit of a lady, Man configures the female protagonist Argenis as an exemplary woman.⁶ She tells Lady Anne Wentworth, to whom she appeals for patronage, that she presents the work to her to “represent Argenis unto You, as the Fairest, most Vertuous, and Constant Princesse of Her time. And I have thought, reading this History, that I have seene Your true portraiture in the person of this Faire Lady” (A3). Addressing her readers, Man describes how she came to translate the work:

Gentle Reader, my humor inclining to Melancholy, induces me sometimes, to seeke in my Closet for some diversion, in the reading of Bookes, suteable to a Gentlewoman of my quality, and of eighteene yeeres of age; That is it wherein I have most particularly applied my selfe this Christmas, and amongst the rest, in the reading of this Booke, which hath pleased me; not only for the subject whereof it treats; but also, comming from the hands of an Author, whose memory I honor, though of a contrary Beliefe to mine, because that being in France, in my Parents company, I have heard a great esteeme to be made of him, as of the most learned Prelate of his time. (A6,A6v)

Not only does the romance aid her in overcoming the dangers of melancholia, but it provides her with an occupation that does honour to a learned man, N. Coeffeteau, the Bishop of Marseilles, who had translated the work from Latin to

French. That this man is Catholic is not the sign of corruption that it was for Ascham but of the work's religious origins. The Stationer reinforces the sense of the propriety of both translator and book with an address to male readers in which he tells them he wished to see his "Shop adorned with this little Volume, which comes from the hands of one of the most Vertuous, and Comeliest Gentlewomen of this Countrey, and which belies not her birth, which is truly Noble" (Man A8). In Man's work, the description of the virtue of Argenis and Lady Anne Wentworth, the ethical credentials of the author, and Man's class position combine to make the work laudable. Hannah Woolley, writing late in the seventeenth century, also recommends the reading of romances to women on moral grounds. She writes in *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1673) that romances which

treat of generosity, gallantry, and virtue as Cassandra, Clelia, Grand Cyrus, Cleopatra, Parthenissa, nor omitting Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, are Books altogether worthy of their Observation. There are few Ladies mentioned therein, but are character'd what they ought to be; the magnanimity virtue, gallantry, patience, constancy, and courage of the men, might intitle them worthy Husbands to the most desiring of the female sex. (9)

Although she does offer the usual warnings against the wanton and wandering eye, Woolley offers a revisionist reading of romances, in which female characters are exemplars of virtue and male characters of the masculine qualities that will make men not courageous soldiers but desirable husbands. Neither the critics

nor the defenders of romance endorse reading for pleasure, since both place the romance in a moral framework where reading is an act of identification that informs the values and actions of readers, whether for good or ill. But coincident with writings against the romance was the acknowledgement that women did read such works and a moral justification for the activity.

It was not only women who defended women's romance reading. Numerous works of Elizabethan prose fiction, including romances such as Lyly's *Euphues and his England* and Sidney's *Arcadia* were addressed specifically to women readers.⁷ Like the expressions of antagonism towards romance reading, these addresses to female readers acceptingly acknowledge a special connection between femininity and romance. But this interest in women's reading is complicated in that it integrates gender issues into cultural concerns that range beyond anxieties about women's reading. Caroline Lucas' *Writing for Women: The Example of Woman as Reader in Elizabethan Romance*, one of the first books to note the motif of the woman reader, examined works by Pettie, Greene, Rich, and Sidney and their addresses to female readers. She argues that these texts ultimately offer to women the possibility of a "resistant" mode of reading; by responding to the centrality of women in these narratives, women readers may value their own lives. Yet, there are two problems with this thesis. Lucas offers no evidence that early modern women actually read in the way she suggests, although if she had examined the writings of Margaret Tyler, Judith Man, and Hannah Woolley, Lucas might conceivably have found verification for her argument. The precise dynamics of "resistance," considering the

investments of these women in chivalry, marriage, and morality, would be in need of careful elaboration, however. Lucas' argument is more problematic in terms of how she considers the addresses to women as straightforward evidence of an interest in women's reading. Recent work on gender and Elizabethan prose fiction has questioned this assumption by examining the prefaces as a form of negotiation with early modern cultural change, in particular the expansion of literacy to the middle class and the shift from oral to print culture. In *Fashioning Authority*, Constance C. Relihan develops the premise that Elizabethan prose fiction is involved in the negotiation of the cultural place of newly literate readers, print, and prose fiction (15). The different addresses to male and female readers in Barnabe Riche's *Farewell to a Military Profession* (1581), for example, are an attempt to articulate his authority against the predicament of having written in the less than respectable genre of prose fiction. Riche's address to women deprecates his work, allowing him to indicate to male society that he possesses a certain level of socioeconomic competence, while his address to male readers asserts that trying to please women is the cause of social ills. Through these contradictions, Riche distances himself from the feminizing effect of writing for women while still providing a rationale for the form in which he has chosen to write. The essays in *Framing Elizabeth Fictions*, also edited by Relihan, further explore ways in which authors of prose fiction, such as Gascogne, Pettie, Sidney, and Nashe, use gender to negotiate authority in an unvalued genre and to position themselves in relation to a non-elite readership. Teresa Micaela Prendergast, for one, argues that the encodings of the feminine

in Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, especially the addresses to female readers, can be explained not only through gender, but also through the cultural shift from the dissemination of courtly fiction through the semi-private oral recitation of texts to publication in print for a readership beyond the author's immediate control. The female readers reinforce the ideal of the aurality of poetry, even as Sidney writes in prose. Imagining an audience of "fair ladies" also enables Sidney to avoid the emerging alignment of prose fiction with an urban audience by placing him within a leisured courtly coterie (101-102, 112).⁸ In her book, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle*, Mary Ellen Lamb similarly suggests that the inscribed female audience in Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, the "fair ladies," is a "rhetorical ploy" that should guide readers of both sexes to read like women and to accept the proposition that men might worthily focus their attention on romantic pursuits instead of the militaristic (72-110). The association between women and romance, developed both by writers of conduct books and those who addressed romance narratives to women, imagined gendered reading practices, but these associations were also crossed by concerns about the class of readers, the emergence of print culture, the Reformation, the place of continental narratives in England, and the function of reading—whether it might be for recreation as well as for study.

II

Wroth in the Manuscript; Wroth in Print

While male writers of prose fiction used gender to negotiate the transition from manuscript to print culture, Mary Wroth used manuscript culture to traverse gendered constraints on women's reading and writing in print culture. More deeply entangled in concerns about print and manuscript culture and the class and gender of romance readers than issues of the vernacular, nationalism, religion, or education, the materiality of Mary Wroth's *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania*—its typeface, title page, and size—and the dynamics of manuscript circulation help to determine the place of Wroth's work within the culture of romance reading in early modern England. As a material object, a printed book, *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania* is quite unlike most prose romances printed in England, with the exception of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Charles Mish notes that the romances that appealed to a popular audience (chivalric romances such as Emanuel Forde's *Parismus* and reprints of the *Amadis* and *Palmerin* romances) were printed in black letter. By the 1640s, this typeface was rarely used except in quarto editions of chivalric romances.⁹ Wroth's volume, by contrast, is printed in roman typeface. The book is also a folio, which further cements its position in elite, rather than popular, culture. Linking the format, the genre, the moment and mode of reading, Arthur Marotti and Roger Chartier both consider the format a crucial characteristic of a book's social function. Marotti suggests that a book's size will determine the institutional status of its contents and how the book will be used, whether it will be functional in daily life or a literary monument (*Manuscript* 286). For Roger Chartier, the material form of a book will indicate its social position, with two groups of consumers

emerging: “For one group the book is a noble object, well-made, leatherbound, and to be carefully preserved; for the other, it is an ephemeral and roughly made thing. By its form and by its text, the book became a sign of distinction and a bearer of cultural identity” (*Cultural Uses* 181). And, indeed, Marotti credits Sidney’s 1598 folio collected works, a book that has *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* on the title page, with being instrumental in overcoming the stigma attached to the publication of lyric poetry; the folio volume provided a model for the “monumentalizing edition,” which celebrated a writer’s total achievements, of the posthumously published works of Spenser, Jonson, and Shakespeare (*Manuscript* 236-238).

Marotti also includes Wroth’s *Urania* in this short list of “monumentalizing” tomes, a nomination suggested by the book’s size and reinforced by its ornate title page. The page was engraved by Simon van de Passe, a Dutch artist who was a member of the Sidney-Herbert circle, renowned for his portraits of the royal family, and the known engraver of only five title pages (Roberts, “Textual Introduction” cvi). In depicting a central episode of the romance, that of the throne of love, the page also associates the book with the permanence and stability of the monument. Twin pillars appear on either side of the page, solidly framing in the foreground the towered bridge, upon which Cupid, Venus, and Constancy stand, and in the middle ground, the Throne of Love atop a mount. These pillars are joined at the top by a cartouche that declares Wroth’s elite and literary origins, announcing the work to be that of “Mary Wroth. Daughter to the right Noble Robert Earle of Leicester and Neece to the ever famous, and

renowned Sr. Phillips [sic] Sidney knight. And to the most excellent Lady Mary Countesse of Pembroke late deceased."¹⁰ "The medium was," according to Arthur Marotti, by way of Marshall McLuhan, "more than the message; it was many messages" (*Manuscript* 290), and one of the messages of Mary Wroth's book—further emphasized by, as Mary Ellen Lamb notes, the title in its title, the Countess of Montgomery (*Gender* 181)—was that *The Urania* was appropriate reading for the upper classes.

Whether or not Wroth was behind the publication of the volume, let alone the particular form that it took, is open to debate. Barbara Lewalski regards the folio format, the title page, the registration of the book with the stationer, and the absence of any effort to recall the work as evidence of Wroth's involvement (*Jacobean* 264), but Josephine Roberts is more circumspect. She suggests that Wroth could have been involved in the setting of the title pages, for other authors certainly were, and she notes that in her letters Wroth does not deny knowing of John Marriott and John Grismand's printing project; Wroth could, in any case, have lent a manuscript to friends in the hope that they would show it to publishers ("Textual Introduction" cv). But Roberts also notes that the printer began setting the text on sig. B, leaving a blank page for preliminary dedicatory poems, common in works by members of the nobility, which he never received. The printed volume of the romance also ends mid-sentence, and while Sidney's *Arcadia* is similarly unfinished, his printer used an ornament to fill up the remaining space. Wroth's printer, however, simply left the space blank, not marking it with "the end of the fourth book," as he had marked the first three

books ("Textual Introduction" cx).¹¹ Wroth herself claims that she never intended to have the work printed, although, of course, this could be a rhetorical ploy to deflect criticism; in a letter to George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, she asks for the king's warrant so that she can recall the books that have been sold, for, she says, they were "solde against my minde I never purposing to have had them published" (Wroth, "Lady Mary Wroth to the Duke of Buckingham" 236). But whether or not Wroth meant to publish, she did take an interest in the printed text. An extant copy of the 1621 edition contains Wroth's handwritten corrections, suggesting, as Roberts argues, that at the very least Wroth possessed a "determined dedication to authorship, even in the face of her society's hostile reception" (Textual Introduction" cxviii). Given this opposition, Mary Wroth's *Countess of Montgomerie's Urania* bears an almost ironic relation to its material form. Her volume is considerably grander—larger, longer, and more elaborately presented—than any books by her female contemporaries. Yet, *The Urania* was actually completely ineffectual as a "monumentalizing edition" and has been, more like the works of her female contemporaries than of Shakespeare and Jonson, almost forgotten in the writing of literary history, being reprinted in a contemporary edition only in 1995.¹²

Whatever Wroth's wishes with regard to the printing of her romance, the modes by which texts circulate and the reading practices of the characters within *The Urania* emerge from the conditions of upper-class manuscript culture. This attention to the coterie serves, on the one hand, to buttress the volume's position as a product of and for the upper class, but it also provokes an intriguing

dichotomy between the reading practices that Wroth represents in her work and those which her work seemingly received. The manuscript culture that Wroth represents in her work can be elucidated, in part, through the research of Arthur Marotti, H.R. Woudhuysen and Harold Love into the circulation of literary manuscripts in English aristocratic circles. Associated with upper class social contexts, manuscript culture inculcated particular attitudes towards writing and reading. Harold Love distinguishes between the types of communities formed by manuscript and print by suggesting that while print publication implied a community characterized by the public sharing of knowledge, openness, and flexibility, the sharing of texts in manuscript form resulted in a community that was exclusive and inward-looking (Love 183-189). Woudhuysen remarks on this, as well, and adds to the attractions of manuscript circulation, "its personal appeal, relative privacy, freedom from government control, its cheapness, and its ability to make works quickly available to a select audience" (15).

The textual communities formed around manuscripts were also more welcoming to women than those of print culture, probably at least in part because of the circle's exclusionary character; not only were the women who could participate already elite members of society, but their reputations were also more protected from the taint of unchastity because their writings were less exposed to readers outside the authors' circles of acquaintance. Women participated in the creation and circulation of manuscripts primarily at court and within families, while the manuscript circles that existed at the Inns of Court and universities were the exclusive preserve of men (Marotti, *Manuscript* 30-47; Woudhuysen

163,164). Even though manuscript culture is central to the literary expression of most early modern women who wrote, the story of women's participation in it has not yet been fully developed in literary histories. Margaret Ezell and Victoria Burke, who have written about a number of manuscripts containing writings by women, are critical of the narratives that result from this exclusion. Ezell blames the omission on two faulty assumptions: that the commercially published text is the most significant literary achievement because it is meant for other readers, and that manuscript texts are diaries, letters, or memoirs and so are most interesting, not for their literary value, but for what they reveal about women's lives ("Elizabeth DeLaval's" 216,217). Neither of these suppositions, however, accurately reflects early modern practices. Victoria Burke argues, too, that even women's compilations, frequently containing copies and excerpts from other texts, are a significant aspect of women's literary history, and with the evidence provided by such manuscripts, she challenges the perception, exemplified in Germaine Greer's introduction to her anthology *Kissing the Rod*, that women writers were "untrained, ill-equipped, isolated and vulnerable" (Burke 147).¹³ Wroth's *Urania* can make a considerable contribution to our understanding of the history of women's participation in manuscript culture because the writing, reading, and exchange of manuscript texts figure prominently in her fictional narrative and in her own social circumstances. While Wroth's female writers and readers actually do seem quite vulnerable, in so far as they engage in a variety of practices designed to keep their texts safe from unsympathetic readers, the

manuscript texts themselves are highly valued, artful, and significant contributions both to social relationships and to authorial reputations.¹⁴

Indeed, manuscript circulation was a principal feature in the writing life of Mary Wroth and members of her family. For Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, manuscript circulation had political and personal consequences that certainly contradict the perception that manuscripts were private documents. H.R. Woudhuysen has documented how Wroth's uncle, Philip Sidney, circulated his works in manuscript, giving copies of his poems, the *Old Arcadia*, and his controversial *A Letter to Queen Elizabeth* to his friends. Circulating this letter among courtiers was "part of a carefully orchestrated campaign to dissuade the Queen from marriage" (151), while allowing others to see and copy his poetry allowed him to solidify relationships with them (385). Mary Sidney Herbert also gained a reputation as a writer through her *Psalmes*, which were widely admired and survive in sixteen manuscript copies, testifying to their extensive distribution (Love 55,56). While in varying genres, the material forms in which Wroth's poetry, her play *Love's Victory*, and the continuation of *The Countesse of Montgomerie's Urania* survive all attest to Wroth's own participation in manuscript circulation as a writer. Between 1606 and 1613, before the 1621 publication of the *Urania* and the appended sonnet sequence "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus," Wroth was praised as both patron and poet (Lewalski, *Jacobean* 246,247).¹⁵ The bibliographical details of the "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus" sequence, likely the basis for this praise, support the suggestion that Wroth's poetry circulated in manuscript form. The Folger manuscript of "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus" (Folger

MS V.a.104), a holograph fair copy, suggests that the sonnet sequence was prepared for other readers because it is written in the formal italic hand that Wroth reserved for important documents such as the surviving manuscripts of *Love's Victory* and correspondence with people of high rank (Roberts, "Introduction," *Pamphilia* 61; Brennan 16).¹⁶ It is likely that other copies of the poems were in circulation, as well, for Roberts surmises, in part because the Folger manuscript is not the copy text for the 1621 printed text, that there must have been at least three such manuscript versions. Wroth also wrote a continuation to her published romance, which survives as a two-volume holograph manuscript (Newberry, Case MS fY 1565.W95).¹⁷ Wroth's pastoral play *Love's Victory*, probably written after the romance, further reinforces the sense that manuscripts were not necessarily private documents. *Love's Victory* survives in two slightly different holograph copies, and there is evidence that a third copy once existed, although it is now lost (Brennan 16-20). The Penshurst Manuscript of the play was also probably prepared for presentation, for it is bound in "dark red turkey" with boards decorated with a gold frame and a monogram (Brennan 16). Although there is no evidence that *Love's Victory* was ever performed, it is the kind of play that was suitable for performance by an author's friends, and the lost Plymouth manuscript was once owned by Sir Edward Dering, who was known to have an interest in amateur productions (13,14). Given that manuscripts were central to Wroth's own writing career and that the 1620s and 30s were the richest period for the compilation of verse miscellanies, with most of the extant verse miscellanies dating from this period

(Woudhuysen 158),¹⁸ the prominence of handwriting and of the exchange of poetry in manuscript in the printed section of Wroth's *Urania* is in need of further exploration.

So far, Wroth has been described by critics primarily as a woman writer who received a particularly nasty reception when her romance was printed, but this focus obscures the extent to which her work represents the manuscript culture in which she was also writing. Whatever Wroth's intentions toward publication, the reading and writing practices that she represents in the *Urania* are thoroughly manuscript based. The characters in her romance are deeply invested in the process of producing writing. The courtly coterie of ladies and gentlemen, including Pamphilia and Amphilanthus and many of their companions, exchange handwritten poems amongst themselves with more frequency than they take up printed books, and when the latter does happen, the text is valuable only insofar as it is personally appropriate to the reader's or the gift-giver's experience. Otherwise, the book can be discarded. As I will demonstrate, Wroth's representation of manuscript texts—letters and poems written in letters, stored in cabinets, or inscribed in trees—suggests a mode of reading in which texts are required to be germane to the immediate emotional occasion of the reader and part of a personal, often intimate, relationship between reader and writer. Through being physically involving, private, and talismanic, the manuscript texts Wroth represents demand sympathy of their readers while enabling them to claim possession of both property and identity.

III

"O deare Paper": Love Letters and Chaste Hands

The first kind of handwritten text that Wroth's characters exchange is letters, which are addressed to a singular and identified audience. Wroth's readers within the *Urania* respond to letters as both verbal and material objects, thereby elucidating a form of reading that requires a sensual response, not only of the eyes, but also of the hands and mouth. Whether the reader is the intended audience, or an intrusive or accidental observer, these handwritten epistles become a crucible that puts the reader's affection and loyalty on trial. Wroth models an ideal exchange between writer and reader with Ollorandus's letter to Melasinda, a reader who values the author's words and protects them from unsympathetic eyes. Melasinda receives the letter from her lover Ollorandus through his dwarf messenger during a hunt. After gaining the privacy of a grove of trees, she reads the missive, kisses it repeatedly, and then apostrophizes it: "O deare Paper...welcome as heavenly blessings to mee: thou bringest mee word my Ollorandus lives; and more that hee thinkes of his poore Melasinda" (272). The letter's contents go virtually unmentioned, although it does seem to contain the news that Ollorandus has become king; the paper and the action of having written possess the primary romantic significance. Just as, on another occasion, Leandrus imagines that a kiss placed upon a paper will endure until it can be placed in Pamphilia's hand, Melasinda's letter evokes loving acts: the dwarf bestows a kiss on the paper on his master's behalf, which Melasinda accepts with another. Wendy Wall notes, with reference to the sonnet

sequences of Sidney, Spenser, and Daniel, that erotic writing frequently devoted attention to the materiality of the text—the handwriting, ink, and paper—such that love poems are “presented as intricately personal, highly present, and determinedly physical objects, whose identity rests in their linkage with the hands and bodies of writers and recipients” (47). The kisses that Melasinda and the dwarf proxy bestow on the paper similarly suggest that through the materiality of paper and ink, passed from hand to hand and mouth to mouth, the letter can draw the lovers into a closer, if mediated, physical connection.¹⁹

Melasinda's attachment to her love letter draws upon early modern notions of the functions of handwritten letters for both readers and writers. Her response suggests, first of all, that the very act of writing is as significant to her relationship with Ollorandus as the words written. John Donne wrote that “Letters have truly the same office as oaths...they are permanent; for in them I may speak to you in your chamber a year hence before I know not whom and not hear my self. They shall therefore ever keep the sincerity and intemperateness of the fountain, whence they are derived” (“To Sir H[enry] G[oodyer]” 168). By putting pen to paper, Ollorandus makes a commitment, like an oath, to his words and, consequently to Melasinda. Assured of his constancy, Melasinda also treats the letter, as many of her contemporaries do, as a form of writing peculiarly able to make the absent writer present. When Martin Billingsley describes a letter as “the very Mouth whereby a man familiarly conferreth with his friend, though the distance of thousands of miles be betwixt them” (C1v), he makes sense of Melasinda's kisses; the letter that is a mouth is eminently suitable for

exchanging such tokens of affection. Even so, Billingsley's comment, as well as Donne's that "more then kisses, letters mingle Soules;/For, thus friends absent speake" ("To Sir Henry Wotton," 1,2), suggests that, if the exchange of letters might be eroticised, they are for friends as well as lovers. According to Lisa Jardine, Erasmus conceptualized familiar letters through "friendship, effective transmission of feeling and absence made present" so that the letter is "a form of written work which crucially makes vivid the voice of a friend from whom one is separated, so as affectively to render that friend present." Produced through rhetoric, the affect makes the letter compelling and persuasive ("Reading and the Technology of Textual Affect" 79-84). Even so, the emotional effect of the epistle clearly does have important consequences for the romantic relationship.

Writing about letters in his correspondence, Donne argues that their capacity to produce affect makes them better, even than books, at communicating love.

"The knowledge buried in books perisheth and becomes ineffectual, if it be not applied, and refreshed by a companion," but the letter, as Donne tells his father-in-law in 1603 or 1604, "resides" in the reader, who contributes "lively activity and vigour to it" ("To Sir G.M[ore]" 1.122). As one who animates the text, the reader of the love letter is imagined to know the lover's loyalty in receiving the letter and to experience his affections in the act of reading.

Melasinda evidences the impact of Ollorandus' letter on her not only through her expressions of pleasure in possessing and reading it, but also in the way that she causes the letter to reside within herself. After learning the letter "by heart" and addressing it as a living, holy object that contains the "truths" of

Ollorandus' love, she burns the paper. The letter's vitality is denoted in the poem that she composes on the occasion, for she marks the epistle's ceremonial "death" by burning as a "sacrifice" in a "pure and holy" fire (272,273). Not only preserving her paper from the more usual mundane uses—being employed in a myriad of domestic and commercial activities, such as wrapping fish, packaging spices, starting fires, or binding books (Dawson and Kennedy-Skipton 6,7)—her poem also invests the remains of the paper with religious significance:

You reliques of pure love
 To sacred keepe with me remoove,
 Purg'd by this fire from harme, and jealous feare,
 To live with me both chast and cleare. (273, lines 22-25)

The words of the letter live with her, while the ashes become a shrine to Ollorandus, as she, "looking on the Ashes, wept, and kissing them, put them up againe; and thus continued shee, till Olloradus himselfe came, to whom these daylie offerings were made" (273,274). The letter's loving reader, Melasinda treasures the letter as both word and material object, conveying the one to her memory to memorialize it in a composition of her own and the other to the safekeeping of unreadable ashes within a cabinet.

Melasinda's reading of the letter becomes an occasion upon which to confer value on women's reading and writing and to represent herself as valuable through the inward, private space of her memory. With the offerings she makes to the cabinet containing the letter's ashes, Melasinda bestows a sacred value on the secret text that she possesses; eternally mystified, the letter will never be

read by anyone but her. Giannozzo in Leon Battista Alberti's *Della Famiglia* similarly associates the private with the holy, but the connection is made through the lock that keeps his papers from his wife's eyes. He says of his papers: "I never kept them in my pockets, but always under lock and key in their proper place in my study, almost as if they were sacred or religious objects" (218). To admit his wife to the knowledge of his affairs would be to devalue it: "No matter how trifling a secret I had, I never shared it with my wife or with any other woman" (218). Melasinda, on the other hand, is the perfect keeper of the secret, the one who knows the letter's business and keeps it from others, including those at the castle who examine the dwarf in an attempt to discover the purpose of his journey (272). Although the ashes are preserved in the "daintie Cabinet," the text is preserved in Melasinda's memory so that she becomes the human analogue to this repository of the treasured confidence. In *The Pens Excellencie*, Martin Billingsley had recommended that women learn to write for romantic occasions just such as these because he thought that in writing women would be able to preserve secrets "that are, and ought to be, betweene Man and Wife, Friend and Friend, &c." when they are absent from each other (B4v). Letters are, as Svetlana Alpers also notes of seventeenth-century paintings, symbols of secret transactions (196-201), an assessment of the role of letters with which Billingsley concurs. But his argument for teaching women to write, if he allows an economic advantage (widows will be less likely to be deceived as they care for their estates if they can write and keep accounts themselves (B4v,C), also points to their inferiority; writing, "the handmaid to memory" (C1v), would serve women well

because they “commonly hav[e] not the best memories” (B4v). When Melasinda’s reading ends in writing, she too composes a poem that will remember; it is a “witness” to “the sorrow for the burning, and the vows she made to them burned” (272). Composing a vow legitimizes Melasinda’s writing, for her poem becomes the sign and articulation of her constancy. But her memory is also sound, for she repeats the letter to herself every day. The letter, associated with both confidentiality and memory, allows Melasinda to become both a reader and a writer and to construct herself spatially as a private, inviolable, and constant subject.

Wroth’s romance, however, is replete with instances in which readers and writers fail to meet the standard set by this ideal for the exchange of letters and epistolary poems. Numerous dangerous, disrespectful, and unsympathetic male readers do violence to ladies’ papers or their cabinets, and some women readers are deluded or duped by the texts they read because male writers do not maintain their constancy in the way that Ollorandus does. The story of Sirelius’ attack on his wife’s papers suggests the threat, which Melasinda attempts to preclude, constituted by the exposure of letters to hostile eyes. Although the marriage between Sirelius and his unnamed wife was said to have been happy for some years, Sirelius’ fondness turns to jealousy when his wife begins to spend time with a young lord at court, a relationship that creates a stir when others watch to see what will happen. A conflict results, in which the lady’s father takes the son-in-law’s part and Sirelius banishes the lord from his house and his wife from being in that lord’s company. When the lady refuses to obey

her husband's order, although "it was more out of her spirit, that disdaind to be curbd, then extraordinary liking of him" (515,516), Sirelius inflicts violence on his wife's cabinet: "Her Cabinets hee broke open, threatned her servants to make them confesse; letters he found, but only such as between friends might passe in complement, yet they appeared to jealousy to be amorous" (516). The father, even worse, threatens to kill his daughter, "out of folly, ill nature, and waywardnesse, which hee cald care of his honour, and his friends quiet" (516). The story concludes with the couple reconciled, although the lady later dies, and Sirelius remarries, again unhappily (517). The lady of the tale is innocent, but she is not obedient and she has not, as conduct books recommended, avoided even the appearance of unchastity. The result is the destruction of her cabinet, an invasive and unsympathetic reading of her papers, and even the threat of murder.

Within a culture in which the contents of a lady's cabinet could draw such ire, Melasinda's safe storage of her letter precludes Sirelius' "jealous" reading and ensures that she can maintain control over the perception of her chastity. Even so, although the lady's cabinet was a significant private space, it was not as private as the man's study might be because of the disparity of power between them; Orest Ranum alludes to this discrepancy in noting how Samuel Pepys, after receiving a cabinet as a gift, presented it to his wife only after learning how its secret drawers worked (228). The husband and father of the lady in Wroth's story regard the contents of the cabinet as "ocular proof" of the crime of adultery, not only because the letters had been preserved in secret but also because the

possessive father and jealous husband overwhelm the significance of the letter writers' words with their violent passions; the licentious significance of the text results from an emotional reading, not from the significance intended by the writers, who are only friends. In addition to destroying the lady's property, the intrusion of Sirelius and his father-in-law deforms the lady's feelings, distorting friendly affection into an adulterous passion. In a letter to his father-in-law, George More, John Donne jokes about the possibility of accidental, unintended female readers for one of More's letter with a suggestion that the intrusion might become an opportunity for moral instruction ("To Sir G. M[ore]" 123). In Wroth's work, the unsolicited readers of women's writings and the letters addressed to them bring only danger because there is no assurance that outside readers will read as the woman does. In this context, the woman's memory becomes a space under siege, a necessary, safe retreat from the hazards presented by those who would wreck cabinets. Yet, the memory and the woman herself acquire value because she reads; she contains texts that are precious objects, and she becomes a writer, responding to texts she receives, in order to participate fully in the social relationship that made her a reader in the first place.

The gendered conflict over the significance of women's texts—those that they possess as well as those they write—is further illustrated by the response to Wroth's romance. Interestingly, the readers who respond with violence to the letters of Sirelius' wife are also those who decry the publication of the *Urania*, in so far as the charges made by the now infamous Edward Denny, Baron Waltham (later the Earl of Norwich) result from this narrative about Sirelius. Denny wrote

to Wroth, February 26, 1621/2, to deny that he had written the rhymes “from the father in lawe of Sirelius to Pamphilia” and to complain that “the whole wor[ld]d conceives me to be ment in one of the weakest and unworthiest passages of your book” (Denny 238). Denny does not seem to have quickly relinquished the grievance, for two years later, on March 9, 1623, John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton about Denny’s claim that “in her booke of Urania she doth palpable and grossely play upon him and his late daughter the Lady Hayes, besides many others she makes bold with” (Chamberlain qtd. in Salzman, “Contemporary References” 178).²⁰ Indeed, the tale does closely follow known details of Denny’s life. The marriage of his only daughter Honora to James Hay, first Earl of Carlisle, was, like the wedding of Sirelius, celebrated by a masque—Campion’s masque for Hay’s wedding, which is still extant. Denny, too, threatened the life of his daughter after her—apparently real—adulterous relationship, and when Honora later died, James Hay, like Sirelius, married again (Roberts, “An Unpublished Literary Quarrel,” 533). Akin to the lady in her story who protests her innocence against jealous readers, Wroth also asserts her blamelessness for her reader’s perceptions. In a letter to the Duke of Buckingham, dated 15 December 1621, she writes of “strang constructions which are made of my booke contrary to my imagination, and as farr from my meaning as is possible for truth to bee from conjecture” (236). To Denny, in a letter dated 15 February 1621/2, she responds to his “rayling” rhymes against her with assertions of her “innocencie; which is as cleare and pure as new borne” (237). Her letter of 26 February 1621/2 reiterates this theme, as she tells Denny that he

has "taken that part to your self" (240), while "any verses written from Sirelius father in lawe to Pamphillia, are no waie concerning mee" (240). Wroth's verse, "Railing Rimes returned upon the Author by Mistress Mary Wrothe," goes further in blaming Denny's guilt for his perception of a fault in her work: "But it appeares your guiltiness gaps wide/And filld with Dirty doubt your brains swolne tide" (qtd. in Roberts, "An Unpublished Literary Quarrel," 534). Not leaving the determination of the romance's significance to words alone, Wroth substantiates her assertions of her own innocence with appeals to her rank. She tells Denny that she would justify herself to any witnesses he might produce, confident that they will "shrink;/For my ranke below the Kings Majestie and his, I know how appeare {cancelled word} before the best in justification," and she threatens him with her friends: "for believe it my noble allies will not thank you for forbearing mee" ("To Sir Edward Denny" 240). For both Wroth and Denny, the text's import is a social struggle as well as a linguistic one.

In the story of Sirelius and in her letters about her own work, Wroth hinges the significance of the text upon the woman's wishes, whether she is the writer or the reader. However, Denny, as Sirelius and his father-in-law did, usurps this position with his own declamations upon the significance of the womans' text. Responding to Wroth's objection that he had never bothered to ask her for "true information" about her romance, Denny writes: "I confesse in some kinds of doubts it is so just a course, that yf I fayled in yt, I should have needed no other or so severe an accuser as my self. But Madam to aske yf yt be daie when the sunn shyneth wear a question so vaine as you count your booke innocent, which

all the world condemns" (238). As in the exchange between the lady and the lord, in which conflict arises in part because "most mens eyes were upon them, to see whither this would come" (515), Denny affirms the significance of the romance through what the world believes. And indeed, not only do John Chamberlain's comments to Dudley Carleton suggest that others were watching the conflict unfold, but so, too, do the extant versions of the letters exchanged between Wroth and Denny. These letters survive, not in their autograph versions, but in various copies made by Wroth's contemporaries.²¹ Furthermore, given that Wroth's letter to the Duke of Buckingham on December 21, 1621 asking for a warrant to recall the work was written before her first letter to Denny, on February 15, 1621/2, in which she announced that she had that very day received his rhymes, it may not have been only Denny who was making "strang constructions" of her book (237). Wroth cannot create the reconciliation she gives to Sirelius' wife, for her readers maintain their control over the significance attributed to the text—perhaps, in part, because it is quite likely that Wroth's claims of innocence were not actually true. She has also coupled the fault of revealing Denny's secrets to that of having a published work, an offence made the more onerous because the work was not about religion.²² Although Wroth wrote to William Feilding, first Earl of Denbigh (who also had copies of her correspondence with Denny) and to the Marquis of Buckingham for help in assuaging the king, there is no record that a warrant was issued for recall of the *Urania* (236,242; Roberts, "Textual Introduction" cvi).²³ The coterie, in which readers and writers are known to each other, provides the social conditions that

make it possible for Wroth's text to be read as the roman à clef that Denny protests against, for in the absence of a printed key, no readers would have known who was being "traduced" by the tales; the only charge that might be made is that Wroth has not published a religious work. I will discuss Wroth's romance as a roman à clef again in connection to her characters' use of ciphers. Here I want only to note the integration of secrets, and attempts to preserve and understand them, into social relationships. Reading and writing are crucial aspects of a variety of relationships between two people, from friendship, to romance and marriage, but these relationships are also wound into a larger social circle of acquaintances, family, and friends who watch and are involved with the relationship and with the contents of the texts that are exchanged. With concerns about chastity underlying Melasinda's acts of preservation, the story of Sirelius' wife, and Wroth's experience, the woman's text (when misconstrued) quickly works to the detriment of the woman to whom it belongs.

In addition to elucidating the significance acquired by texts through social conflicts, especially between men and women, and readers' treatment of texts as material objects, Wroth's romance also attaches significance to the mode in which the text circulates. How a handwritten text is distributed to others reflects upon the character of the writer. Just as a viciously motivated reader can distort both the writer's reputation and the intended meaning of her text, the writer can also distribute the text carelessly. Male writers are particularly prone to this error, frequently to the detriment of their women readers. In distributing his poems as freely as his affections, Amphilanthus draws women readers into promiscuous

attachments to texts. Because his poems and letters are not the product of a constant heart, given the volatility of Amphilanthus' love, the meaning of his words is unstable, and his readers are deluded, unable to become writers as Melasinda can. Both Musalina and Antissia, who are respectively scorned by Amphilanthus, keep his poetry as mementos of his love because it has been written in his hand. While Musalina's possession of Amphilanthus' texts—she, along with Lucenia, had “most he had written” (497)—leads to rewriting when she carves the poem he has most recently given her, along with other of his works, into a tree, her writing is not a composition but an act of mourning for the loss of Amphilanthus; the poem she rewrites is not written for her, in any case, but for Pamphilia. Antissia, similarly miserable as a consequence of being abandoned by Amphilanthus, keeps his picture close to her heart and his papers at hand:

Oft would shee read the papers she had gaine from him in his owne hand, and of his making, though not all to her, yet being in that time she did not feare, shee tooke them so, and so was satisfied. Read them she did even many millions of times, then lay them up againe, and (as her greatest priz'd and only blessing left) kept them still neere, apt many times to flatter her poore self with hope he had not cleane left her, who so kindly let her keepe those things, contrary to his manner with others, as he reported to her self, for from them he tooke at varying all they had of his; as from Lucenia, who hee told, shee could not esteeme of his shadow, so little prizing the substance. (328)

Just as Antissia had earlier composed from “unframed and unfashioned thoughts” (147), here she reads excessively, far outstretching with her perusals the significance that Amphilanthus had invested in giving the text to her. That Amphilanthus has also been known to ask for the return of his papers “at varying” further demonstrates his inconstant nature; his papers could never be sacralized as ashes within a cabinet, for he may ask for their return.

If Dolorindus, on the other hand, is a constant lover, he, too, fails in love by neglecting to preserve his poems for his lover only. After Dolorindus loses a poem addressed to his beloved Selinea, the lady's husband discovers it and gives it to another lady who is in love with Dolorindus and also wishes to see the lovers parted. In an effort to harm Dolorindus, this lady lets the paper fall from her hand during a dance, just when she is certain that Selinea will pick it up. When Selinea sees the handwriting, and the hand from which the poem has fallen, she assumes an intimate relationship between Dolorindus and the other lady (182-189). The love poem has been read by other eyes, been touched by other hands, and it is, for Selinea, as if a kiss, or more, had transpired between Dolorindus and his unintended reader. Selinea refuses ever to be reconciled with Dolorindus—even after the death of her husband—and Dolorindus laments his fate: “Alas that ever I did take a penne in hand to be the Traytor to my joy” (187). When Dolorindus, however inadvertently, allows another to read a poem about his love of for Selinea, he indicates to her a carelessness not just with his paper but with his affection. The manuscript is a very personal possession, the handwriting making it identifiably the product of a particular writer, with an

assumed contiguity between the handwriting, the devotion of the writer, and the reader who possesses it. Stephen Orgel, commenting on handwriting in Shakespeare's plays and Claudius' "Tis Hamlet's character" writes: "The character, indeed, was the hand, or rather the letters formed by it, until well into the seventeenth century" (125). Because handwriting reflects upon the emotional state of the writer, and because the letter is enlivened by its reader, a poem or letter of love must be carefully preserved for the right reader. Otherwise, a form of unfaithfulness results. Like Amphilanthus, Dolorindus fails in this regard and his love, like his letter, is lost. Only by the monogamous exclusion of other readers can love remain faithful.

Selinea's scepticism about the authenticity of Dolorindus' poetry, of the roots of his words in constant affection, is also characteristic of Wroth's narrator, who knows, in another case, that a lover plagiarizes. When Dorileus, a minor character, presents a sonnet to a lady, saying that it was his own, the narrator indicates that it is not: "but the truth is his friend made it for him, and so was his Secretary justly" (606). The lady, who loves more earnestly than he, responds as a good reader should, with repetition (this time in singing it), and with affection, as she "kis'd the originall Coppy because in his owne hand, and never thought it neere enough, nor ever deere was a paper to a Lover" (606). The consequences of the lady's trusting reading are only harmful, however. Because the text is as "counterfeite as his vowes and protestations," and he is one of the "true beguilers of welbeleeving women, who were happier to be Hereticks, then such beleevers" (606), the lady becomes promiscuous through her reading; she has been drawn

into a relationship, not just with Dorileus, the copyist, but also with the writer of the original. The suspicion of Wroth's narrator is also found in Hannah Woolley's exemplary dialogue between an "ingenious Gentlewoman and a Poetaster" in her *The Gentlewomans Companion* (1673). Here when the poet/lover would woo with purchased words, the lady declares him to be a "mercenary scribler" (253) who gives the same encomium to a hundred women, and criticizes him for contaminating with money the ideal exchange of romantic love and so endangering the chastity of the female reader who unwittingly accepts it as hers alone (252-255). As Woolley states in a lady's sample epistolary response to a man professing the "languishing condition" of his love: "should I except the tenders of affection from all such amorous pretenders, I might be married to a whole Troop, and make my self a legal Prostitute" (246). The female reader's chastity is guaranteed only when the male lover means what he says when he speaks words rooted in his heart, when the text is given only to the reader in whom it is interested, not to others, and when the reader possesses discipline and knowingness about her reading, not involving herself in texts neither meant for her, nor meant sincerely at all.²⁴

Wroth places a high value on reading and writing the epistolary text, the handwritten letters and poems that are, like letters, addressed to a particular reader. These texts are a personal and affective form of textual conversation. The intimacy and emotion of the exchange are qualities that early modern and contemporary commentators have ascribed particularly to the handwritten text in the early modern period. Distinguishing between print and manuscript culture,

Marshal McLuhan made the bold, if somewhat undefended, assertion that “[t]he print-made split between head and heart is the trauma which affects Europe from Machiavelli till the present” (170). For McLuhan, the uniformity of print produced reading habits that were fast, lineal and sequential, with the result that print homogenized the experience of reading and consigned the auditory and sensual complexity of oral culture to the background (125). D.F. McKenzie also argues that manuscript had a closer relationship to orality than did print, a factor that made some authors prefer to be read in manuscript: “In part, it has to do with that question of presence (greatest in speech, still implied in script, least of all in print). Some writers were troubled by their loss of control over their texts; for them and for many others, printing was too impersonal, too public, too fixed, and often far too expensive for the small number of copies required” (96). Richard Wollman credits Donne's interest in circulating his writings in manuscript to a similar tension between orality and writing: “His preference of manuscript over print is analagous to Socrates' preference of speech over writing in the Phaedrus; for Socrates, the 'written word cannot defend itself as the natural spoken word can,' while speech demands an audience and relies on exchange between persons” (91).²⁵ Wroth's characters are similarly concerned with preventing misinterpretation, with the physical intimacies of reading, and with the affections that are conveyed by words, paper, and ink. Reading is not just an experience for the eye, but also for the hands that hold the letter and for the mouth that kisses it. The text affects the reader, drawing her into a variety of responses, from rejection, out of suspicion of masculine wiles, to repetitive

reading, in which the text is read again and again, to reproductive reading, in which the text is rewritten in songs and in trees, and finally to writing that memorializes and memorizes. Only with the last does an internal, private, and stable female identity emerge.

That several of the texts read by Wroth's characters are manuscript pieces circulated among a select group of readers demonstrates an aspect of the social position of manuscripts *vis à vis* the printed text in early modern culture. In her work, Wroth engages the pen, rather than the press, in creating a powerful construction of women as capable readers and writers. This may be premised upon the fact that for women writers, manuscript circulation was a much more common literary practice than publication (Burke 135). But manuscripts were not just a feminized opposite to print. For Martin Billingsley, who regarded writing as a superior art to printing, social value accrued to manuscript through writing's antiquity; it was "found out in the very infancy of the world," unlike printing which "came up but yesterday," and remains the precedent to printing (B3v). As Arthur Marotti also notes, Donne, too, wrote of the manuscript as a treasure:

What Printing-presses yield we think good store,
 But what is writ by hand we reverence more:
 A Book that with this printing-blood is dyed
 On shelves for dust and moth is set aside,
 But if't be penned it wins a sacred grace
 And with the ancient Fathers takes its place (qtd. in Marotti 27)²⁶

For Wroth, as well, the manuscript might occupy the shelf beside the texts of ancient fathers, like them both in value and in permanence, and unlike the more ephemeral printed text. Melasinda treats her letter as a text with sacred grace, while the books that appear to Dalinea (in the Tomb of Love upon an altar beside burning but never extinguishing candles) and to Veralinda and Urania (in the Throne of Love on a magically appearing pillar) draw upon these associations with the ancient and sacred to give value to the narratives of female identity that the volumes contain. Like the letter, each book—existing only in a single, magical copy—has its right reader, which the books physically demonstrate by refusing to open except to that reader. When Wroth ascribes value to these women's books and letters and describes them as spectacles of wealth, wonder, love, and family, not only does she assert the importance and complexity of female identity, but she also explicitly resists the common evaluation of women's texts as culturally insignificant. John Lyly's address to his women readers in *Euphues and his England* provides a dramatic contrast. When Lyly imagines his book in the hands of women readers in their cabinets, his book becomes a commodity—a motif repeated elsewhere.²⁷ Just as ladies choose fabric for its colour rather than its durability, they should read his book, "being but trash; the one will be scarce liked after one reading, and the other [lawn] is worn out after the first washing" (201). Male readers, on the other hand, are to invest themselves in the book, to make it a scene of rewriting as they take their pens to the book to correct the faults of printing (204). The books and letters belonging to Wroth's women possess value, not through their dispersal, but through their

singularity, through containing narratives of love and identity, and through being read and preserved by the reader for whom the text is written.

The handwritten text, however, articulates more than the personal, immediate, and affective. Handwriting is also involved in class and gender hierarchies. Debunking the notion that a text will convey the author's presence, Jonathan Goldberg asserts that the presence conveyed by a letter is first of all class-based because of the writer's very ability to write, the hand that he writes in, and the rhetorical epistolary form that he chooses, and as Jonathan Gibson suggests, this class-based identity is also displayed through increasing amounts of blank space on the page with letters to illustrate deference to social superiors (1,2). Goldberg adds, "Meaning, familiarity, intention, and the like—all that would constitute presence—are constructed in the letter along rhetorical lines, inscribing the social rhetoric that also writes the domain of presence as and in the letter. Writing begins with an awareness of the person, not as an individual but rather as a social category" (*Writing Matter* 252). For Goldberg, handwriting represents the writer, not as an individual, but as a subject fluent in a discourse that enabled social power. He elaborates on Keith Thomas's argument that to read a written script was a privileged form of literacy, such that learning to read a particular typeface did not necessarily enable one to read other typefaces, and the ability to read print did not make one fluent in reading handwriting, which was the preserve of those who could write (*Writing Matter* 51). As D.F. McKenzie notes as well, reading a manuscript was also a privilege that offered the reader

the opportunity to be “one of a more select community than the amorphous readership of print” (97).

Wroth's own manuscripts, both her literary texts and her letters, provide evidence of her participation in such a classed construction of writing. Eight autograph letters of hers survive, and the two to her most elite readers, Queen Anne and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (along with the Folger manuscript of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and the manuscripts of *Love's Victory*) are in a formal italic hand that differs from the cursive italic style that she used in rough drafts of her writing, including the continuation of the *Urania*, and letters to friends (Roberts “Introduction,” *Pamphilia* 61). For Wroth's characters, the ability to write and to read handwriting is the implicit condition of all social interactions; her characters take their social privilege for granted, and no character like Mopsa in Sidney's *Arcadia* appears to make the decorums of the social codes visible. The contrast between handwriting's place as elite, permanent, and historically rooted and the more democratic, transient and novel qualities of print underlies and informs the peculiarly affective quality that Wroth attributes to her socially valuable handwritten texts.

But even though Goldberg dismisses the relevance of the idea of the individual to the early modern ideology of handwriting, Wroth employs both its social position and its association with the personal and affective. If manuscript culture is not socially democratic, Wroth's representation of it is inclusive of women. Although women were most commonly taught only the italic hand, while upper-class men learned other hands—the court hands used in law courts and

government offices and the secretary hand, commonly used in business, in government, commerce, record keeping, and correspondence—Wroth's male characters write only as women do (Dawson and Kennedy-Skipton 8-10). With his comment that "the graphic virtues of italic, while no less real, are of a chaster and less assertive order" (110), Love also implies that a particular style of handwriting might be a constituent of masculine identity.²⁸ In Wroth's work, however, there is no separate literary and social world inhabited only by men. Women read the texts that men write. The writer is also recognizable through his handwriting, as Dolorindus is, with texts assuming special emotional significance because lovers' hands produce them, as Amphilanthus' and Ollorandus' texts do—along with (as I will show in the next section of this chapter) those by Pamphilia. Michael Neill writes of the power of the hand: "it was both that which made possible full participation in the new print culture, and that which served as a symbolic guarantor of individual difference, privacy, and possession against the mechanical usurpations of print. The quasi-magical authority of handwriting was most evident in the power invested in the signature as a sign of individual presence and consent" (28). The unique hand is valuable to Wroth, as much as the precise copy is to the writing master, because it places constraints on the exchange of texts. Because the text can be traced to its source through its appearance, the author must preserve the text for the right reader who treasures and keep it from unsympathetic eyes. With the handwritten text, the woman reader is assured of a special position in relation to a male writer and of a position far from the public exchange, conditions which sometimes enable her to

become a writer. Within the intimate society of manuscript culture, where letters and poems are exchanged among friends and lovers, the woman's writing, exemplified in the poem composed by Melasinda, is both possible and cherished.

IV

Ciphers and their Decorous Readers

In *The Urania*, the text that is not placed in a cabinet or the memory—and even some that are—is open to appropriation and misreading by antagonistic readers who would harm the writer. Wroth also keeps texts from dangerous misinterpretations by making reading a private act, both by using secret or private languages and by placing reading in private spaces. In relatively public spaces, such as gardens which are accessible to a range of characters within their social circle, Wroth's writers sometimes use ciphers, an encrypted form of writing that can be read only by the initiated reader. While the writer of the manuscript possesses a greater degree of control over her text than the author of the printed book, the writer of a ciphered text regulates her readers almost completely: they can only interpret if she wishes them to. By using ciphers, Pamphilia—for she is the writer with whom they are identified—demonstrates a way of writing, analogous to the roman à clef, that is private even while on public display and a way of reading in which the (male) reader's ability to comprehend is dependent on his friendship with the author.

Ciphers were a form of encoded writing most frequently used in the business of espionage and in situations of political strife. They came into use in

England in the early Tudor period and were employed especially during Elizabeth's reign by Francis Walsingham (Haldane 59-66). But ciphers were used not only in espionage, for they also found their way into diaries and letters by both men and women. Sheila R. Richards' volume of ciphered letters from the British Public Records Office offers letters representative of the occasions on which ciphers are used: letters concerning or written by or to Mary, Queen of Scots, letters dealing with foreign affairs, and those related to various aspects of the Civil War (ix). Women like Queen Henrietta Maria and Mary Queen of Scots wrote in cipher for political ends,²⁹ but one woman composed in cipher to complain to her Royalist husband of being abandoned during the Civil War ("A Wife").³⁰ Katherine Packer, in her manuscript book entitled *A Boock of Very Good medicines for severall deseases wournds and sores both new and olde*, dated 1639, also used shorthand, which is like the cipher in being a system of symbols unreadable to the uninitiated audience, to record recipes in her carefully prepared and indexed manuscript book—perhaps suggesting that recipes might be treasures worthy of preservation for a chosen group of readers (Folger MS V.a.387).³¹

Encrypted writing is a language that articulates a form of power. That which is illegible, Jonathan Goldberg says in *Writing Matter*, is reserved for the service of the state, while that which is legible is "but the vulgar remainder of those occulted hands" (210).³² Even when used more mundanely as a language in which to express the private, the encrypted language is compelling because it is exclusionary. The cipher is a rational but arbitrary system of signs known only

to the creator and his or her chosen readers. John Willis devotes a chapter of his 1602 work *The Art of Stenographie teaching the wayes of compendius writing* to general guidelines for encryption. He recommends that those interested in it invent “new Illiteral Characters” for words, “betweene which words and their Characters, appeareth some Analogie, and proportion of reason, at least, in the opinion of him that inventeth them” (F4). A written language that does not possess a phonetic relationship to the spoken word can create communities among those who actually speak disparate languages, as Timothy Bright suggests in his *Characterie: an arte of shorte swifte and secret writing* (1588) was the case in China (A3,A3v). But the communities created are more often exclusive societies of two or even one. Willis refers to the example of Augustus who used a code to write his son, “when they wrote their mindes each to other” (F3v), and according to Orest Ranum, Samuel Pepys wrote his diary in cipher, while foreign languages could serve a similar purpose against unwanted readers—frequently wives who were fluent only in English (209,245). Through encryption, the personal text becomes a treasure that acquires value by excluding all readers but those the author allows. The personal also sometimes becomes imbued with the sacred. Willis finds another precedent for secret writing in Egyptian hieroglyphics, “by which” he says, “the secrets and mysteries of their Learning and Religion, were after a sort locked up from the Vulgar people, and never applied to common uses, but knowne onely to the Priestes, who had been taught the same in private from their Elders” (F8v,G). The ciphered text is creative because the writer has devised its language, powerful

and private because it can preclude the unwanted reading, and, ultimately, magical. The seventeenth-century diarist Elizabeth Delaval, for example, valued in her youth secret letters from her maid, tying them to fairies and to friendship (30,31). Orest Ranum finds this move to the magical to be characteristic of private writing: "Intimate memoirs not infrequently evoke the ineffable. Accounts of mystical experiences, ecstatic moments at ancient ruins or in the depths of the forest, and sublime instants in which flesh and spirit were joined in love reveal a need to express to oneself or others an inner sense of transcendence" (209). The ciphered text is a mystification of the personal that simultaneously creates privacy, enables its maintenance, and accords it the cultural worth of religion and learning.

For Wroth, the element of private life that will not be desacralized by being commonly known is love circulating amongst ladies and gentlemen. Lovers inscribe testaments to love with special scripts when the writing will be encountered by others, so that the writer can keep the lover's identity secret, while at the same time having it known that a romance is transpiring covertly. Wroth provides a scene of writing in which Pamphilia, during a hunt, retires to a grove to examine her thoughts, and upon deciding that they are true, she takes "a knife, and in the rine of an Oake insculped a sypher, which contained the letters, or rather the Anagram of his name shee most and only lov'd" (325). Since Pamphilia writes from a constant heart, her inscription acquires both an emotional and textual significance; it affirms her internal state and announces the identity of the object of her affection. Male readers of such texts read in ways

that acknowledge the privacy inherent in Pamphilia's inscriptions. When Dolorindus retires to a "dainty fine wood," he finds a mount, cunningly undertaken, with a black marble stone table and seats in the middle. Engraved on the seats and the surrounding trees, he finds "many Ciphers, although but one for meaning, though in number many; Lovers had done these as he thought; lovers made him remember he was one, and that oft he had carv'd his Mistresses name upon Bay trees, to shew her conquest, which she had requited, cutting his name in Willowses, to demonstrate his fate" (133). Dolorindus' method of reading the ciphers does not include deciphering their precise significance, getting into the details of the names of the lovers involved; rather, recognizing that the ciphers are tokens of love, he simply reads in them a reminder of his own status as a lover.

Perissus, too, demonstrates the appropriate way to read ciphers when the Queen of Naples, Limena, and Perissus, her lover, stroll in a woods. The woods, noted to have once been the walk of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus, have been filled with ciphered mementos to love:

Up and downe they walked, the Grove being so delightfull as gave content to all, and all sorts of Lovers. Going along the Spring they found many knots, and names ingraven upon the trees, which they understood not perfectly, because when they had decipher'd some of them, they then found they were names fained and so knew them not. But Perissus remembred one of the Ciphers, yet because it was Pamphiliass hee would not knowe it. (490)

Perissus can associate secret scripts with particular writers, an act of recognition that raises the possibility that the cipher might be decoded more fully. Yet he deliberately resists decoding Pamphilia's ciphers so that their meaning remains a secret. To translate either the cipher or the feigned names would contravene a sense of the decorum of romantic behaviour that he shares with Pamphilia; if he were to seek to understand the sign, he would be applying the text "to common uses," revealing himself to be a vulgar reader while desecrating Pamphilia's love. As Perissus' example suggests, the reader should not desire knowledge that the writer does not wish him to have. The cipher offers Pamphilia the only language in which she willingly makes known, in however limited a sense, either her feelings or the identity of her lover. As such, the script enables a muted exchange premised upon a personal relationship with readers who discipline their curiosity and find pleasure, not in knowing secrets, but in being able to recognize that they exist; Pamphilia, for her part, will speak publicly because she is confident those readers capable of interpreting will decline to do so and acquiesce to her wish for privacy.

Amphilanthus, too, models the exemplary use of the ciphered text associated with Pamphilia. In a period of loyalty to her, Amphilanthus renames himself the Knight of the Cipher (339), and he chooses a new device, which the narrator describes as "onely a Cipher, which was of all the letters of his Mistrisses name, delicately composed within the compasse of one, and so was called, the Knight of the Cipher" (339).³³ No longer the "lover of two," Amphilanthus for once, if covertly, identifies himself as the lover of one. With the

choice of a cipher, Amphilanthus preserves the privacy, and consequently the chastity, of his lady. He is also in sympathy with Pamphilia's own obsessive concern for the privacy of expressions of love. Just as she does not publicize her feelings, he does not betray her by revealing his own attachment. Yet the very privacy of the cipher also attenuates its instability as a signifier. Not only does the cipher enable Amphilanthus' inconstancy because he can change his affections without changing his device (which Sidney's knights with their portraits of ladies cannot do), but the cipher is also unable to announce Amphilanthus' social status. Amphilanthus himself remarks that the meaning of his device is as great as his lady: "although a Cipher were nothing in it selfe, yet joined to the figures of her worth, whose name was therein, it was made above the valew of her selfe or Country" (339). But this significance can be understood only by those (few) capable of joining signifier to signified. Indeed, the first lady that he encounters in this guise believes that her knight will easily dispatch him in a joust. She tells him, "my Knight will make you as little, and of as little account, as your Devise and name signifieth" (339). The cipher is ineffective at communicating either the meaning or status of a text to those who have not been familiarized with the code and simply falls silent when confronted by readers far enough removed from knowledge of the writer to be quite unable to interpret it. Again, being able to read is dependent on a personal relationship with the author.

Wroth herself seems to have employed a cipher in announcing her authorship of manuscript texts, suggesting that the cipher may offer a feminine mode of authorship—with all the attendant problems of status and signifying that

Amphilanthus' use of the cipher elucidates. The cover of the Penshurst manuscript of *Love's Victory*, a presentation copy with a contemporary binding, offers a ciphered monogram that consists of the letters PHILMSA and perhaps W and V at the centre of each side and a 'S fermé' (\$) at each corner—which might allude to Wroth, Philip Sidney, Lady Montgomery or Lord Pembroke (Brennan 16). This '\$' also appears throughout the Folger manuscript of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, where Wroth places it on either side of her title (leaf 1), at the end of each sonnet, and above, below, and on each side of the signature of "Pamphilia" which appears after Sonnet 48 and after the ninth sonnet in the "Crowne of Sonnets" (leaf 29; leaf 54v). For Wroth, the "\$" seems to be functioning as a signature, reinforcing that of Pamphilia, in the absence of Wroth's own name. Given that Mary Sidney Herbert also used the "\$" in her correspondence (Brennan 16), this sign, like the monogram on the cover of *Love's Victory*, represents the identity of the writer, if only for those able to recognize the clues, as one of the Sidneys. Wroth is similarly, but more explicitly, introduced on the title page of the printed *Countesse of Montgomerie's Urania*, with the declaration that she is the niece of Philip and Mary Sidney. But according to Peter Beal, it is the more understated enunciation of authorship that is characteristic of manuscripts. In comparing a scribally produced copy of a book with a printed version, Beal notes that the manuscript book need not advertise its origins because it is produced for a narrow and specific audience that already knows its source: "[h]ad manuscripts advertised themselves and their circumstances of production as shamelessly as printed books, that special

dimension would have been obviated; manuscripts themselves would have been devalued" (19). The cipher offers Wroth not only a way of allowing women to be private in public spaces, identifiable only to friends, but also a way of writing that articulates anti-commercial and elite social values. The ciphered text is above advertisement, belonging not to the more socially diverse realm of print culture, but to the coterie where the writer is concerned only with the readers of her own social circles, the exclusive group who can enter the garden (or possess the manuscript) where the ciphers are inscribed.

Pamphilia does inscribe entire poems in the garden, but these, too, are disguised, not through encryption but through claims of imitation. On one occasion, Pamphilia, "finding that all places are alike to Love, tedious" enters a "fine wood," a space defined by hidden art that makes nature appear natural. Although she carries an unread book—"not that shee troubled it with reading, but for a colour of her solitarinesse" (91)—her activities in the park turn toward the literary. Pamphilia first composes an anagram of Amphilanthus' name from flowers, a form of enciphering that disguises her lover's name and an act of poetic collecting: the metaphor of gathering flowers was frequently used to describe reading, since the etymological root of "anthology" is the collection of flowers (Benedict 9). Pamphilia then turns to writing when she takes a knife and engraves a poem in the bark of an ash tree. This act is both primal and productive. The sixteenth-century writing master Peter Bales made the first act of writing the choice of a penknife (Q2), and as Jonathan Goldberg writes: "The knife works: to produce the quill, to produce the writer" (*Writing Matter* 64). The

writing knife is, according to Goldberg, a weapon in cutting a path towards social advancement. For Pamphilia, however, this act of engraving entails the possibility of being known, which instigates concerns about privacy. Antissia, lacking Perissus' prudence, reads the poem Pamphilia has written as evidence of her feelings, with "youre owne hand in yonder faire Ash will witness against you" (94). Not submitting with good humour to the revelation of her love poems by her companions as Shakespeare's Beatrice and Benedick do when they find their friends have turned their "own hands against [their] hearts" (5.1.91,92), Pamphilia reprimands Antissia by saying that a true friend would not be so inquisitive. She also takes refuge in the poem's literariness: "...for many Poets write aswell by imitation, as by sence of passion; therefore this is no prooffe against me" (94). The claim functions much like the cipher, as a screen behind which to conceal the poem's relationship to her heart. As the announcement of imitativeness coincides with the incisions of the knife, Pamphilia's writing is at once literary, forceful, and secret.

Yet, if Pamphilia's appeal to imitation is presented as a ruse to deal with Antissia's impertinence, it is also an accurate assessment of the provenance of the poem. Maureen Quilligan points out the similarity between Pamphilia's introductory apostrophe, "Beare part with me most straight and pleasant Tree" and that of Sidney's Pamela "Do not disdain, O straight unpraised pine" in *Old Arcadia* (Quilligan 265). Both Pamphilia and Pamela also use the tree as a ground for the text by dividing the poem between trunk and root and inscribing the trunk as a witness to the love wound that they have received. But while

Sidney's Pamela writes on the root of the tree to signify her chastity, to assert that the root of her desire is constancy (Sidney 198), Wroth's Pamphilia, constant beyond question, writes on the root of the tree because it supported her head—which contains, according to the narrator, "the richest World of wisdom in her sex" (93). Yet if Wroth replaces the sexual with the intellectual, her alteration to the park in which the poems are composed is more conducive to the chastity of its female inhabitants. While the trees in the park where Pamela walks "were set in so perfect order that every way the eye being full, yet no way was stopped" (198), in the park where Pamphilia strolls, also artfully ordered, her eyes were bounded by the view. Pamphilia's claim of imitation serves a similar purpose to the cipher, at once concealing relationships from the non-reader while revealing to those who are intertextually competent. First allowing Pamphilia to privatize her emotions from Antissia's inquiries, imitation also relates Wroth to her famous uncle, placing her writing in the same textual space as his to assert that she, too, is a writer, a carver of trees and a weaver of fictions.

The Urania itself was thought to contain encoded messages of still another form, as a roman à clef, so that the lovers who write secretive scripts are also writing in a form that requires readers like those who would decipher Wroth's romance; the roman à clef, like the cipher, requires a key to unlock its significance. Jennifer Lee Carrell notes that the pastoral romance "carried a generic expectation to present truth dressed up as fiction" (85), and indeed readers of Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* and of John Barclay's *Argenis* did devise keys to translate fictional characters into their real-life

counterparts.³⁴ One reader of Wroth's work, George Manners, Earl of Rutland, (who was married to Elizabeth Sidney, Philip Sidney's daughter and Mary Wroth's cousin) wrote to Wroth asking for a key to her work in a letter dated May 31, 1640: "Calliing to remembrance the favor you once did me in the sight of a Manuscript you shewed me in your study att Banerds Castell. And heere meeting with your *Urania* I make bold to send this enclosed and begg a favor from you that I may read with more delight. If you please to interprete unto me the names as heere I have begunn them, wherein you shall much oblige me" (244,245). Manner's letter indicates that manuscript reading occurred in one of Wroth's own private spaces at Barnard's castle, where Wroth frequently resided in London, that reading a manuscript was a privilege, a "favor," and that the earl expects the key will increase his pleasure in reading. Her critics, on the other hand, take no delight in deciphering and fail to act with the courtesy displayed by the Earl of Rutland in his requests for Wroth's approval. Along with Edward Denny, John Chamberlain, in writing to Dudley Carleton, asserts an unwillingness to be an acquiescent reader. Wroth, he says, "takes great libertie or rather license to traduce whom she please, and thincks she daunces in a net" (qtd. in Roberts "An Unpublished" 532). Her critics are fully confident that they already possess the secret and censure her on their own terms.

At issue are the respective authorities of reader and writer in determining the text's significance. There is a fundamental antagonism between Denny and Chamberlain and Wroth, for they disagree not just on Denny's actions but on the reader's role. For Wroth, if Denny sees himself "traded," it is the fault of his

perception, rather than her writing. The polite reader in her romance, similarly, does not read jealously, as the example of the wife of Sirelius demonstrates, and he will decline, like Perissus, to articulate any correspondences that might be made; from respect for the privacy of the writer, he will be constrained to silence in order to allow the writer to express what she will. As Helen Hackett writes of Wroth: "her...predicament was that she must rely on her reader's recognition of the real correlatives of her fictions, while also relying on such recognition as being tacit and acquiescent" ("Yet tell me" 62). While Wroth curtails the reader's behaviour, Wroth's critics would limit that of the writer, as they berate her for the liberty she takes. Yet liberty is precisely the point. With her encryptions, the ciphers and the character names that relate fiction and social reality, Wroth offers the woman writer, exemplified in Pamphilia, a limited freedom to speak what she will. This freedom is contractual, however. It depends upon certain required responses of readers: the discretion not to reveal what is known, the recognition that the text must be preserved from unintended and uninitiated readers, and an esteem for the author that arises from personal relationships with family members, lovers, or friends. This contract alone stands between texts and their destruction. Within a world where men threaten violence to women's texts—as Denny, uncannily true to the character of Sirelius' father-in-law, would verbally offer to Wroth's—the contract between writer and reader that requires friendship and affection from the reader, along with the script that conceals even as it expresses, enables women's public speech.

So even though representations of reading are a critical element of Wroth's work, she allows, with the woman's cipher, that the writer should be able to delimit the text's significance for her own readers. In contrast, Michel de Certeau regards the cipher as the epitome of the reader's work in making words mean. He suggests this with reference to a comment by Descartes on codes: "And if someone, in order to decode a cipher written with ordinary letters, thinks of reading a B everywhere he finds an A, and reading C where he finds a B, and thus to substitute for each letter the one that follows it in alphabetic order and if, reading in this way, he finds words that have a meaning, he will not doubt that he has discovered the true meaning of this cipher in this way, even though it could very well be that the person who wrote it meant something quite different, giving a different meaning to each letter" (qtd. in de Certeau 171). For de Certeau, deciphering exemplifies the reader's authority in determining meaning, but this power is consistently usurped by institutional readers who construct a text as secretive in order to establish their own social power: "The use made of the book by privileged readers constitutes it as a secret of which they are the 'true' interpreters. ...By its very nature available to a plural reading, the text becomes a cultural weapon, a private hunting reserve, the pretext for a law that legitimizes as 'literal' the interpretation given by *socially* authorized professionals and intellectuals (*clerics*)" (171). Wroth would place herself as the true interpreter of the text's significance. She is the keeper of the secret who allows readers' admittance to the text's significance when they demonstrate their deference to

the writer's feelings, their knowledge of social codes, and their position within elite social circles.

But the ciphered text does not only discipline reading. It also promises pleasure, as George Manners' letter suggests when he asks for the key so "that I may read with more delight." Discreet because incompletely decipherable except to friends, the cipher is nevertheless voyeuristic, hinting to readers that intimate relationships are transpiring. Even though Dolorindus cannot or will not read the lovers' names, the cipher reminds him of his love, of his own place among the community about which he knows he is reading. The cipher also offers a form of pleasure to the writer, the enjoyment of the reader's wonder and in being in the exclusive possession of knowledge. Intelligence of intimacies, the correspondences between cipher or fiction and life, possesses social value, as the assertion of the value of private texts in terms of the sacred also suggests. Jennifer Lee Carrell comments upon the relationship between fact and fiction in Wroth's work by dividing her readers according to gender. Carrell argues that men expected to be able to translate fiction into fact, while Wroth was instituting a more feminine way of reading that would not satisfy this requirement: "the *Urania* and Wroth's defense of it suggests [sic] that part of what Wroth and her female characters enjoyed in a romance story was that very liminality, the neither-flesh-nor-fowl character of fictional fact/factual fiction" (89). Yet, Wroth's male characters, especially Perissus and Amphilanthus, read women's texts with an exemplary and remarkable discretion. The deference of these male characters to Pamphilia may be part of a defensive attempt on Wroth's part to

preclude the readings that she did in fact receive. But Wroth also demonstrates a mode of reading that is premised upon the material conditions of reading and writing in manuscript, rather than print, culture. Only manuscript culture constructs relationships between writers and readers on the terms of intimate personal knowledge and affectionate attachment that Wroth expects of both writers and readers. The roman à clef dynamic of Wroth's romance relies on these conditions, yet within the circumstances of print culture. The implications of this displacement will be considered in the final section of this chapter.

V

Traversing the Spaces of Reading

Wroth privatizes the practice of reading by creating an individualized language that is decipherable only by the initiated reader, even when the text is exchanged in a relatively public location. She also makes reading a private act by placing it in more secluded spaces such as bedrooms and chambers, spaces that were, according to Orest Ranum, along with gardens, frequently represented in tapestries and paintings as places for solitary reading, intimate conversation between lovers, and the storage of one's most valued possessions (Ranum 210-212). Indeed, Roger Chartier has argued that the practice of reading in such spaces, along with the spread of literacy, the circulation of texts in print and manuscript form, and the increase in silent reading, was integral to the very formation of the notion of the private sphere ("Practical Impact" 111). For Wroth, the space in which reading occurs contributes value to the act and to the reader.

But spaces are rarely private in the sense that they are possessed and occupied surely and perpetually by one inhabitant. Rather, the boundaries between public and private are porous, as external observers watch reading in personal spaces, and texts written in chambers and gardens will be read by friends and lovers. Through the permeability of boundaries between public and private, private reading and writing contribute to the constitution of female rule and to the public presentation and dissemination of women's writing.

The meeting of Parselius and Dalinea illustrates the function of women's reading within public and private space. Parselius arrives at Dalinea's castle, asks to be admitted to see the princess who he has learned lives there, and is led through a series of chambers. He first enters a stately hall, "carv'd curiously in Images of the Gods, and other rare workmanship," and then a room hung with silk and gold hangings, "the Story being of Paris his Love, and rape of Helen," and finally arrives in another smaller, richer space (124). This space is not the princess' bedroom, but it bears a more intimate relationship to her than the other spaces do because she reads in it with her ladies, as the book that has been abandoned in a chair by the window indicates. This room is not, however, decorated with literary images but with signs of wealth and power: the "sumptuous" furniture and a cloth of state under which Dalinea sits (124). Wroth presents Dalinea and Parselius' first encounter in much the same terms that appear in Patricia Fumerton's discussion of a meeting that transpired between Elizabeth I and Sir James Melville. Melville, like Parselius, traverses increasingly more exclusive spaces before arriving at the central, private space

of the Queen's bedchamber and being shown the contents of her cabinet to indicate his entrance into her confidence (62). With this progression through the house into its heart where the lady resides, the purposes of the public and private intersect, and the feminine space emerges, for once, as a space of privilege. While Alberti configured women's occupation of the central space of the house only as domestic surveillance, by which the wife possessed the keys to the rooms containing her husband's goods but was unable to claim any space as her own (Alberti 215; Wigley 348). With Wroth's representation of the woman's cabinet, its owner is allowed a private space into which it is an honour to be admitted. This sense of privilege is reiterated in Lyly's articulation of his ambition to place his book in ladies' caskets and Donne's declaration to the Countess of Montgomery of one of his hopes: that his name will be left in her cabinet ("To the Right Honourable the Countess of Montgomery" 123).³⁵

The room in which Dalinea reads is not a cabinet (which could be either a room off a bedchamber or a piece of furniture (Ranum 211), but as with Elizabeth's political use of her private objects, public and private converge in Dalinea's space. The public purpose of the room is represented in the cloth of state under which she sits, "of Carnation Velvet, curiously and richly set with Stones, all over being Emrodered with purle of Silver, and Gold, the Gold made in Sunnes, the Silver in Starres, Diamonds, Rubies, and other Stones plentifully and cunningly compassing them about, and plac'd as if for they Skye where they shin'd" (124). Roger Chartier notes the importance of such material displays at court: "In a monarchy the sumptuousness of the court is a kind of rhetoric,

intended to make a point, to persuade others of the king's power: first the court, then the subjects" ("Introduction" 164). The cloth of state and the room are a rhetoric of Dalinea's power, but the room also offers visible signs of private activity, the ladies sewing and a book lying in a chair, "as it shewed, she read while they wrought." The book in this room positively constitutes women's reading as powerful—rather than as the dangerous occupation that Vives and Braithwait, among others, thought it to be. The abandoned book is a further sign, like the cloth, of Dalinea's privilege, for she is the literate woman among her ladies. But the book is also a window into the private life of recreation, albeit curtained by Dalinea's shift from the chair with her ladies to the chair of state.

The very hint that Dalinea reads, foremost among the signs of identity surrounding Dalinea, causes Parselius, despite his previous attachment to Urania, to fall immediately in love with Dalinea: "this first sight wonne him" (124). That the abandoned book instigates love at first sight might be explained through the tradition of paintings of women reading, in which watching the woman read is an eroticised act. Dalinea's abandoned book, not even as fully explicated an image as Dalinea herself reading, is clearly enormously compelling for Parselius. Kate Flint argues that books in paintings of women can function either as signs of their chastity—as guarantor of class and goodness when the reading is religious, practical, literary, and disciplined—or as invitations to the voyeuristic reading of the women by male observers—when the women depicted are reclining and reading in a way that seems passionately oblivious to their surroundings.³⁶ Although Flint's book considers women readers in the nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, the sense that the woman reader could offer visual pleasure to the spectator is also confirmed by the painting "The Letter Writer Surprised" by the seventeenth-century Dutch painter, Gabriel Metsu, who did several paintings of women writers and readers. More accurately, according to Svetlana Alpers, "a letter-writer spied on," the painting depicts a woman writing a letter by an open window while a gentleman peers over her shoulder (202). Taking up another painting, Vermeer's "Woman Reading a Letter," Alpers notes how the position of the prying gentleman is here occupied by the artist similarly looking in on the woman reading (202,203).³⁷ Helen Hackett similarly argues, from examining addresses to male and female readers in George Pettie's *A Petite Palace of Pettie His Pleasure* (1576) and Robert Greene's *Penelope's Web* (1587), that "the narrative foregrounding of a female audience in romance may not be so much about women reading, as about male readers deriving pleasure from imagining that they are watching women reading. Male readers enjoy romance as a lightweight entertainment, while simultaneously enjoying a sense of intellectual superiority, knowing that they were distinguished by gender from the kind of foolish creatures who took this nonsense seriously" ("Yet Tell Me" 40,41). In addition to appealing for the patronage of the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and her daughter the Lady Anne, Countess of Warwick (better known today as Anne Clifford), Robert Greene begins *Penelope's Web* by addressing both the lady and gentleman readers. Although Greene is reticent to appeal for the approval of male readers because the matter he has chosen is "womens prattle," he changes his mind; that "Mars will sometime bee prying into

Venus papers" and that men like to hear ladies speak (A3v) ensure that men will pick up his book, if with voyeuristic intent, and so he must confer with them to guarantee that he will not be feminized by having written a book for women.

Parselius' attraction to Dalinea also eroticises the woman reader, yet Wroth's use of this motif differs on at least three counts. When Dalinea sets the book aside before Parselius enters, she may demonstrate her awareness of the erotics of observing women reading and her acceptance of codes of conduct that decree women not be temptresses. Yet, before Parselius arrived, Dalinea had been directing her attention towards her ladies by reading aloud to them. As Roger Chartier notes, "[r]eading can itself create a social bond, unite people around a book, foster convivial social relations, on the condition that it be neither solitary nor silent" ("Leisure and Sociability" 104). The demands of state and sexual propriety toward men override the pleasures of reading together, but friendships with women are given a place in Dalinea's life. Dalinea's reading is also not trivialized. Even though Parselius encounters adventures directly in the outside world, while Dalinea experiences both adventures and world indirectly, mediated through the book, Parselius' tales, and the window beside which she sits, Parselius does not presume that his stories are superior to her books. Wroth does not diminish Dalinea's different relationship to space and narrative. By not mentioning what Dalinea does read and placing her beside the window where she can look outward, as she may in reading itself, Wroth does not represent anxieties about wandering eyes or the morality of women's reading—an aspect of her character that Wroth develops later with the inclusion of a

tragedy of incestuous, if innocently so, young love in Dalinea's family history.

George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his pleasure*, on the other hand, offers narratives similar to those with which Dalinea is associated. His book contains "histories," many of them from Ovid (such as "Tereus and Progne" and "Minos and Pasiphae"), but, because this is a book for women, the printer has added an argument, or moral lesson, to every story so that the ethics of the characters' actions are unequivocal.³⁸ Dalinea's reading, the wall-coverings in her house, and later, her presence in the Tomb of Love, all suggest that she is comfortable within elite—if morally ambiguous and non-religious—classical and literary culture. Her literacy, her leisure, and her occupation of literary and sumptuous spaces, along with her place under the cloth of state, indicate that she possesses both the class and intelligence to rule her reading as she rules her kingdom. Josephine Roberts, with reference to such characters as Pamphilia, Ramiletta, and the Queen of Bulgaria, argues that Wroth's romance "offers a highly ambivalent view of female rule in which the central character struggles vainly to fulfill the dual nature of sovereignty" ("Radigund Revisted" 202). With Dalinea, however, the intersection of the public and private, the duties of rule and the pleasures of reading, allow her to emerge as a character who is both lover and monarch, ruler of a kingdom and of books.

Wroth places Pamphilia's own reading in a different space. Set more strictly in opposition to her role as queen, Pamphilia's reading, on one important occasion, occurs in her bedchamber. Yet, here, too, the boundaries between public and private are permeable, with the consequence that Pamphilia becomes

known as a writer. Pamphilia's bedchamber is said to elicit a more authentic representation of Pamphilia's internal state than the self she presents to her companions. Feeling herself tyrannically tortured by love and yet resolved that no one else "should know shee could be subject to affection," Pamphilia retires to her bedchamber "to get more libertie to expresse her woe" (62). Pamphilia attempts first to express her unhappiness through reading, when after looking at the moon and comparing her fortunes to its waxing and waning, she returns to her bed with a little Cabinet in which she kept many papers: "and setting a light by her, began to reade them, but few of them pleasing her, she took a pen and paper, and being excellent in writing, writ these verses" (62). The papers in Pamphilia's cabinet are valued enough to be preserved, but because she is not satisfied with reading them, she writes again. Pamphilia requires an immediate relationship between the text she reads and her emotional state, a prerequisite more suited to the conditions of manuscript culture than of print. In *The New Invention, intituled Calligraphia; or the arte of faire writing* (1622), David Brown expresses this immediacy as one of the superiorities of writing to print. He argues that while both can "articulate the voice of the Tongue, whereby the thoughtes of the minde are expressed to these who bee present, and to interpret the minde, (without use of the tongue) unto those who bee absent," only writing offers present and immediate expression, "because the action thereof is readie and easie, to bee prosecuted at everie occasion, without the helpe of such secundarie meanes" (¶¶¶2v, ¶¶¶3). This intimacy between book and reader is possible with the printed book when it is presented as a gift, for

when Steriamus bestows upon Urania a book of verses on second love, he cements their relationship through the book's appropriateness to her (332). But more frequently, and for Pamphilia here, only the text written for the occasion can produce the identity between text and reader requisite to the satiating reading experience.

Dissatisfied with reading what she has written before, Pamphilia writes again. But if her chamber allows her to say what she would not express in the company of others, she lacks confidence that she will be able to maintain control over the boundaries of this space. On this occasion, she regards her writing only as a hazard to the secrecy of her emotions: "as at this time dost, bring my owne hands to witnesse against me, unblushingly showing my idlenesses to mee" (63). Consequently, Pamphilia, like Melasinda, sacrifices her new lines: "as soone almost as shee had given them life, she likewise gave them burial" (63). Her anxieties about control are not groundless, as Steriamus' wife, Alberti's household, and Wroth's own experience illustrate; Wroth only gained legal possession of the furniture and books of her "studdye and clossett" when she was willed them at the death of her husband (Robert Wroth qtd. in Lewalski, *Jacobean* 247). This lack of jurisdiction impinges upon the pleasure of the moment, as Pamphilia, for the sake of perpetual privacy, destroys letters and poems that possess value.

Yet, on other occasions, the permeability of the boundaries between public and private can enable the dissemination of texts to other readers without the woman writer having to take indecorously active measures to gain an

audience. Pamphilia's chamber is used for social activities as well as for solitary reading, and when others enter her space they also gain access to her writing—as George Manners, Earl of Rutland, did when he read the *Urania* itself in Wroth's chamber. On one occasion, Pamphilia, Amphilanthus, Urania, Selarinus, and Selarina (the latter's sister) gather in Pamphilia's chamber, and while Pamphilia and Amphilanthus converse on the bed, the guests go into the next room so that the two lovers can be alone. This room contains Pamphilia's cabinet, "where her bookes and papers lay," and these guests take up the papers and "passed a while in reading of them, and longer they would have done so, but that they heard excellent musick" (260). Even for good friends who are, as Perissus demonstrated, sympathetic to Pamphilia's penchant for privacy, the preservation of papers in a cabinet does not indicate that they are for their owner's eyes only. Pamphilia is not offended at their actions, and it may be that readings like these contribute to her reputation as a writer.

The entrance into the closet and the reading of Pamphilia's papers also lead to explicit declarations of love. Later, as Amphilanthus prepares to depart, he mentions this reputation when he asks to see "some Verses of hers, which he had heard of," a request to which Pamphilia assents:

She granted them, and going into her Cabinet to fetch them, he would needs accompany her; shee that was the discreetest fashiond woman, would not deny so small a favour. When they were there, she tooke a deske, wherein her papers lay, and kissing them, delivered all shee had saved from the fire, being in her owne

hand unto him, yet blushing told him, she was ashamed, so much
of her folly should present her selfe unto his eyes. (320)

The conditions in which Pamphilia reveals her poetry are characteristic of the way in which sonnets were exchanged. Patricia Fumerton notes: "Love poetry, then, was guardedly 'published' between intimates in private rooms. It was also kept in the private room within ornamental cabinets or boxes. The locking of love poems within these containers usually reserved for one's greatest valuables belies the poets' reiterated apologies that their poems are mere 'toys' or 'youthful follies'" (72). Pamphilia's poems, too, are follies, but their revelation is also attached to the more peculiarly feminine fault of immodesty. Bearing her person in her handwriting and her kiss, Pamphilia's papers are an extension of herself. In her closet, Amphilanthus again perfectly performs the part of the discreet reader, mitigating the danger of exhibition. Just as Parselius refused to interpret the cipher, Amphilanthus now demonstrates a similar deference to Pamphilia's penchant for privacy by assuming that her poems must be fiction. Amphilanthus declines to interpret her poetry as an indication of her emotional state until he is given permission to do so: "'But one thing,' said he, 'I must find fault with, that you counterfeit loving so well, as if you were a lover, and as we are, yet you are free; pitie it is you suffer not, that can faigne so well'" (320). While Naomi Miller considers Amphilanthus' assertion that Pamphilia "counterfeits" to be a "conventionally masculine charge" that is dismissive of women's writing (178), his sensibility is in accord with Perissus' concern for the privacy of the woman writer; Amphilanthus would have been a vulgar reader had he presumed, without

asking, to know the relationship of the text to the writer's affections.

Amphilanthus' deference allows Pamphilia the choice to reveal the verity of her text, and after her blushing confession they embrace and declare their love to each other for the first time. Amphilanthus gains further entrance into Pamphilia's intimate spaces when he opens "a little tablet" that lies in the same box as the papers. The book is not put out for Amphilanthus' perusal, for Pamphilia had only "forgot to lay [it] aside" (321), but Amphilanthus nevertheless opens it to find a picture of Pamphilia, "drawne by the best hand of that time" (321). The picture is probably a miniature because it is "shut up" after Amphilanthus looks at it, and it reinforces the bond between them as a love token that Amphilanthus can carry away with him.

Nona Feinberg regards Amphilanthus' actions on this occasion as trespasses: "the cabinet, the box, the verses, and the miniature which had been Pamphilia's inward places have become a site of appropriation, even violation. Amphilanthus's intrusion into her secret cabinets is architectural, but it is also somatic" (179). Pamphilia's response to Amphilanthus' reading of her papers, according to Feinberg, is embarrassment and shame, for she presumes that only harm comes of the transformation of contents of the private cabinet into a social exchange and that Pamphilia did not desire the result, receiving the love of Amphilanthus. Both Amphilanthus' reading and Pamphilia's writing within this private space are indeed problematic in terms of what they say about women's writing and its occupation of space, but Feinberg delineates the appropriate boundaries of the public and private too rigidly and restrictively, implying that

there ought not to be congress between the two. When Amphilanthus sequentially gains entrance to Pamphilia's private spaces—her bedroom, her cabinet, and finally the box in which she keeps her writing—Pamphilia acquiesces to his various offensives. There is a sense in which Amphilanthus, with his aggression, is doing just what Pamphilia needs and requires of him; Amphilanthus' entrance into her private space allows her to avoid transgressing prohibitions against publication or the assertive expression of desire, even as she makes both her work and her love known. Through her passivity, with Amphilanthus' cooperation, Pamphilia becomes at once a lover and a "published" writer—if publication involves simply being read. The critical problem of this episode is in the representation of Pamphilia's agency, in that she does nothing active to achieve these ends. If there are positive consequences for Pamphilia, the scene remains troubling because of the principle that it articulates: that passivity is required of women, in expressing love, in becoming known as writers, and in controlling the boundaries of the spaces they inhabit as their own. Only with the cooperation of her friend, and not because Pamphilia possesses the key to a perfectly private space or because she can choose the time and space in which to speak, can she, on this occasion, unlock the secret of her feelings.

VI

Discarding the Romance

Not all representations of reading in *Urania* involve manuscript texts, however. The most discussed scene of reading in the book is the occasion

upon which Pamphilia discards a romance that she has been reading. This time feeling herself happy in love but burdened by Amphilanthus' absence, Pamphilia makes a book a part of her solitary contemplation, as she leaves her servants to take refuge in a "delicate thicke wood" to read it: "the subject was Love, and the story she then was reading, the affection of a Lady to a brave Gentleman, who equally loved, but being a man, it was necessary for him to exceede a woman in all things, so much as inconstancie was found fit for him to excel her in, hee left her for a new" (317). The narrator's ironic calculation of the reason for the male inconstancy that is the narrative staple of Wroth's own work draws on traditional assumptions of masculine superiority while inverting the tradition of female inconstancy. Yet, if the representation of male inconstancy in Pamphilia's book is akin to the narrative that Wroth writes, Pamphilia's response to the book is less than sympathetic: "Poore love,...how doth all storyes, and every writer use thee at their pleasure, apparrelling thee according to their various fancies? canst thou suffer thy selfe to be thus put in cloathes, nay raggs instead of vertuous habits? punish such Traytors, and cherrish mee thy loyall subject who will not so much as keepe thy injuries neere me" (317). Loyal to love as a transcendent ideal, Pamphilia disapproves of its representations, the clothes that it puts on when it is written down. As if to express her faithfulness to the ideal of love and her distance from its shoddy, insufficient material representation, Pamphilia physically throws the book away to walk up and down, "her hand on her heart, to feele if there were but the motion left in the place of that she had so freely given" (317). In discarding the romance, Pamphilia turns to the unmediated,

unrepresented feeling of her own heart, expressed not in the hand put to paper but the hand put to the heart.

From this hand, Pamphilia constructs a private, feminine poetics. After discovering the motions of her heart, Pamphilia addresses the wood, which responds with an echo, a sound that disconcerts her, so she silences it: "shall I turne blabb? no Echo, excuse me, my love and choyce more precious, and more deere, then thy proud youth must not be named by any but myselfe...thy vast, and hollow selfe shall not be first, where fondest hopes must rest of secrecie in thee, who to each noise doth yeeld an equall grace" (318). Just as the ideal of love is misrepresented when told in tales, so it is tainted when spoken by one who, like the echo, is all word and no feeling, all text and no love. Only those, like herself, who truly love and whose writing emerges from an internal state of constant affection, can compose faithfully on the topic of love. Women are best able to write in this way, according to Wroth, for the words of men are frequently as meaningless as those of the echo because they vow love and then change their affections, emptying their words of affective content. As Limena says of a Lord who wavers between love and scorn for his lady, "mens words are onely breath, their oaths winde, and vowes water" (228). But if Pamphilia's words have a substance that the words of Wroth's male characters can too frequently lack, Pamphilia's requirements for good writing can cause her to fall silent. Just as the status and significance of the cipher may be completely unrecognized by the unknowing outside reader, and the papers preserved in a cabinet can contribute little to one's reputation as a writer, the words that need to be so fully

true that they perfectly express the ideal of love can go unspoken; believing that the transformation of the sensations of the hand on the heart into writing may result in misrepresentation can also result in silence. This silence is complicated, in that it is not the result of obedience to social codes requiring women's submission but of respect for the ideal in which one believes, but it is silence nevertheless.

Critics have had widely diverging opinions on Pamphilia's encounter with the book in this scene. Although they have noted the striking similarity between the book that Pamphilia reads and that which Wroth writes, such comparisons make the incident difficult to interpret; it seems that the *Urania* itself is being thrown aside. Barbara Lewalski regards Pamphilia's forsaking of the book as a moment of self-denial in which she "rejects a book of romances that contains an analogue of her own sad story, seeking to deny its evident applicability" (277). Nona Fienberg, on the other hand, sees Pamphilia's reading as a moment of self-discovery analogous to that of Augustine or Petrarch, yet differentiated in terms of gender because she reads a woman's writing; Pamphilia's choice of Wroth's *Urania*, rather than the Bible or the words of a Church father, signifies her resistance (178,179). However, Pamphilia ultimately rejects the book, which mitigates against reading the scene as a straightforward articulation of the value of women's writing for women readers. While Mary Ellen Lamb similarly regards the scene of reading as important to female subjectivity, for her it is not the text but its rejection that most contributes Pamphilia's sense of herself: "Her resistance to her text creates for her the independent subjectivity denied by

contemporary constructions of the woman reader. Even though subsequent events show her faith in love to be misplaced, she has been granted the freedom to be wrong" ("Women Readers" 218,219). Pamphilia's rejection of the book is indeed the key to the scene, but what does this mean for the value that Wroth is attributing to her own romance?

In addition to Lamb's argument for Pamphilia's resistance to the content of the the book, the answer to this question may be in the book's form, the relationship of its content to its reader, and its social value. The only text to be treated so dismissively, Pamphilia's discarded book is quite unlike the manuscripts—the letters, poems, or books—that are produced in single copies or for particular groups of readers to be, in the best of circumstances, preserved by their readers as treasures. Manuscript texts are part of a relationship between writer and reader and open to revision, ensuring that the text continues to be appropriate to the writer's or reader's changing experiences. For example, just as in her chamber Pamphilia turns to writing when she becomes dissatisfied with what she reads, she requires the poem that she engraved in the tree to retain its relevance to her emotional life; this latter poem was first written as she mourned Amphilanthus' betrayal but it receives, when Pamphilia is momentarily happy in love although cognizant that Amphilanthus could well abandon her again, an additional stanza stating that tears can also flow from mirth.³⁹ Able to be revised with nothing but a return to the knife, the poem in the tree is more flexible and immediate than the romance that Pamphilia discards; no addenda, reprints, or errata are required. The stasis of print clothes the emotional vitality of

love in unsatisfactorily rigid terms. Not only has Pamphilia's book not been given as an appropriate gift, but it fails completely to instigate an act of identification between reader and text; Pamphilia is, at that moment, happy in love, and she is not interested in tales of inconstant male lovers. In this she may be in denial, as Lewalski suggests, but she is not denying herself. Rather, she is asserting herself—her belief in love and in the necessity of intimacy in reading—against a world that is not as she is.

Ironically, when Pamphilia tosses the romance aside, she treats the book in a way antithetical to what the folio form and elaborate title page of Wroth's own romance would seem to require. Rather, Pamphilia's discarded romance is more like the kind of commodity that John Lyly imagines that women read; the book can be treated as trash because it is a generically-produced product making statements about love that do not immediately relate to Pamphilia's emotional state. In this, too, Pamphilia's book is not much like the manuscripts that Wroth's characters primarily read. In contrast to Lyly, who devalues women's books and consequently treats women themselves as trivial, Wroth places great value on all of the other texts that her female characters read, and in so doing, she gives worth to the women themselves. According to Peter Beal, the literary manuscript was preserved from the images of whoredom associated with print only so long as it remained outside of the public marketplace in the private, elite social circle (29,30), and the texts in Wroth's romance are neither for sale nor for everyone. When texts are distributed promiscuously, as Dolorindus' poem is, the consequences are severe for both the male writer and the female reader.

Pamphilia's poems and ciphers, preserved in cabinets or inscribed in trees, Melasinda's letter kept forever in her memory and remembered in her poem, Amphilanthus' writings, retained by Antissia and Melasinda, Peralinda's book in which she records her life, and the two magical books containing narratives of identity belonging to Veralinda and Urania and to Dalinea are all precious objects that would never be treated with the carelessness that Pamphilia exhibits toward her romance. These manuscript texts circulate in single copies, to single or multiple readers within a restricted social group, or are hand-copied by a loving reader. Copies are not for sale, but made as acts of love and friendship. The space in which the text appears delimits the size of the audience, whether this space be a garden or a bedchamber. Within this enclosed circle of readers, Pamphilia's writing has influence—for Antissia is also drawn to the ash tree to express her sorrow over the loss of Amphilanthus, as she writes in imitation of Pamphilia (114).

The conditions of manuscript culture, the way in which manuscript texts acquire value through their handwriting and secret scripts, the personal relationships between writers and readers, the exchange of texts in private spaces rather than a public marketplace, are all enabling for Wroth. What then are we to make of the fact that *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania* was itself printed in 1621? Although we do not know if Wroth herself was responsible for this, reading the printed text is not wholly incompatible with the reading practices that Wroth represents in her work. Whether the text is handwritten or printed, reading can be part of a relationship with the writer in so far as decoding the

roman à clef can occur whether the text is printed or in manuscript, so long as the readers are part of the social group possessing the knowledge to make the connections. Like Dorothy Leigh, who suggests that she prints her volume for her sons, Wroth's romance might be printed for a select group of readers. But print remains promiscuous in that neither author nor printer can choose the readership (except through delimiting circulation through prohibitive pricing). By the emphasis that her romance places on the relationships between readers and writers, especially on the role that the reader plays in protecting the text from destruction and the writer from becoming public, Wroth configures a way of reading that emerges from the conditions of manuscript culture through which her volume will be treasured, preserved, and respected. Given her interest in having readers correctly interpret the woman's writer's words, print may also offer an important stability to the text. Her revisions in one of the extant copies suggest that she could treat the printed text as open, as a manuscript text might be, but also that she wanted the volume to be correct, to close off other readings. Her work elaborates a tension between manuscript and print, between her treatment of the text as open, necessarily available to revision to match the author's or reader's emotional experience, and the text as closed, such that the reader must submit to the meaning the writer intends, as if significance were singular and authorial. Wroth attempts to have the best of both worlds. But if with *The Urania*, she imagines a world in which women's writing can be expressive, exchanged, influential, and admired, it is not a vision that she can ultimately enforce in the open spaces of print culture.

Endnotes

¹ He lists “ungratious bokes” from Spain: “Amadise, Florisande, Tirante, Tristane, and Celestina the baude mother of naughtyynes;” from France: “Lancelot du Lake, Paris and Vienna, Ponthus and Sidonia, and Melucyne;” from Flanders: “Flory and white flowre, Leonell and Canamour, Curias and Floret, Pyramus and Thisbe;” from England: “Parthenope, Genarides, Hippomadon, Wyllyam and Meliour, Libius, and Arthur, Guye, Bevis, and many other” (10v).

² Although they do not mention romances specifically, Edward Hake, Thomas Salter, and Giovanni Bruto are also critical of reading that they characterize as light and likely to lead a woman into licentiousness. In *A Touchestone for this Time Present* (1574), Hake criticizes parents who let their daughters learn “the highe path to whoredome” and nurse them in “amorouous bookes, vaine stories and fonde trifeling fancies, that she smelleth of naughtiness even all hir lyfe after, as a vessel which being once seasoned, doth never forgo the sent of the first licour.” (C3v,C4). The objectionable books take a particular form, as “pampheticall trifles” that can be contrasted with “wholesome Doctrine” presumably published in a more substantial form. He believes that reading leads to action: “reading pernicious, unchaste and godlesse bookes, or after lavours of lyke importaunce (for avoyding tediousnesse) to accompany inpleasures and banquets, young amorous Roisters, & mischievous variettes, making the ende of one pleasure to be the beginning of an other” (C5v). When parents bring up their daughters to read, without giving them proper reading material, they are merely making them “companions of carpet knightes, & giglots, for amorous lovers” (C5v/C6). Bruto objects to the “amorous and impudent songs” (D4) and the “amorous and impudent verses, or fables and newes: as the tales of Bocace and others” (G4v), which might be read by his audience of fathers for style but will only corrupt the minds of young women. Thomas Salter elaborates slightly on the same point, similarly condemning the unwise fathers who let their daughters “leame by hart bookes, ballades, Songes, sonettes, and Ditties of daliance excityng their memories thereby, beyng then most apt to

retayne for ever, that whiche is taught them, to the same maner of order" (Bii(v)). Much later, Edmund Gayton's *Pleasant Notes Upon Don Quixote* (1654) takes a humorous approach to romance reading that results, in part, from the association between women's romance reading and illicit sexuality. A prefatory poem by William Taylor takes a bawdy approach to the women readers in the commentary, telling them, "Don from Dulcinea will not stray,/(He runs at Sheep, but not that way) (**2). Taylor elucidates the burning of "excommunicated books" in Book One with reference to those works "of Errantry" that "have a strange Influence upon the minds of the Readers" and lists readers who will be especially susceptible and so should be prohibited from reading: "Cooks , Butchers, and all sedentary men, (who also are subject to the Piles) as Committeemen, Taylors, Gentile Crafts-men, Schollers over the degree of Doctors, and super-annuate, besides Ladies, & their Gentile-women, and Gentile-men Ushers." Giving extra attention to the ladies, he assesses their reading with a bawdy joke: "Ladies going to be full of Imagination transgresse in Fancy with Gondibert, and forget who they are under, or who is over them" (17).

³ The *Arcadia* was not immune to charges of being dangerous reading on other fronts; a recent editor of *The New Arcadia* notes that the work was similarly condemned by Puritans as frivolous, idolatrous, and morally pernicious (Skretkowicz xlili).

⁴ All of these citations are mentioned in Henry Thomas's *Spanish and Portugese Romances of Chivalry*, although I have discussed them differently.

⁵ John J. O'Connor mentions that an entire chapter of La Noue's *Discours Politiques et militaires* is devoted to *Amadis*, where the author expresses concern that young men might believe that they can learn to be soldiers by reading the book and that readers may be led to investigate magic (14,15). The prominence of *Amadis de Gaule* in these expressions of concern about women's reading is curious in that the romance was translated into England relatively slowly, some time after Vives, for one, issued his directions. Margaret Tyler's translation of the first book of *The Mirror of Knighthood* in 1579 was the first English

translation of a Spanish romance, and, divided into eight parts, the romance was not completely translated until 1601 (Thomas 247). The *Amadis de Gaule*, the first four books of which were printed in Spain in 1508, grew to 12 books by 1546 and received both French translations and continuations that were different from the Spanish development of the tales (O'Connor). As John O'Connor states: "If we ignore the German additions, we are confronted by a romance of twenty-one books, several of them in duplicate translation and two—Books XV and XVI—in two very different versions. The cycle, written in Spain by at least five authors over a period of about forty years and added to by the Italian Mambrino Roseo, was made French by ten different translators or adaptors, the process of translation extending over nearly as many years as the process of writing" (20). But *Amadis de Gaule* was first translated into English only in 1589, before which the work was accessible only to those English readers who could read foreign languages such as Spanish, German, Italian, or most likely, French, from which the first English translation was made. The *Palmerin de Oliva* was translated in 1588 and 1597 (Thomas 249).

⁶ It is the story of Poliarchus, the Prince of France, who dresses as a woman to gain the presence of the beautiful Princess Argenis. After rescuing her from being kidnapped by a rejected suitor, Poliarchus reveals himself to be a man, and they fall in love. They are separated by various events, including a civil war, accusations of treason against Poliarchus, rival suitors and parental opposition, but all is resolved when the father's choice of a husband, a moor, is revealed to be Argenis' brother, the result of a secret marriage to the Queen of Mauritania.

⁷ Paul Salzman usefully distinguishes between types of prose fiction: the popular chivalric romances (the *Amadis* and *Palmerin* cycles published in Spain and Portugal between 1508 and 1550 and in England in the 1590s); the courtly and fashionable romances (exemplified by Lyly's *Euphues* and Sidney's *Arcadia*); the novella (often tales translated from Ovid and Boccaccio, as in George Pettie's *Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure* (1576) and Robert Greene's *Penelope's*

Web (1587)); and the realistic jest-book and cony-catching pamphlet like Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* and Nicholas Breton's *Mamillia* (*English Prose Fiction*).

⁸ See also, in the same volume, Joan Pong Linton, who argues that Lyly constructs a female reader to negotiate class conflict between the court and the market for which he writes. Susan Staub contends, as well, Gascgoine's *Master F.J.* represents Gascgoigne's anxiety about publication and his inability to control readers after publishing the work (51).

⁹ Of the works that I have been discussing as works addressed to women readers, although not all chivalric romances, John Lyly's *Euphues. The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and his England* were printed in black letter in their first editions in 1579 and 1580, respectively, and in their seventeenth-century editions to 1630. *Rich His Farewell to Militarie Profession* (first printed in 1583 and until 1606), George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his pleasure* (1576 until 1613), Robert Green's *Mamillia* (part 1 in 1580 and part 2 in 1593), and Diego Ortunez de Calahorra's *The Mirroure of Princely Deedes of Knighthood* (1578 until 1599) were all printed in black letter. Sidney's *Arcadia* and John Barclay's *An Epitome of the History of Faire Argenis and Polyarchus* (1640) were not.

¹⁰ As Mary Ellen Lamb notes, these are only the most prominent of Wroth's literary connections. Elizabeth Manners, her cousin and Philip Sidney's daughter, was praised, as was Wroth herself, by Ben Jonson for being a poet. The dedicatee of the volume, Susan Vere Herbert, the Countess of Montgomery, was also the daughter of two poets; her mother was Anne Cecil, who wrote four epitaphs, and her father was Edward de Vere. William Herbert, the father of Wroth's two illegitimate children, was a posthumously published poet and the patron of poets, including Shakespeare's first folio (*Gender* 150,151).

¹¹ With regard to Wroth's intent to publish, Roberts also notes that there are over 1 050 stop-press variants in the volume, spread throughout the volume and making substantive, as well as accidental, alterations. Although Roberts does not argue that this proves Wroth's involvement in the printing, since they could have been made by anyone able to consult the manuscript, Roberts does

propose that the presence of authorial handwritten corrections in one of the surviving copies of the *Urania* suggests Wroth's continued interest in the printed version. These emendations provide a number of readings unavailable from other copies. The printer's confusion about the ending is also reflected in the stop-press correction at the end of the sonnet sequence that concludes the volume, where in most copies the word FINIS is used but in five copies there is an ornament (cx-cxviii).

¹² Peter Beal notes a similar impulse to monumentalizing in the posthumous publication of Katherine Philips' poetry. Philips had resisted publication in her lifetime except when her poems appeared in the company of other royalist coterie poets, but after her death a folio volume of her works was produced. The poems, the book's format, its description of itself as a monument, and the accompanying picture of Philips as a bust on a pedestal all suggest an effort to put her works into the public domain in a way that would ascribe the value to her authorship that she did not achieve in her own lifetime (173-175). Yet, if one contemporary owner of Philips' volume would invest in a sumptuous binding of "red morocco, with elaborate tooling in gilt, and painted floral inlays," and it could be compared in form to the works of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher—as Beal does—Katherine Philips, like Mary Wroth, has not been remembered as they were.

¹³ For a discussion of women as "users and producers of courtly love poetry, see Elizabeth Heale's examination of the hands of Lady Margaret Douglas, Mary Shelton, and Mary Howard, Duchess of Richmond in the Devonshire Manuscript.

¹⁴ Margaret Ezell, for example, discusses how Elizabeth Delaval's volume has been characterized as that of an aristocratic woman who wrote only for herself and about religious topics. Yet, as Ezell argues, Delaval displays an awareness of an audience and of the conventions of romance, and if her meditations are given headings in the manner of a devotional text, her reflections are frequently more psychological than spiritual. She reflects on her relationships with the people around her, including a maid and a suitor whom her aunt refused to let

her marry ("Elizabeth's Delaval"). Victoria Burke also asserts that the women she studies (Constance Aston Fowler, Lady Anne Southwell, Ann Bowyer, and Lady Margaret Wemyss) "throw[] into question the still common notion that women's literary activities were necessarily private in the first half of the seventeenth century....None of the four miscellanies ... should be considered as private documents" (136). In developing his notion of "scribal publication," Harold Love includes a chapter on the circulation of Katherine Phillips' poetry in manuscript in the late seventeenth century and her reputation as a poet.

¹⁵ Lewalski offers the evidence of Joshua Sylvester's reference to her as a poet, poems by Ben Jonson and William Drummond, and the Penshurst portrait of her with a giant archlute. Ben Jonson comments to Mary Wroth, in "A Sonnet, to the Noble Lady, The Lady Mary Worth," published in *Underwood* in the *Works* of 1640, that "Since I exscribe your Sonnets, am become/A better lover, and much better Poet" (166). The poem is not necessarily about manuscript poems, however, given that the poem was written sometime between 1613 and Jonson's death in 1637.

¹⁶ The Folger MS exhibits evidence of being a fair copy, not only in its handwriting, but also in the care taken in its organization and presentation. Wroth gives the sonnets a title on the first leaf and places each poem carefully on the page, between ruled margins with one sonnet per page; the sonnets are numbered; and, except before the songs, the first word of the next sonnet appears at the bottom of the previous page under an elegant swoosh. The manuscript is now bound, but since this binding is a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century addition, it is possible that the manuscript was unbound and these elements allow Wroth to indicate her preferred order.

¹⁷ Critics have argued that writing in manuscript had an impact on the narrative. Barbara Lewalski, perhaps problematically presupposing that Wroth all along intended to publish the first part of the *Urania*, argues that the restricted circulation of this continuation may account for the greater number and explicitness of allusions to the Sidney-Pembroke family circle. Lewalski supports

this view with reference to a poem, known to be by William Herbert and ascribed to Amphilanthus, and to the association of the Queen of Naples with the Countess of Pembroke, of Rosindy with Robert Sidney (Wroth's brother), and of the brother and sister Bellario and Clorinda with Philip and Mary Sidney (Clorinda being the name Spenser gave the Countess of Pembroke in his introduction to her funeral elegy for Philip Sidney). Josephine Roberts, however, suggests that the continuation may offer evidence of Wroth's self-censorship in that its characters are less easily identifiable and her satire is directed less toward individuals and more toward a critique of Jacobean society ("Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*" 128).

¹⁸ Harold Love makes an interesting qualification to this focus on literary manuscripts. He says that women's literary writings were often of less significance to them than their works dealing with the practical conduct of the household, preparation of food, and treatment of illness. He gives the example of Dame Johanna St. John whose 1704 will gives a book of recipes to her granddaughter but specifies that the contents of a cabinet she leaves another granddaughter should be burned (58). Although it may also be that these papers were burned, not because they were not important, but from concern for privacy and anxieties relating to women's writing, it is still worth noting that forms of writing not typically thought of as literary could possess great value. Love notes, as well, that the parental advice book, printed examples of which I have discussed in my third chapter, could also be scribally published within the extended family (202).

¹⁹ Leandrus, in another instance, similarly bestows his attentions on the papers upon which he has written verses that he plans to give to his beloved Pamphilia (a love that will ultimately go unrequited). After reading the sad verses "of my wailing/And Loves failing," he kisses the papers "because they should goe to his mistris" (102).

²⁰ Roberts also notes that Sir Aston Cokayne's poem "A Remedy for Love" states that "The Lady Mary Wrothe's *Urania* is repleat/ With elegancies, but too full of

heat" (qtd. in Roberts "Introduction" 36), although it is not clear which of the incidents led to this assessment.

²¹ While Wroth's letter to the Duke of Buckingham and to Sir William Feilding are holograph manuscripts, the first letter to Denny (dated Feb. 15), Denny's reply, Wroth's second letter, and Denny's final reply are preserved in contemporary manuscripts belonging to the Marquess of Salisbury, the Clifton Manuscripts, as well as, with the exception of Wroth's first letter, the manuscripts of the Earl of Denbigh (Roberts. Appendix. *The Poems of Mary Wroth* 236-242). The poem "To Pamphilia from the father-in-law of Seralius" is in the Clifton Manuscripts (Manuscripts of Sir Hervey Jukes Lloyd Bruce), as well as in two seventeenth-century commonplace books, under a different title "To the Lady Mary Wroth for writeing the Countes of Montgomeryes Urania" (Roberts, "Introduction," *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* 32,33).

²² Denny, too, attaches Wroth's disrespect towards him to the accusation that she has written "lascivious tales and amorous toyes" instead of composing "a volume of heavenly layes and holy love" and following the example of her "vertuous and learned aunt" (239). Helen Hackett astutely notes, however, that Denny's comment suppresses the Countess' fame as a connoisseur of romance, as the dedicatee of the *Arcadia* ("Yet Tell Me" 47). Mary Ellen Lamb, in her study of the reception of Mary Sidney's writing, also comments on Denny's distortion of her authorship, obscuring her translation of secular works so that she appears only as the author of the Psalms (*Gender* 30).

²³ She asks the William Feilding that his "favor may make all well with his Majestie" (242) and the Duke of Buckingham for the king's warrant so that she can get the books "that are abroad" (236).

²⁴ This knowledge can be constituted as something to be mocked in women, as in William Browne's "Fido, an Epistle to Fidelia" where the chambermaid upon hearing the mistress read a letter from her lover, "quickly strikes/That good opinion dead, and swears that this/Was stol'n from Palmerin and Amadis" (qtd. in Wright, *Middle-Class Culture* 112). Even though Browne's purpose is to ridicule

the maid's reading, her knowledge gives her a form of power over men because she is able to deconstruct the lover's missive.

²⁵ Donne expresses this view, in part, in a letter to the Countess of Montgomerie, to whom the *Urania* is also addressed. As he writes to give the Countess a sermon that she had already heard, he contrasts the spoken and written word: "I know what dead carcasses things written are in respect of things spoken. But of things of this kind, that soul that inanimates them never departs from them". It is only because he gives her a sermon, spoken by the spirit of God, that this written word can live. God has spoken the word to the writer, and so the writer will "meet[] himself again (as we meet ourselves in a glass) in the eyes and ears and hearts of the hearers and readers; and that spirit, which is ever the same to an equal devotion, makes a writing and speaking equal means to edification" ("To the Right Honourable the Countess of Montgomery" 2.123). The written word lives because it is read. Richard Wollman disagrees with Arthur Marotti's book *John Donne: Coterie Poet* (1986) for reducing Donne to an "author-function." (87). He wants Donne to be an author who represents himself, in some kind of real, personal sense, to his readers: "Donne tries to insulate himself against the inevitable misreading that occurs when writing is separated from the writer's actual voice, from the dialogue exchange between reader and writer" (88). While I see similarities between Donne's representation of the function of letter and manuscript text and Wroth's, I also do not want to conflate author and voice in the way that Wollman does. Writing as if speaking to a listener is not the same as actually speaking to a listener. It would be better to say that Donne—like Wroth—represents his authorship in terms that personalize or animate both the author and the reader. Even if the writer represents his text as his, or her, "actual voice," resplendent with feeling and emotion, this could still be a fiction, as Wroth's narrator actually points out, that gives the writer a persuasive power; there may be a fiction of truthfulness while the text is nevertheless a literary, even imitative, construct.

²⁶ Harold Love dislikes this translation of Donne's Latin because it obscures the metaphor of birth and suggests that a more appropriate version might be: "What presses give birth to with sodden pangs is acceptable, but manuscripts are more venerated. A book dyed with the blood of the press departs to an open shelf where it is exposed to moths and ashes; but one written by the pen is held in reverence and flies to the privileged shelf reserved for the ancient fathers" (153).

²⁷ Another romance writer, "H.M. of the Middle Temple," identifies his *The strange fortune of Alerane: or, my ladies toy* (1605) as a "pamphlet," not "as a thing worthy to be respected, but at your vacancie and fit opportunitie to be peruse. As a trifle, therefore to spend the time withal" (A3). Barnaby Rich concludes *His Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1594), addressed to both female readers and male soldiers, with his characterization of the histories in his book as "vanities fitter to be presented on Stage....then to be published in Print," as if print were the domain of the non-ephemeral, the serious, and lasting. His excuse for printing is the effeminization of English culture, where men not only dress like women but change their fashions frequently as women do: "So I have put forth this booke because I would followe the fashion" (P2). Lyly's declaration that his book is a commodity to be consumed and disposed of is exclusively the result of being a book for women. To present a piece of trash to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, to whom Lyly appeals for patronage, would be an insult, and so for the earl the book is a child in need of protection, a mouse requiring protection from the cat, and a small boat that would be hoisted to safety on a tall ship ("The Epistle Dedicatory"). Even for the gentlemen readers, the book is a tardy traveler who needs to be welcomed, but not a disposable commodity ("To the Gentlemen Readers"). The address to women demonstrates to the Earl and to gentlemen readers that Lyly knows the possibility of feminization in writing for women, and he makes their faults evidence of his capability: "He that searcheth a woman's thoughts must have his own stayed" (202).

²⁸ Love also discusses a writing example given by Giles Dawson and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton in their *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650*. A 1622 letter

written by a boy to his father suggests the importance of the individualizing script; in the letter, young William Bagot expresses his apologies for his handwriting, evidently after having been reprimanded by his father: "nether will I there by any more shoue a barren invention" (102). According to Love, the problem seems to have been that the boy was incorporating the italic, which his father saw as "a regrettable abnegation of the proper independence of an English gentleman" (110).

²⁹ Plate IV of Sheila R. Richards book offers an example of a ciphered letter to Queen Henrietta Maria to Charles I, dated 22 Sept. 1645. The letter is entirely in a cipher based on numbers (it begins: "14:74:57:59:2:441: le:7\$:54:8:78...") and when deciphered, it is written in French.

³⁰ Richards' book includes ciphered letters, captured in transit, from a woman to her Royalist husband, in which she writes, not of royalist secrets, but to complain vehemently and touchingly that her husband has forgotten her. Deciphered, her messages reveal a complaint: "Had I bine so deare as you protene [pretend?] I could not have bonn so much for gotten. But thre is no tru in this world" (132). She also expresses her constancy to him, her desire for approval for not having spent any of his money except on his sons, and her wish that he write her: "It was reported heare you were al kilded and taken, wich made me almost besides my self and cold never besattisfied til I heard from you. I hoped for some comfortabel lynes, but tis invaine to expect love where there is none" ("A Wife" 133).

³¹ The book is carefully organized, suggesting that the recipes were not randomly recorded. The book is divided into two sections, one for medicine and one for cookery, the second section beginning with a reiteration of Packer's claim of possession: "Preserving and Coockery/Katherine Packer/her boocke" (p.176). At the end of the book, there is an index in which a full page is given to each letter of the alphabet so that relevant recipes can be appropriately listed, by both recipe and page number.

³² Goldberg also includes a relevant citation in his book, although his source is not clear: "As the *Egyptians* had two sorts of Letters, one sacred and hieroglyphicall, the other vulgar: and as with us the writing proper to the publike Courts in Court and Cancerie hands differ from the common writing: so the *Hebrewes* also might have a two fold writing" (qtd. in Goldberg 211).

³³ Patricia Fumerton notes Philip Sidney's fondness for exhibiting devices at court tournaments. She mentions that he invented a number of "imprese" with stars (suggesting Stella), and when he learned he would not be receiving an inheritance because of the birth of a son to his uncle Leicester, he devised an imprese stating "~~SPERAVI~~" (83).

³⁴ William Dean discusses two keys to the *Arcadia*. The best known is in a letter by D. Tyndale to John Aubrey, dated Feb. 18, 1686/7, entitled "Key of Pembroke's *Arcadia*." There is a second in a copy of the 1598 folio of the *Arcadia* once owned by Henry Oxinden, recorded in the 1630's but possibly from an earlier date. Dean concludes: "both keys demonstrate that there was a tradition of assumed correspondences between real persons of the Sidney circle and the fictional characters of *Arcadia* from an early date, even much earlier than Oxinden's key" (19,20). With his 1628 and 1629 editions of a translation of John Barclay's Latin romance, *Argenis*, Sir Robert Le Grys also includes a key identifying the characters. "The Clavis" is printed at the end of the work and begins by identifying such a key as the desire of his readers: "That many, who will be pleased to reade this Barclay his *Argenis*, will also desire to know, who they were,. that under the fained names of Meleander, Poliarchus, *Argenis*, Licogenes, and the rest mentioned therein, the Author intended to impersonate" (485). Although he is not certain about the identity of Poliarchus and *Argenis*, he then identifies Meleander the king of Sicily with Henry III of France and numerous other minor characters with Puritans, Spaniards, Catholics, kings and dukes. Interestingly, Judith Man would also translate an abridged French translation of this work into English and publish it in 1640.

³⁵ John Lyly's also imagines his *Euphues and his England* in the lady's cabinet, as if it were a honoured place: "Euphues had rather be shut in a lady's casket than open in a scholar's study" (200). Yet, here, Lyly's sense of the value in the place is limited by the triviality that he associates with ladies' reading, both in being opposed to the scholarly and in being a work for hours of idleness during which reading is comparable to playing with a lapdog. Donne also associates the cloth of state with the privileged space in one of his letters to Magdalen Herbert. After comparing his letter to Bevis of Hampton, a figure from romance seeking adventures, he tells her: "This day I came to town, and to the best part of it, your house; for your memory is a state-cloth and presence, which I reverence, though you be away; though I need not seek that there, which I have about and within me" ("To the Worthiest Mrs. Magdalen Herbert," 1.165). Donne imagines Magdalen Herbert's house as a space defined by identity, a space in which her presence remains although she is absent and in which she is remembered as regal.

³⁶ Barbara M. Benedict refers to an eighteenth-century scene of reading from Thomas Amory's *Memoirs:Containing the Lives of Several Ladies of Great Britain*: "She had a volume of Shakespear in her hand, as I came softly towards her...and her attention was so much engaged with the extremely poetical and fine lines which Titania speaks in the third act of the Midsummer night's dream that she did not see me till I was quite near here. She seemed then in great amazement. She could not be more surprised if I had dropt from the clouds" (qtd. in Benedict 63). In this scene, the reading woman, especially the woman absorbed in Shakespeare, is beautiful, like the poetry of Shakespeare himself. In the seventeenth century, however, both this sort of absorption in reading and recreational reading itself were questioned by conduct books for women. The acceptability of the woman's reading in this later example may be related to the lady's reading of the "extremely poetical and fine lines" of Shakespeare, but it may also be that perspectives on recreational literature had changed. Roger Chartier also discusses an eighteenth-century painting by Pierre-Antoine

Baudouin, in which the woman reading a novel has abandoned herself to sensuous imagining. The painting is both moral, a warning against such reading, and voyeuristic, as it invades a woman's most private place. He argues that eighteenth-century men imagined reading by women as idle and sensuous, the "quintessence of private activity." This focus on the female reader is indicative of a change in attitudes toward reading generally; while the iconography of reading in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was male and religious, exemplified in paintings of St. Jerome, that of the eighteenth century was female and secular ("Practical Impact" 146,147).

³⁷ The "Bathsheba" paintings by Rembrandt and Jan Steen also contribute a motif to the genre of the woman with the letter. While Steen produces a Bathsheba very like the women readers of other Dutch painters, Rembrandt combines the Northern European interest in painting women with letters with the Italian concern for painting the nude, so that Bathsheba sits on a sofa in some private locale, head tilted, holding the letter in her hand, as if meditating on its contents (Alpers 204-206).

³⁸ The book represents itself as having taken an indirect route to print, with Pettie having given the book to one R.B. with admonitions not to publish and R.B. then publishing it because he wants to please women. The printer is the one who adds the moral lessons. He concludes the story of Progne and Philomela, for example, by saying that they are turned into birds because they are not worthy of human shape and, if he attributes some guilt to Tereus for his rape, his wife also deserves to be condemned to hell for murdering her child (38). Even though the stories are not about virtuous women, each story ends with a lesson about such things as chastity, patience in adversity, the right use of a husband's goods, the avoidance of covetousness, and obedience to husbands (although it also says that daughters need not obey their fathers in choosing husbands, but should choose according to their own wishes).

³⁹ This scene is itself a significant rewriting of Sidney's Philoclea, for although she also returns to her tree, Philoclea's revision is characterised only as

inconstancy. Having written a vow of chastity but now in love with Cleophila/Pyrocles, Philoclea's inscription of a poem in marble is "an accuser of her change" (110) and its revision is a recantation:

But lo, my words defaced, my fancies blind,
Blots to the stone, shame to myself I find;
And witness am, how ill agree in one,
A woman's hand with constant marble stone. (110)

Philoclea has no option for revision as a writer or as a woman, for a blot on her writing is a blot on her sexual reputation. For Pamphilia, from whom Wroth requires no vow of chastity, the ability to change her poem allows her to be a living and growing reader and writer.

Coda

"Eagle Eyes Against the Sunne": Seeing Women Reading in Aemelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*

Queen Anne; Princess Elizabeth; Lady Susan, Countess Dowager of Kent; Lady Mary, Countess Dowager of Pembroke; Lady Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland; her daughter, Lady Anne, Countess of Dorset; Arbella Stuart; Lucy, Countess of Bedford; Lady Katherine, Countess of Suffolk; and the "Vertuous Reader"—with prefatory addresses to these potential female patrons, Aemelia Lanyer begins her *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* and vividly contributes to an archive of represented female readers. My inquiry into the intersections between reading and metaphors of vision, both in these patronage addresses and in the Passion poem that follows, was the genesis for this dissertation, and now serves, coda-like, as a conclusion. I will consider—as variations on previous themes—Aemelia Lanyer's integration of religion into other early modern discourses, especially those concerned with the representation of beauty, female sexuality, and knowledge. Lanyer's work also brings a new ingredient to this study of early modern women's reading: the female reader embossed with the power of the patron. Consequently, I first will consider the importance of patronage to Lanyer's configuration of her readers' sight. Then I will examine the process of religious vision and the significance of what Lanyer's readers are to gaze upon: their minds, the body of Christ, and an empty space from which female beauty has been erased. Finally, I will conclude by reflecting upon some of the possible

consequences of Lanyer's representation of the Passion, including a critique of gender roles in marriage, the articulation of the subjectivity of the female reader, and the construction of the female artist.

Lanyer constitutes her readers, first of all, through the prefatory poems that solicit patronage for her work. These poems are remarkable on several accounts: Lanyer addresses an unusual number of potential patrons; she solicits only women; and she continues to apostrophize Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland throughout the Passion poem, which forms the central portion of the book, and the country house poem, "The Description of Cooke-ham," which follows.¹ Because of the exceptional nature of Lanyer's prefatory poems and her continued addresses to the Countess of Cumberland, issues of patronage are central to Lanyer studies. Barbara K. Lewalski, among the first seriously to take up Lanyer's work, argued that in the dedicatory poems, Lanyer "rewrite[s] the institution of patronage in female terms, transforming the relationships assumed in the male patronage system into an ideal community" ("Rewriting Patriarchy" 100; *Writing Women* 221). Critics such as Lisa Schnell, Ann Baines Coiro, and Jonathan Goldberg, to somewhat different ends, have taken issue with Lewalski for creating an idealized sisterhood of women at the expense of a consideration of the tension instilled by the differences between Lanyer and her patrons. Mary Ellen Lamb, Kari Boyd McBride, and Michael Schoenfeldt, acknowledging the concerns about class raised by these reassessments, argue, in various ways, that Lanyer critiques the social divisions created by class hierarchy through

modifies the discourse of patronage with religious language.² Like Lamb, who writes that “far from erasing disparities in class, the *Salve* is predicated upon them” (“Patronage” 40), I see Lanyer’s approach to class as ambiguous, at times requiring class distinction in order to solicit favour, and at times criticizing the economic disparity class produces.³ I will focus on the relationship between patronage and reading and the implications of Lanyer’s use of metaphors of vision for the representation of her patrons’ ability to read, to see, and to know.⁴ When Lanyer combines the role of the upper-class female patron with that of the reader and with images of seeing, she affixes a degree of social power to the representation of women’s reading. In so far as this representation is of “women’s” reading, a quality ascribed through gender rather than through the status or wealth of the individual women, Lanyer’s depiction of women as intellectual and spiritual knowers and her efforts to confront and expose injustices of dominant masculine culture, especially with regard to female beauty, intervene in gendered discourses of mind and spirit in a culture anxious about women’s reading and education.

Lanyer connects the patron’s ability to read and her ability to see throughout the patronage poems, simultaneously implicating her vision in issues related to patronage, religion, and sexuality. In the initial dedicatory poem addressed to Queen Anne, Aemelia Lanyer directs her patron in reading *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*: “Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene,/ A womans writing of divinest things:/ Reade it faire Queene, though it defective

be,/Your Excellence can grace both It and Mee" (1-6). Here, the Queen is to view the spectacle of the "seldome seene" woman's writing even as she reads it; the verbs "view" and "read" hold the same relation to the object, the poem. The Queen's reading gaze is not to observe passively, however, but by consenting to view writing by a woman, is to grace actively with her excellence a poem presented as defective by its author. Paying particular attention to the Queen's faculty of sight, Lanyer reiterates that she writes of "divinest things": "Here may your sacred Majestie behold/That mightie Monarch both of heav'n and earth" (43,44). Lanyer similarly directs the Lady Katherine, Countess of Suffolk, toward a view of Christ: "Heere I present to you the King of kings:/Desiring you to take a perfit view,/Of those great torments Patience did indure" (42-44). The view of his torments becomes an eroticised vision of Christ's loveliness in death. Beauty shines in "Deaths ashie pale discoloured face" (77) where none of the traditional signs of beauty (dove, swan, ivory, rose or vermillion) are as beautiful as this lifeless body: "In whom is all that Ladies can desire;/If Beauty, who hath bin more faire than he?" (85,86). The Countess' daughters also see Christ as beloved through a comparison with the men around them: "Heere they may see a Lover much more true/Than ever was since the world began" (52,53). While the divine image that the Queen and the Countess of Suffolk are to observe in their reading is noble, a king, the one that the Countess of Pembroke is to focus on at the end of "Authors Dreame," is of more humble circumstances:

Yet it is no disparagement to you,

To see your Saviour in a Shepherds weed,
 Unworthily presented in your viewe,
 Whose worthinesse will grace each line you reade.

Receive him here by my unworthy hand,
 And read his paths of fair humility. (217-222)

The Christ presented to the Countess Dowager of Kent, the Countess of Bedford, and the Countess of Dorset is even more explicitly sexualized; Lanyer counsels the Countess of Kent to "Receive your love..Which here presents himselfe within your view," and to "Take this faire Bridegroom in your soules pure bed" (37-38, 42). In the poem to the Countess of Bedford, Lanyer allows that Virtue will unlock the cabinet of her breast with the key of knowledge, and Christ will enter in, "The true-love of your soule, your hearts delight,/Fairer than all the world in your cleare sight" (1-7). And finally, when the Countess of Dorset looks at the death and passion of "His lovely love" (114), her soul may enfold him in her armes, "Loving his love, that did endure such paine" (119).

In each case, reading Lanyer's poem is an engagement of the eyes, a form of vision that is simultaneously involved in the construction of patronage and in the overlapping traditions of religious and erotic vision. According to Lorna Hutson, the male patron not only writes a discourse of himself in reading, but also, in the competing discourse within which he is a noble patron, his gaze is used to "authenticate[] and enlarge[] the text's sphere of influence ("Why" 159).

Within this masculine homosocial space, the eyes of the patron become integral to the production of knowledge:

This process of authentication [of knowledge] was spoken of a disclosure or a 'discovery' or 'invention' of what had been hidden; a topic was 'unfolded' to be 'beheld' by the interpreting eye. The beholder thus exercised virtue as a medium of knowledge, and the patron, in his exalted position as potential governor of society, exercised more than most, having eyes like the sun, to bring knowledge to the inferior sight of others. ("Why" 160)

Lanyer, too, particularly engages the gaze of her patrons to bring knowledge of Christ, and also of women, to the eyes of sympathetic readers and hostile critics. Although repeatedly declaring her inadequacy in creating that reflection and describing her poem as insufficient—a dim steel rather than a crystal mirror, and the product of a "weake distempred braine" ("To the Queenes Most Excellent Majestie" 139)—she actively ensures her text's sufficiency, first of all by asserting the presence of Christ in it, and then by engaging her readers in the project. Because those readers who see God are also patrons, their exemplary vision and consequent ability to know are materially reinforced by their social power; being a patron works against the limitations of being a woman reader. Even so, female patrons were not, as Hutson says of male patrons, "potential governor[s] of society," and consequently women were not usually considered to be able to offer knowledge to others. It was believed, after all, that Eve's desire for

knowledge brought about the Fall, a conviction that resulted in the numerous dicta controlling women's eyes that I discussed in my first chapter. Richard Braithwait, for example, had argued that because Eve looked on the fruit, coveted, and aspired to knowledge of good and evil, women should close their eyes: "ramme up those portells which betray you to your enemy, and prevent his entry by your vigilance" (142).⁵ With the proffered vision of Christ, Lanyer focuses the gaze of her female readers within a sanctioned social space, the religious text appropriate to both women writers and women readers. But just as the other women writers I have discussed did not use the legitimacy of this space simply to express submission, Lanyer imagines the possibility that female eyes might be knowing, rather than lascivious, privatized, or closed altogether. With patronage poems that provide, as Mary Ellen Lamb suggests, "an early modern form of celebrity endorsement to sell books to anonymous consumers within the capitalistic system of market exchange," (43), and, as Lorna Hutson argues, patrons who are "celebrated as a textual resource" ("Why" 160), Lanyer employs her patrons, their social position and the representation of their sight, to reconfigure and then to authorize, even to "sell," women's ability to gain knowledge through reading.

Lanyer doubles the perspective of her readers by metaphorically describing her text as a mirror for the virtues of good women, in addition to figuring it as a portrait of Christ. As for the male patron described by Lorna Hutson, who can produce, as exemplified in Shakespeare's sonnets, "an inner

self through the rhetorical 'finding out' or 'invention' of the text's colours" ("Why" 159), Lanyer's patrons are also to develop self-knowledge. Lanyer charges Queen Anne to "Look in this Mirroure of a worthy Mind,/Where some of your faire Virtues will appeare" (37,38), and reiterates later: "Let your faire Virtues in my Glasse be seene" (90). As in the poem to Queen Anne, where the Passion poem is represented as a "dym steele, yet full of spotlesse truth" (41), the speaker in the dream vision states: "I here present my mirroure to her view,/Whose noble virtues cannot be exempt,/My Glasse being steele, declares them to be true" (210-212). The prose address to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, combines the trope of the vision of Christ in the text with that of text as mirror. Christ, says Lanyer, possesses beauty and riches, such that he can "receive no blemish, nor impeachment, by my unworthy hand writing" (24,25). Thus her poem, because it contains Christ, is a treasure upon which the Countess should look with "the most perfect eyes of your understanding" and it is also a "mirroure of your most worthy minde" (28, 30-31). Lanyer focuses the eyes of her readers, informing them of what they will see—both divinest things and their own virtues. This works both to flatter the patron through a representation of her as a good woman and to make the poet necessary to her self-knowledge; when Lanyer claims possession of the poem and the reading process by repeating "this Mirroure," "my Glasse," and "my mirroure," she participates in the relation as the tain of the mirror, the solid surface behind the mirror that creates the reflection. In addition to performing the deferential and flattering work of the patronage

address, the mirroring of female virtues also functions as a defence of good women. As Wendy Wall writes of Lanyer, "Her work is figured almost obsessively as an interactive mirroring of female virtues, a redemptive textual space in which women might find the image of themselves and other devout women, and in which they, by looking, might purify their sight" (*Imprint* 322). Through superimposing glimpses of her readers upon a picture of Christ, Lanyer confirms and creates an image of the moral rectitude of women; her patrons are not excluded from knowledge on the basis of their gender as happened in writings on education. She reflects women's moral stability back to her readers, a reflection that might also be read by the potentially voyeuristic reading public that may be looking in upon the space of women's reading and writing. When the eyes of her patrons assert the worth of her volume even as they articulate their own significant abilities, class overwrites the limitations of gender to configure the female reader as a more effective agent and subject.

The notion that Christ can be seen in reading also has its place in religious tradition, for it is potentially related both to the pre-Reformation interest in the use of images and to the idea of the beatific vision, popular in seventeenth-century Protestantism. In my second chapter, I discussed the iconoclastic rejection of the use of images in mid-sixteenth-century England by those who sought to reform the English church; Catherine Parr, I suggested, deployed visual images to configure her turn from the blind worship of "visible idols" to the insight gained from reading the Bible, and in so doing involved her book in the religious politics of her day while

representing her own ability to possess knowledge. So, although Martin Jay argues that the English Reformation was hostile to vision because of the collapse of difference between iconolatry and idolatry, with the rejection of the visual experience of physical objects (icons and other images) in favour of the literal word of Scripture (42,43), this study (and others) suggests that it would be better to speak of a restructuring of vision. Margaret Miles describes the removal of art from churches not as an opposition to vision, but as a reformation of its patterns: "The whitewashed churches and lecture halls of Protestant communities did not so much reject visual participation in worship as provide a startling new visual experience in the absence of presentations of a hierarchically ordered universe as a setting for Christian worship." Nevertheless, responding to Luther's statement that "the ears are the only organs of a Christian," Miles concludes, "Protestant Christianity ...became, often abruptly, a religion in which a Christian was trained increasingly to use the ears; if eyes were engaged in devotional piety, it was for reading" (*Image* 122-124). This palimpsestic rewriting of imagery is literally illustrated by the Binham Priory in Norfolk, where, in the mid-sixteenth century, the paintings on the rood screen were whitewashed and written over with the words of Scripture from Tyndale's translation (Phillips 96). This is not a dichotomy between the visual and the verbal but a replacement of the image with the word as an object of vision; the eyes were not abandoned as instruments of knowledge but redirected physically and metaphorically from pictures to texts.

The process of seeing Christ through a text, the notion that words might be a medium of sight, is differentiated from seeing him in an icon, but is, nonetheless, influenced by ideas of vision older than the Reformation. Augustinian theology, influenced by neo-Platonic distinctions between the eye of the mind and that of the body, described the experience of God in visual terms.⁶ Augustine writes in his *Confessions* of the process of learning to see; at first able to use his bodily senses to present exterior things to his mind for judgment, the mind, seeking "the light by which it was sprinkled," comes to prefer the immutable (7.17.23). As in Plato's gaze between lovers, the sight of God is a reciprocal process in which sight is possible when there is a likeness between the one who sees and the object seen.⁷ Robert Harris' 1652 sermons on the Beatitudes make explicit this connection between neo-Platonic sight and reading. Harris says that there is both a natural vision of God acquired through reason and a vision attained through grace. Explaining further explanation how God is seen supernaturally, he writes:

it will easily appear, that it is a most blessed thing to see God, if we consider, that these three things must concur to the making up of sight:: first an object; secondly, a medium, a middle; as the water or aire enlightened; thirdly, the faculty of seeing; in a word; there must be a double light, the one without a man, and the other within. (213)

The object of sight is God, who is "beauty itself...a most amiable and delightfull object to the eye of mans soul," while the Son is the medium of vision, the reflection of the Father's glory and "the best glasse wherein we may come by the

sight of God." The Son is revealed in "his Word and Ordinances, which in the Revelation are fitly set forth by the name of a sea of glasse, first, for largenesse, secondly, for steadinesse; thirdly, for clearnesse, as giving us a clear sight of God." The final element of sight, the faculty of seeing, is explained by grace within and grace without; Harris' model requires, like the fires of Plato and Augustine, an internal and external medium: "for neither is God to be seen but by the light of his own grace." (213,214). When Aemelia Lanyer tells her patrons to view Christ in her poem, she draws upon the notion that language provides the medium in which the divine can be seen, but the medium is her poem, rather than the Bible.⁸ Making the relationship between her readers and Christ dependent on her words places value on her words, and it alters the typically gendered constructions of both reading and writing; she composes, not the valueless words of a woman for female readers with wandering eyes, but a vision of divine beauty for readers who possess a superior ability to attain knowledge of God by seeing correctly, an ability supplemented and affirmed by the fact that her readers are patrons.

Closely related to this form of religious vision is the erotic gaze that similarly emerges from the neo-Platonic tradition. Not only does Lanyer tell her female patrons to regard their own invisible qualities, but she also presents them with a vision of divinity that is particularly embodied, in the beautiful Christ, and with a blank space from which their own physical beauty has been erased. In *Timaeus*, where beauty is integrally related to the eyes, Plato tells of a lover who by looking at

his boy falls into a kind of love-madness "because the stream of beauty that pours into him through his eyes warms him up and waters the growth of his wings [of desire]" (251B). Beauty moves from the boy-beloved into the eyes of the gazing lover to instil a painful pleasure, a representation of the eye as an agent of love that is influential throughout Renaissance culture (Krier 87).⁹ When Lanyer begins to tell the story of Christ's Passion with a refusal to describe female physical beauty, for it is "not the subject I will write upon" (186), she declines to participate in the exchange by which female beauty is blazoned in public. The absence created by what the marginal gloss calls, "An Invective against outward beauty unaccompanied with virtue," asserts her difference from other (mostly male) writers who wrote of women's beauty. Lorna Hutson, as well as Jonathan Goldberg following her, asserts that invective is "highly problematic" because she sees Lanyer as indiscriminately grouping a victim of rape, Lucrece, with women who are "*exempla* of the evils of seduction" (Hutson, "Why" 167; Goldberg, *Desiring* 26). I read this passage differently, however. Because Lanyer is personifying Beauty, female beauty is a chimera, a villainy projected onto women rather than an essential feature of their nature. It was Beauty, not Helen herself, who "bred in Troy the ten years strife," Beauty that "made chaste Lucrece loose her life" and Antonius to wrong his wife, Cleopatra to hurt Octavia (when Marc Antony abandoned Octavia for her), and Rosamund (the mistress of Henry II poisoned by his queen) to be killed. For "Holy Matilda," too, Beauty was "the cause that turn'd her Sweet to Sowre" (209-240). With reference to women whose stories were

culturally recognizable from the literary renditions of Shakespeare, Daniel and Drayton, Lanyer demonstrates that beauty is dangerous because it makes women vulnerable to preying eyes.¹⁰ Véronique Nahoum-Grappe argues that in the early modern period beauty offered a kind of social power: "Power, holiness, sunlight, the Beautiful Woman—all were, in one way or another, social spectacles, means of captivating the gaze and dazzling the onlooker so as to dominate the social scene" (88). But for Lanyer, captivating the gaze entails only danger. She concludes:

That pride of Nature which adorns the faire,
 Like blasing Comets to allure all eies,
 Is but the thred, that weaves their web of Care,
 Who glories most, where their danger lies;
 For greatest perills do attend the faire,
 When men do seeke, attempt, plot and devise,
 How they may overthrow the chastest Dame,
 Whose Beautie is the White whereat they aime. (201-208)

Beauty is an external attachment to which no internal consent is given and an evil entity alien to women but projected onto them. According to Lanyer, beauty makes women its victims when they draw the attention of men, in a culture where women lack material power to resist their plots. The Countess of Cumberland's beauty emerges in opposition to this invective when Lanyer redirects the eyes of her readers away from female bodies towards the minds: "A mind enrich'd with Virtue, shines more bright,/Addes everlasting Beauty, gives true grace" (197,198).

Goldberg argues that Lanyer constructs the Countess' intellectual beauty as a "good woman" through "invidious distinctions," a contest with the negatively connoted beautiful seductresses listed in the invective. I see Lanyer's diatribe not as dividing women so much as uniting them through having been acted upon by "Beauty," conjoining them against the conventionally divisive terms of good and bad, chaste and unchaste. Against this phenomenal "Beauty," Lanyer defines a feminine metaphysics, a female mind constructed on the gaze of the seeing eye that can look at a woman without destroying her.

Given the prefigurations of the contents of the poem in the patronage addresses, it is not surprising then that when there is a body seen in the poem, it is the body of Christ that appears, first on the cross and then after the resurrection. There are two representations of the body of Christ, the first the suffering and broken body of Christ on the Cross and the second the resurrected Christ. The two exhibitions of the body traverse a confessional divide between Catholic and Calvinist, in which the former focuses on the beauty of Christ, the white and red, while the latter concentrates on suffering, the black and blue (Shuger 95). Both exhibitions of this body, however, are a visual spectacle to be observed by the Countess of Cumberland through reading. On the first occasion, Lanyer relates the Passion ecphrastically, as the picture of a suffering body:

His joynts dis-joynted, his legges hang downe,

His alabaster breast, his bloody side,

His members torne, and on his head a Crown

Of sharpest Thorns, to satisfie for pride. (1161-1164)

Only pride is an abstraction. The joints and legs, and elsewhere, the "eyes with teares, his body full of wounds" (1159), are all concrete and visual. With the second display, Lanyer returns to the issue of beauty as she depicts the body through the language of the Canticles. Again alternating between having her readers look upon women and divinity, Lanyer exhibits Christ's beauty in a way that contrasts with her earlier refusal to write a spectacle of female beauty into print. Just as Christ is laid in the tomb as "the Beautie of Heav'n and Earth, /...The purest coulours underneath the Sunne" (1281,1282), after the resurrection, "A briefe description of his beautie upon the Canticles," as the marginal note describes it, blazes the body of the risen Christ:

This is that Bridegroom that appaeres so faire,

So sweet, so lovely in his Spouses sight,

That unto Snowe we may his face compare,

His cheekes like skarlet, and his eyes so bright

As purest Doves that in the rivers are,

Washed with milke, to give the more delight;

His head is likened to the finest gold,

His curled lockes to beauteous to behold. (1305-1312)

Layering metaphor upon metaphor, simile upon simile, Lanyer also likens the locks to black ravens, his lips to "skarlet threeds," his cheeks to a bed of spices, and his lips to lilies (1313-1320). The metaphors with which Lanyer describes Christ are

exactly the same as those describing the bridegroom in Chapter 5:11-13 of the Song of Songs, with the comparison of the lips to scarlet threads coming from 4:3, a description of the bride.¹¹ Lanyer was, like her contemporaries, working with the Song of Songs as an allegorical dialogue between the bridegroom Christ and his bride the Church. But, as Barbara Lewalksi implies with her outline of early modern Bible commentaries on the Canticles, writers distanced themselves from the book's physical and sexual content through that allegory (*Protestant Poetics* 59-69).¹² Lanyer does gesture towards allowing the parts of the body to represent an abstract moral lesson with the suggestion that Christ's lips are to be praised because "he is constant, and his words are true" (1317). But while she begins with the supposition that the Canticles are a representation of the relationship between Christ and the Church, she does not move to the level of abstraction of her male contemporaries.¹³ As Elaine Beilin has noted, "The traditional Christian allegory of the Song of Songs opens up a source of imagery to Lanyer that allows her more literally to glorify a Christian woman as the particular beloved of Christ, not only because of her spiritual beauties but for what she does in the world—caring for others and dispensing charity" (*Redeeming* 200). Lanyer's theology also retains a physicality that provides for women readers a spiritual model in which women, who are the church, may occupy a privileged position in a divine/human relationship; Christ is God incarnate as man, the beloved bridegroom who redeems the body as well as the soul.

Lanyer's representations of the body of Christ have a number of consequences related to the social function of reading—including the transformation of a violent society, the recuperation of the female body, the rewriting of gender roles within marriage, the inwardness of the woman reader, and the validation of the woman writer as artist. In order to explore these in some detail, I want to consider first of all the particular consequences of Lanyer's representation of Christ's suffering and death. In addition to constructing her readers through the discourse of patronage, Lanyer also makes the Passion a particular occasion for the elaboration of reading. According to Debora Shuger's study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Calvinist Passion narratives, the involvement of the reader is a crucial feature of the form, as illustrated by the prominence of the audience in the narratives. The audiences Shuger describes are antagonistic, even violent, composed as they are of the disloyal disciples, Christ's Jewish enemies, and, more infrequently, the Daughters of Jerusalem. The sympathy embodied by this last group is frequently erased, for they are reprimanded for their weeping; their tears are misplaced, for there will be greater cause for weeping when Jerusalem is destroyed by God's judgment against the city (98-100). The audience illustrates, according to Shuger, "human depravity." Participants have an "inexplicable desire to cause pain to another creature, in a cruelty whose symbols are the demonic others of the Renaissance imagination: parricide, barbarian, cannibal, Jew, beast, madman" (92). But the reader is also made to identify with this audience of Others, for he has crucified Christ with his sinfulness:

the texts make it clear that if the torturer is the demonic other, he is also the reader. The reader must *identify* with the torturer. The notion that since Christ died for our sins we are all responsible for the Crucifixion originates early in Christian thought, but the Calvinist passion narratives intensify this complicity by merging the position of the reader with that of the torturer. (92)

With a trajectory from the Crucifixion to the fall of Jerusalem, rather than from death to resurrection, an interlaced structure involving stories of political and domestic violence, and a rhetoric of identification, Passion narratives become, according to Shuger, not only the occasion for the recognition and confession of sin, but also for the expression of revenge fantasies, the staging of subjectivity, and the articulation of anxieties about masculinity (91-116).

Lanyer, too, gives significant attention to the audience in her passion narrative and writes a position of reader identification, embodied in the Countess of Cumberland. Her reader, however, does not identify with the torturers, who are blind, but with the women in the story, who see Christ rightly. The audience at the crucifixion in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* is peopled with the usual suspects: the disciples who abandon Christ, the "monsters" who come to arrest him, but more exceptionally, a group of women that includes the Daughters of Jerusalem, the wife of Pilate, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. The narrator says of the fleeing disciples, "Though they protest they never will forsake him,/They do like men, when dangers overtake them" (631,632). The torturers are also branded as sightless men:

Sinnes ugly mists, so blinded had their eyes,
 That at Noone dayes they could discerne no Light;
 These were those fooles, that thought themselves so wise,
 The Jewish wolves, that did our Saviour bite;
 For now they use all meanes they can devise,
 To beate downe truth, and go against all right:
 Yea now they take Gods holy name in vaine,
 To know the truth, which truth they doe prophane. (681-688)

The Daughters of Jerusalem, in contrast, demonstrate a special sympathy for Christ, illustrated through their exchange of glances with Christ:

Most blessed daughters of Jerusalem,
 Who found such favour in your Saviors sight,
 To turne his face when you did pitie him;
 Your tearfull eyes, beheld his eies more bright;
 Your Faith and Love unto such grace did clime,
 To have reflection from this Heav'nly Light::
 Your Eagle eyes did gaze against this Sunne,
 Your hearts did thinke, he dead, the world were done. (985-992)

There is a reciprocal relationship between these women and Christ, so that not only do they see Christ, but Christ also lovingly regards them and fortifies their vision.

As Lanyer tells the Countess of Cumberland, with Christ's death "[t]hose eies waxe dimme that gave us all our light" (1174). When the women look upon Christ, he

turns his head and his eyes brighten; in turn, because they find favour in the Saviour's sight, the value of their own faith and love are elevated. The Countess, too, possesses eagle eyes that might gaze against this sun, for immediately after writing this picture, Lanyer turns to address the Countess of Cumberland, again making explicit the place of the reader in the narrative: "This with the eie of Faith thou maist behold,/Deere Spouse of Christ, and more than I can write" (1169,1170). The referent for the pronoun "this" is both the Passion and the Passion in Lanyer's poem; as Christ is being revealed in her poem, there is also a surplus of divinity not captured in words that is also available to the Countess' "eye of faith." The eyes of faith that behold Christ are also specifically gendered female, because Lanyer names the Countess the "Spouse of Christ." Thus, following the instruction to "view thy Love in this most heavy plight," the Countess completes the poem with her understanding as she joins the mourners, also viewing the crucifixion, at the foot of the cross. The Countess' ability to see Christ illustrates her understanding of the significance of the moment.

More unusually, Lanyer also includes in the audience at the cross, Pilate's wife and Mary, the mother of Jesus and the "most beauteous Queene of Woman-kind" (1039). Pilate's wife, in what is a much expanded role from any of the gospel accounts, begins to articulate a defence of Christ and her apology for women through a wish to clear her husband's faulty vision: "Open thine eies, that thou mai'st see" (755). Among the numerous consequences of her argument is that she makes seeing Christ correctly, as the Saviour and not a criminal worthy of death,

contingent upon seeing women correctly, as (among other things) less culpable than men in original sin and as properly free rather than tyrannously ruled (761-880). While Mary's role at the cross is not articulated through vision so much as listening, she, too, possesses a special relationship with Christ. She becomes the audience for a politicized speech in which Christ communicates the significance of the occasion. He tells her of his future triumph and how he will inherit David's throne and "Rule and Raigne for ever; Yea, of his Kingdom there should be no end" (1065,1066). Susanne Woods regards the prominence of Mary in Lanyer's narrative as unusual in Protestant piety (*Lanyer* 138), an assessment that is supported by Debora Shuger, who also notes how the common excision eradicates the normative response of pity and sympathy demonstrated by the Mary of Medieval narratives (99). In Lanyer's work, both Mary and the wife of Pilate occasion the expansion of the significance of the crucifixion to include a consideration of the nature of rule: the rule of men over women as well as that of earthly kings. Mary is the specific audience for the message that earthly rule is contingent and transitory, which Lanyer's narrator also comments on to the Countess of Cumberland: "an earthly Prince may ill endure/The least of those afflictions which he [Christ] bare" (1241,1242). Pilate's wife questions the legitimacy of women's subordination based on Eve's actions; Adam was the stronger and ought to have known better and men have, in any case, boasted of the knowledge they possess, even though it was a consequence of Eve's deed.

Knowledge of Christ, particularly accessible to women, entails an understanding of how to live in the world.

The ability of the female audience to see Christ provides the particular evidence for their superior capacity to know. Lanyer divides this audience almost completely by gender, a division heightened by anti-Semitic language—"The Jewish wolves, that did our Saviour bite." Like her contemporaries, Lanyer constructs the Jew as barbaric Other.¹⁴ But the enemies of Christ are also specifically male. Pilate, the disciples, and Jews, who in their blindness are fickle at best and vicious at worst, do not understand what it is that they see, while the women understand and remain true; although Janel Mueller argues there is a "fundamental misprision exhibited by all of the males in the story, friends and foes alike" ("Feminist Poetics" 111), it is not quite "all" men who misunderstand. Joseph of Arimathea, ("blessed Joseph" (1269) and "honourable Joseph" (1273)) works with the women in arranging of the burial of Christ. Even so, the inability to see is tied to a misunderstanding of Christ, history, and women. Lorna Hutson further considers the consequences of these misrecognitions: "In Christ lies hidden the meaning of the historical moment; he is the object of the interpreting gaze, the matter to be heard and evaluated, the space in which to 'prove' the colours of argument." The gaze of the men is obscured because Christ reveals himself only to those who comprehend history "in the form of compassionate response to human suffering" ("Why" 169). Sarah Beckwith similarly comments on the way in which social issues are discussed through late medieval representations of Christ's

body; they are “the arena where social identity was negotiated, where the relationship of self and society, subjectivity and social process found a point of contact and conflict” (23). With the contrast between the sympathetic, loving gazes between Christ and women and the violence inflicted by men upon Christ’s body, and with Pilate’s wife connection of justice to compassion rather than violence—“Let barb’rous crueltie farr depart from thee,/And in true Justice take afflictions part” (753,754)—*Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* proposes that a just society is premised upon the rejection of such violence and the tyranny over the meek. In so far as Christ is feminized through this meekness, a feminization noted by Janel Mueller, Lanyer’s poem also rejects violence against women.¹⁵ So not only is Lanyer’s female audience more knowing, but its knowledge provides a position from which to understand the nature of earthly rule: Christ is the eventual monarch of a kingdom in which men’s governance is fleeting and fallible, weakened by their mortality, inability to be faithful, and failure to endure suffering. Those who see rightly act with kindness rather than brutality, dispensing justice because they understand both Christ and women. When the object of the gaze is female, and the gazer male, the consequences are distortion, the construction of an phenomenological force that is a menace to women; however, when the object of the gaze is male, and the gazer female, the resulting desire is not dangerous but true, superior in its affection and in its capacity to instill knowledge.

With this dual audience for the Passion, Lanyer may also be enacting a right and wrong reading of her own poem, caricaturing a negative reaction to “a woman’s

writing of divinest things" within the covers of her book. In the first prefatory poem, Lanyer describes her text as "my Paschal Lambe,/The figure of that living Sacrifice" ("To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie" 85,86); not only does her text represent Christ, but it is a typological figure of him. Wendy Wall describes the consequences of this connection: "By figuring the book as the incarnated, spiritualized, and eroticized body of Christ, Lanyer forges a vocabulary through which she can present her work" (*Imprint* 325). A response to her volume is also a response to Christ. If readers react with anger, they are the blind wolves who cannot see, and if they interpret sympathetically, they are like the women at the cross who see and are elevated to a special relationship with Christ because of their vision. In the prefatory address "To the Vertuous Reader," Christ's behaviour towards women—in attending to his mother even in his agony, in appearing first to women after rising from the dead, and in sending a woman to be his messenger to the rest of the disciples—is "sufficient to inforce all good Christians and honourable minded men to speake reverently of our sexe;" the consequence of Christ's example on the cross is that virtuous readers of her work will also respond with empathy: "they will rather, cherish, nourish, and increase the least sparke of virtue where they find it, by their favourable and best interpretations, than quench it by wrong constructions" (59-60). The application of the metaphor of vision to the work of interpretation aids Lanyer in aggressively depicting and pre-empting the reception of her poem in a world unsympathetic to texts authored by women. The

crucifixion is an event for sympathetic eyes, just as her poem, "that which is seldom seen," is a drama performed in public for which understanding eyes are requested.

The representation of the post-resurrection body of Christ works in different ways than the image of the suffering, for it depends not on the ethical division of the audience according to the degree of violence or pity in the viewer's response, but on a reaction to beauty. The recuperation of the female body, the rewriting of marriage, the articulation of the subjectivity of the female reader, and the construction of the female artist all depend to some extent on Lanyer's feminizing of Christ, especially through the language of the Canticles. It is important to note, first of all, that this feminized Christ is not the maternal Christ, referenced by Elizabeth Grymeston and studied by Caroline Walker Bynum; Christ is not a nurturing figure, but an eroticised object of the female gaze, and as the embodied incarnation, a legitimate object to be observed. The language of beauty raises questions about the absolute distinction between femininity and masculinity. Although much of Lanyer's language is taken from the description of the bridegroom in the Canticles, one Scriptural metaphor originally depicted the bride, and the Canticles provided the terms of Petrarchism's blazons of women. With Lanyer's blazon of Christ, masculinity and femininity are not strictly separated, in so far as the feminine can be applied to a masculine body, the masculine to the feminine, a possibility imagined, perhaps, by Galatians 5:28 "...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ." The submissive Christ, like the suffering and broken body of the first display, occupies a feminine position in his powerlessness that, like the maternal

Christ, has roots in earlier Christian practices. Jeffrey Hamburger's *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* outlines the importance of both suffering and sexuality to understanding gender and the incarnation of Christ: "The paradox [the coincidence of intense pleasure with excruciating pain] lies at the heart of the Christian conception of 'passion' as both pain and ardent desire—not merely a theological concept, although powerful as such, but a way of life exemplified by the feminized Christ of the later Middle Ages" (27). David Aers makes the apt argument, however, that feminizing the tortured body of Christ (and the same might be said of Christ's beauty) is not necessarily "feminist"; doing so may actually reinforce basic patriarchal notions of the feminine as material and maternal (or, one might add, objectifiable) (35). Central to Lanyer's feminization of Christ, then, is that his body does not remain as suffering, abject, and broken but triumphs over death to assume a position of power that is also feminine because it is beautiful. When Lanyer displays the body of Christ twice, she augments the special connection between women and Christ with a triumphalism. Christ's victory over death and male enemies allows Lanyer to imagine the triumph of women and to recuperate female beauty, making it not a sign of female vanity, superficiality, and corruption, but of women's redemption; as Lanyer tells the Countess, the power of Christ's blood will "make us lovely in his sight" (1303).

The feminization of Christ also creates an exemplary version of masculinity, with Christ modeling the ideal husband. Patricia Crawford argued that with the

Protestant Reformation Christ, along with the other two elements of the Holy Trinity, was increasingly figured in masculine terms, a development that Michael Schoenfeldt attributes to the “theological stress on the absoluteness of divine power” (*Women and Religion* 10-17; 210). For Debora Shuger, the masculinity of Christ is a symptom of a cultural crisis in masculinity; Passion narratives “assail the manhood of the reader” and are “catastrophic representations of male identity:” “The agonized Christ seems a peculiarly Renaissance nightmare of emasculation, of the loss of power, autonomy, strength, and status” (116). Older examples from the form, however, could imagine Christ as an ideal of masculine identity—the gentle, compassionate virgin who found his contemporary counterpart in the monk (120-121). The Christ of Lanyer’s poem is more like the latter Christ, not a nightmare but a dream, a fantasy husband who defines himself not by his capacity to rule over his wife but to identify with her, to be loved by her, and to love her. Achsah Guibbory also regards marriage as an important part of Lanyer’s poem, although she argues that Lanyer disavows it: “The rejection of marriage in the *Salve* is an integral part of Aemelia Lanyer’s socially radical understanding of the meaning of Christ’s Passion. To reject marriage is to undo the hierarchical social order in which men rule over women, thus freeing women from bondage to men and thus fulfilling the redemptive significance of Christ’s Passion” (204). Lanyer is indeed radical in so far as her use of the Canticles and the visual exchange between Christ and women, between lover and beloved, allows her to write for her female readers a position of access to God that is unmediated by an

earthly husband. She also undoes a religious hierarchy, for unlike the mediated worship recommended in Ephesians 5:23 where the husband is declared to be the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, Lanyer's women are better readers of Christ and better capable of the sight of God because they love him more. But it is difficult to see Lanyer's extensive exploitation of marriage imagery in the description of the relationship between Christ and his spouses (her female reader-patrons) as a fundamental rejection of marriage. Lanyer presents marriage as problematic, when, for example, she tells the daughters of the Countess of Suffolk that Christ is a truer lover than any since the world began, implying that earthly lovers may not be so constant (53). Still, the description of Christ's relationship to women idealizes matrimony, with the consequence that marriage continues to possess social, literary, and religious value.

The peculiar terms of the marriage between Christ and women re-imagine rather than reject earthly marriage. If Lanyer, as Michael Schoenfeldt writes, "shrewdly capitalizes on the particular if limited privilege that women possess in a heterosexist culture for directing a language of erotic passion toward a traditionally masculine deity," the limits of the privilege emerge when heterosexual desire draws women into submission to patriarchy. For Schoenfeldt, Lanyer represents the terms of escape from these restrictions in the relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (217). Sheba is a woman who can look with desire:

Beauty sometime is pleas'd to feed her eyes,
 With viewing Beautie in anothers face:

Both good and bad in this point doe agree,

That each desireth with his like to be. (1597-1600)

The evidence of Sheba's freedom is demonstrated in her ability to travel, "not yielding to the niceness and respect/Of woman-kind" (1603,1604). And as Schoendfeldt concludes, with this description of the function of beauty, Lanyer "pulls the idealized heterosexual relationship of Solomon and Sheba into the orbit of homoerotic expression" (220). It is worth noting, as well, that when Lanyer draws upon the neo-Platonic concept of the attraction of the "like to like," the fire that flows forth from the eye colliding with that fire emitted from the eye of the beloved, the likeness between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon is not only of beauty but also monarchical power. It is not only the feminine in Solomon that attracts her, but the (masculine) power in him, an imagined likeness that empowers her.

Still, Schoenfeldt's point about the expression of the idealized heterosexual relationship through homoerotic terms is worth considering further. for it is also useful (although he does not pursue these implications) in thinking about the place of the body of Christ in Lanyer's poem. The object of the female gaze, the husband/lover Christ, is also like the gazer in being, not altogether female, but a male body feminized through beauty and submissiveness. Jonathan Goldberg and Michael Morgan Holmes argue that Lanyer is articulating female-female desire, but I would argue that Lanyer is rewriting heterosexual female desire in order to ensure that it does not end in submission to the patriarchal rule that has been represented as violent. Michael Morgan Holmes too simply eroticizes the ideal community of

good women described by Barabara Lewalski, with the consequence that his argument is predicated on the exclusion of the disruptions between women introduced by class and patronage. Jonathan Goldberg, although concerned to see that the problem of class be introduced, sees Lanyer as negotiating the expression of same sex desire across the divide of social hierarchy, with Christ's body providing the vehicle for that articulation: "These deployments of Jesus as lover implicate a femininity that is not gender-bound; they imply heterosexual relations and religious passions that coincide with female-female eroticism" (34). I agree that Christ is not "gender-bound," but both critics problematically elide the difference between feminization and femininity, with the consequence that these readings, ironically, empty the poem of feminist content in so far as they reinscribe restrictive definitions of femininity as physically beautiful and able to endure suffering; if the feminization of Christ is not necessarily feminist, it does seem that the argument for the vehiculation of same sex desire through the body of Christ requires and reiterates patriarchal definitions of femininity. The "Invective against Beauty" and the way in which Lanyer only ascribes the traditionally feminine attributes of beauty and physical affliction to male bodies suggest that Lanyer is doing something else. For one thing, she sets the construction of gender in motion to create a version of masculinity unlike that modeled by the men at the cross. When Lanyer configures the relationship between Christ and women in terms of mutual love, articulates female desire for a beauty that has been projected onto a male body, and sets the male-female

exchange in opposition to the violence of relationships between Christ and (most) men, she is reconfiguring the terms of earthly marriages to create a model based not on opposition, but more, if not completely, on likeness. Like Joseph of Arimathea who crosses over to join the women at Calvary, and like Christ himself—who cross-dresses not only by bearing the signs of beauty, but also because, as Lanyer's narrator tells the Countess of Cumberland, "Our ragged clothing scomes he not to weare" (1124,1225)—good masculinity emerges through a willingness to adopt the very attributes of femininity that make women powerless. But it is precisely because the object of the female gaze is also male, that he is a man rather than a woman, that he is feminized rather than feminine, and that he is a king, that women can confer power on themselves. So that heterosexual female desire does not end in subjection, female desire for the feminized man also imagines identity between men and in women in compassion, the ability to rule, and to make judgements about truth.

Lanyer's representation of the beauty of Christ has further implications for the construction of female readers and writers. The body of Christ, within a theology in which the eyes are the medium of relation between human and divine, allows reading to be a mode of self-construction. Debora Shuger also argues that the subjectivity of the reader is characteristically a central concern of Calvinist Passion narratives, which are "mythic stagings not only of violence but also of subjectivity" (98). In Lanyer's poem, the particular subjectivity under construction is her obsessively apostrophied reader, the Countess of Cumberland. Not only

does she identify with the other women at the cross, so that her subjectivity is construed through occupying the position of the sympathetic gazer, but the Countess' gaze also turns inward. Because Christ's body appears dismembered, it provides the material for the construction of a unified reader. Both the "joynts disjoynted" in the first depiction and the blazon in the second write the body in parts. Nancy Vickers, now famously, has discussed the fragmentation and dismemberment of the body of Laura in the Petrarchan tradition, as it relates to the Diana-Acteon story: "[Acteon] transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove from his experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination" (273). That is, the dismemberment of the beloved's body arises from the fear of the dismemberment of the speaker's own; the price at which the speaker attains and maintains his own unity is that of the wholeness of the woman at whom he looks. Thus, the visibility of Christ through the blazon also situates the Countess/reader in the powerful position of the one who gazes, the one who possesses unity against a dismembered other. When the object of the gaze becomes unified in the reader's imagination, the subject reading and seeing gains vitality and integrity.¹⁶ Lanyer has the Countess perform this re(-)membering process:

Therefore (good Madame) in your heart I leave
 His perfect picture, where it shall stand,
 Deepely engraved in that holy shrine,
 Environed with Love and Thoughts divine.

There may you see him as a God in glory,
 And as a man in miserable case;
 There you may reade his true and perfect storie,
 His bleeding body there you may embrace,
 And kisse his dying cheekes with teares of sorrow,
 With joyfull grieffe, you may intreat for grace. (1329-1334)

Even when the book is closed, the Countess can continue both to see and to read by looking inward to an image. The mediating function of language between Christ and the female reader, which Lanyer's poem established, evaporates in the end so that the Countess reads and sees Christ directly in herself. Christ is transformed from a text into the perfect speaking picture, embraced, environed and contained by love. Reading and seeing are the means, not only to religious understanding, but also to the construction of an interior female place that is both shrine and self. By instructing the Countess to internalize the picture of Christ, Lanyer also advises her that she can find stability in herself: "By Crosses and Afflictions he doth prove,/Yet still your heart remaineth firme and right" (1339,1340). And looking at Christ, though he may be a picture, is ultimately returned to the gaze of reading: "Thy Soule conceaves that he is truly wise:/Nay more, desires that he may be the Booke,/Whereon thine eyes continually may looke" (1350-1352). The blazon of Christ becomes the occasion for the construction of a unified female self who reads the text and sees the picture.

In addition to constructing the reader, Lanyer's representation of Christ as beautiful is also important to signifying her place in society as an artist. Sarah Beckwith notes that in the earlier period of her study, "Christ's body was...a vital cultural resource for those who sought legitimacy within their culture. Given that it was a major symbol for the legitimation of authority, it also inevitably provided the language, resources and opportunity for the construction of counter-hegemonic meanings" (117). In this vein, the Passion, along with the peculiarly literary resources of the Canticles, allows Lanyer to signal her entrance onto the literary stage as a poet. According to Barbara Lewalski, "[t]he Song of Songs, or Canticles, was second only to the Psalms as a work of biblical poetry, inviting literary analysis" (*Protestant Poetics* 59). The Canticles were regarded, not only as allegory, but also, variously, as a love song or epithalamium, a group of ballads or sonnets, or a collection of various kinds of lyric poetry (*Protestant Poetics* 64-67). Lanyer cites a work that is a biblical treasure trove of literary resources—a Scriptural source appropriate to women—and useful in representing beauty, an enterprise central to the work of the artist. Elizabeth Cropper, arguing that portraits of Renaissance women elide differences among the individual women to depict them as the ideal *paragone* of beauty, contends: "the portrayal of a beautiful woman also came to function as a synecdoche for the beauty of painting itself" (176). The representation of beauty is a particular problem for the female poet and artist, who by virtue of her gender is more typically the painted than the painter, the object of representation rather than the producer of art (Chadwick 8). By

constructing the Passion through the language of the Canticles, Lanyer takes up a narrative that is fundamental to Christianity in terms that are central to the production of both gender and the artist.

And finally, since beauty is also a physical attribute, attempting to gain control over the representation of beauty can also have material consequences for the women readers of Lanyer's work. Treatises on cosmetics, concerned more with the creation of female beauty in everyday life, demonstrate that there was an interest in excluding women from the representation of their own beauty and, consequently, to limit their ability, quite literally, to "fashion" themselves. Hugh Plat's *Delightes for Ladies*, first published in 1602 but published repeatedly and regularly until 1654, and Thomas Tuke's *Treatise Against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women*, printed twice in 1616, are both addressed to female readers and consider the place of the use of cosmetics, and consequently of female beauty, in relation to art.¹⁷ On the one hand, Plat gives recipes for beautifying products while arguing that the application of cosmetics is nature, not art.¹⁸ He remarks, in the epistle to the reader, that his recipes for "waters, ointments, and sweet smelling bals," are in "easie termes without affected speech," so that not only are the recipes artless—merely righting the wrongs that nature effects, like the parching of the hot sun—but so, too, is their form. When cosmetic use is natural, rather than artificial, it is legitimate. On the other hand, Tuke's *Treatise Against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women*, with its frequent citation of the authority of church fathers, makes numerous complaints against "painting": it is a sign of disrespect for

God, of self-loathing, and of disobedience to masculine authorities. He asks his female readers: "Dost thou deeme men as simple, as those birds, that were deceived by the Painters artifice, flying to grapes, that were but painted" (12). When Pliny related this story, it had been to demonstrate Zeuxis' skill at representing the real world by art, but for Tuke, the story is about mean-spirited deception by women. Proficiency in artifice gives a woman the power to mock men and to prove them foolish and fallible in their desires. A woman who uses cosmetics, he laments, is "her owne creatrisse, as a picture" (57) and a maker of herself (58). For Tuke, here and with his other arguments, the use of cosmetics is a potentially creative or artistic practice that represents a threat to men; women can deceive by it.¹⁹ Richard Haydocke, the English translator of the *Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Painting*—a book about the skills of art, colour, proportion, perspective—also draws art and gender together when he adds a censure of women's use of cosmetics to the Italian original to clarify that the use of cosmetics is a kind of artifice, and thus is "unnaturall, and unholosome" (128). But in spite of these prohibitions against women's use of cosmetics, it would be a mistake to consider their use simply as subversive. The majority of recipes for cosmetic products aim to whiten the skin, and thereby reinforce the dominant value of whiteness, and even, since two common ingredients were lead and mercury, damage women's health. Furthermore, only upper class women have the economic power, leisure time, and nutritional well-being to buy the cosmetics and attain the aesthetic ideals (Grieco 56).²⁰ Even so, discussions of the cosmetic

use do highlight the complicated relationship between women, their bodies, and art, and the difficulties that inhere in controlling the representation of themselves.

When Lanyer represents beauty by creating a picture of Christ, she resists the exclusion of women from the invention of art. Alternatively, when she refuses to depict female beauty in the conventional terms of Petrarchism, and writes a picture of the Countess of Cumberland that differentiates itself from other representations of women, she attempts to write authoritatively on what a woman is and how she looks. As she tells the Countess, the (male) poets who wrote of Cleopatra had a fair subject, for Cleopatra was as rich, wise, and rare, "as any Pen could write or Wit devise" (1428). The Countess' beauty, however, exceeds all terms of comparison; as the Countess is brighter than the sun and more beautiful than Cleopatra, so Lanyer's own poetic subject surpasses that of other poets. Writing of this woman's beauty needs to be made unconventional to be true, and Lanyer's purpose as a poet is to touch eyes that would otherwise be blind so they can see the truth of the Countess' nature—that of her mind and of the heavenly beauty that is in her:

Yet pardon me although I give a touch
 Unto their eyes, that else would be so blind,
 As not to see thy store, and their owne wants,

From whose faire seeds of Virtue spring these plants . (1453-1456)

After correcting the vision of the previously blind, Lanyer goes on to manufacture a picture of the Countess in which she emerges through comparison to famous

women—including the Scythian women who conquered Alexander, Deborah, Judith, Esther, Susanna, and the Queen of Sheba—and to famous men—Stephen, Laurence, Andrew, Peter, and John the Baptist, all of whom were martyred. The women to whom the Countess is compared are heroic, a feature upon which Michael Schoenfeldt comments: “Although the catalog of virtuous women was a popular minor genre, Lanyer’s version features not the standard litany of women who kill themselves to save their husbands’ honor but rather women who assume male roles and who punish the men who try to victimize them” (219). It is Lanyer’s men who perform the roles of this “standard litany” of women, who, more like Christ, are beautiful in their deaths:

Loe Madame, here you take a view of those,
 Whose worthy steps you doe desire to tread,
 Deckt in those colours which our Saviour chose;
 The purest colours both of White and Red,
 Their freshest beauties would I faine disclose,
 By which our Saviour most was honoured (1827-1830)

The referent for “those” whose steps in which the Countess treads is not clear. Does it include the male martyrs mentioned in the hundred or so previous lines or the entire epideictic section from line 1321 when she first turns to address the Countess, thus including the female exemplars? It would make sense that the lines refer to both groups since the Countess might be expected to desire to follow both sets of examples. But either way, Lanyer certainly makes beauty an attribute

possessed by Christ and by men who gain their heroic stature in the more typically feminine way, by dying. If the women are beautiful, they are also rulers and conquerors of men. Again, the ideal, exemplary man is feminized through assuming the signs of beauty and through becoming powerless, while women are masculinized as formidable rulers and combatants.

With her concluding praise of the Countess of Cumberland, Lanyer provides a lesson in reading a woman's beauty. Mary Rogers notes that in Renaissance portraiture, portraits of women imply first and foremost the beautiful woman, without need for any distinguishing history, whereas men are represented through elements of the sitter's biography—social status, actions, and virtues ("Sonnets" 299). Castiglione's Peter Bembo also recommends that the male gazer move from beholding the beauty of one woman towards understanding the universal and heavenly (318). The Countess, however, seems to possess a capacity to equal and surpass the women with whom she is compared, women who are famous precisely for their actions. When she represents heavenly beauty, she also remains the Countess of Cumberland, for heavenly beauty is in her rather than beyond her. She is still identifiable by name, rank, and property, for this beauty does not bring harm, idealize, transcend, or subsume the particular woman. When Lanyer implicitly praises the Countess for her whiteness with her favourable comparison of the Countess to Cleopatra, the 'blacke Egyptian' (1431), she reinscribes a traditional Petrarchan and racist connection between beauty and whiteness. But by taking up her "taske of Beauty" (1322), Lanyer also confers

unconventional praise on the Countess of Cumberland, reconfiguring the terms of beauty, while making a bid for patronage and fashioning herself as an artist and writer.

Lanyer reflects on the centrality of beauty to the problem of a woman writing poetry when she considers the traditional question of the relationship between art and nature. In her initial dedicatory poem to Queen Anne, Lanyer had, like Anne Wheathill, Catherine Parr, Dorothy Leigh, and other women writers of devotional works, distanced herself from learning, and consequently from artifice:

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 yields my Soule a sad delight. (145-150)

Like Platt in regarding Nature as feminine, Lanyer claims to write from its inspiration. Even so, “since all Arts at first from Nature came,” her “taske of beautie” is a work of art, and if “learning” does not provide her with her materials, the Bible does. Scriptural language is, in any case, crossed by dominant contemporary literary and philosophical discourses, especially by Petrarchism and neo-Platonism. Susanne Woods, who compares Lanyer’s discussion of beauty to Spenser’s *Fowre Hymnes*, which was also addressed to the Countess of Cumberland, concludes: “Lanyer’s ‘task of beautie’ has been to find the true white

and red in the story of Christ's passion, to present it to the countess who takes both poem and Saviour into her heart, assuring both poet and patron eternal fame" (*Lanyer* 61). But because beauty is attached to the eye, Lanyer's project ranges further to include a critique of knowledge and of the literary creation. She censures traditional ways of seeing and demonstrates a new way of seeing, one in which women are not only beautiful and capable of desire but also best able to know Christ.

The self-reflexiveness of Lanyer's poem, by which she speaks as author and addresses readers who are also her contemporaries, serves to reveal it as both a product of its particular historical moment and an instrument written to be reinserted into history as an agent of personal, religious, and social change. David Aers and Lynn Staley conclude *The Powers of the Holy* by calling for "micro-histories" that would situate figurations of Christ in localized cultural politics: "We need to know far more than we yet do about the social contexts in which different representations of Christ were created and to which they were meaningful" (264,265). Addressed to the cultural politics of the early seventeenth century, Lanyer's representation of the Passion of Christ deploys metaphors of vision to examine the place of gender in the process of reading and of understanding. Female eyes had been a site of cultural reprobation because they were the instigators of female vanity for women and the source of love-madness for men, but Lanyer recuperates these eyes—essential to knowledge and the expression of desire—so that they are capable of authority, self-knowledge, and the understanding of things divine.

After Word

*she's looking in the mirror
she's fixing her hair
and i touch my head
to feel what isn't there
she's humming a melody
we learned in grade school
she's so happy and i think
this is not cool
'cause i know the guy
she's been talking about
i have met him before
and i think what is this
beautiful woman settling for*

*she bends her breath
when she talks to him
i can see her features begin to blur
as she pours herself
into the mold he made for her
... she still doesn't have what she deserves
but she wakes up smiling every day
she never really expected more
that's just not the way
we are raised
and i say to her
you know, there's plenty of really great men out there
but she doesn't hear me
she's looking in the mirror
she's fixing her hair*

Singer/Songwriter Ani Di Franco,
"Fixing her Hair," *Imperfectly*, 1992

Endnotes

¹ Louise Schleiner makes the apt point that the central title poem "is the patronage poem to that beloved lady whom she served at Cookham Dean" (25), although Schleiner may be overconfident about the nature of the relationship between the Countess and Lanyer. The posthumously published works of Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Grymeston are addressed to female patrons, with Leigh having directed a petition towards Princess Elizabeth and the publishers of *Miscelanea Mediations Memoratives* making Elizabeth Grymeston herself the "patron" for the work, a move that makes patronage merely an honorific attempt to assuage the expected anger of Grymeston's brother. Pamela Joseph Benson mentions a number of women writers and their use of patronage, as she argues that Lanyer's female contemporaries tended to present their works as gifts that would be repaid in bonds of affection or allegiance and would frequently address their works to members of their families: Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* is dedicated to her sister-in-law; Rachel Speght's *Mortalities Memorandum* is dedicated to her godmother, while *Mouzell for Melastomus* has no dedicatee; Margaret Tyler's *A Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* is addressed to a son of the family by whom she was raised; Mary Wroth's *Urania* contained no dedicatory or commendatory poems (although the title page did draw attention to her illustrious relatives); and Isabella Whitney directs her *A Sweet Nosgay* to family members and friends, even though she does write to seek assistance in restoring her fortunes (243).

Of the nine known copies of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, five have all of the dedicatory poems. The presentation copy to Prince Henry has the dedications to the Queen, the Princess Elizabeth, the Countess of Bedford, the Countess of Cumberland, the Countess of Dorset, and "To the Vertuous Reader." Three of the other copies also lack several of these dedicatory poems, while "The Description of Cooke-ham" is missing from the fourth. Woods suggests that the

variations in dedicatory poems may be explained through the practice of writing multiple dedications and targeting potential patrons (Woods, "Textual Introduction" xlvii-li).

² Taking a different approach, Leeds Barroll also outlines a number of practical difficulties with determining the veracity of Lanyer's claim of having been acquainted with Countess of Kent, whom Lanyer calls "the mistris of my youth,/The noble guide of my ungovern'd dayes" (39,40).

³ I am thinking here of the poem to Lady Anne Clifford which radically critiques class hierarchy when it asks "What difference was there when the world began,/Was not Virtue that distinguisht all?" (33,34). But Lanyer also represents the magnitude of Christ's suffering through social hierarchy. Although Christ is represented repeatedly as a Shepherd, Lanyer also describes him as a king. Since he is a monarch, his afflictions and his ability to endure them demonstrate his regality; "meane minds," however, will shew of wat meane mouldes they bee" and if he had been of lower status, "his sufferings had been small to what they were" (1234,1235). Kari Boyd McBride regards Lanyer as a social radical: "Lanyer's repeated reference to the values of another world resembles a kind of liberation theology: the use of biblical prophecy to fire and fuel revolutionary political doctrine demanding the end of social and economic inequalities" ("Sacred Celebration" 79). But mitigating against this supposed radicalism is that the lower classes simply do not enter Lanyer's frame of reference; her patrons are all noblewomen and her reference to "all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen" in the address "To the Vertuous Reader" does not specifically include a rewriting of class hierarchy for those below her. Michael Schoenfeldt, who also argues that Lanyer engages in an attack on the license of birth with her amalgamation of religious and courtly discourse, concludes: "Lanyer is not a leveler." Rather, given the concern with status Lanyer exhibits in her dialogue with Simon Forman (she wants to know if her husband will come to any preferment), Schoenfeldt concludes that Lanyer wants to envisage a "dynamic hierarchy based on virtuous

action rather than noble birth and gender," a system in which Lanyer might be able to rise (212-214). Susanne Woods also sees a conflict in the patronage addresses, common to other poems of the form, between the depiction of the poet as humble servant and that of the poet as able to supercede the patron with her ability to create and immortalize—a tension between seeking the patron's grace and gracing the patron ("Vocation" 87).

⁴ Jacqueline Pearson provides a useful introduction to women readers in Aemelia Lanyer's works. She notices images of reading in the patronage poems, and briefly considers the importance of reading in women's literacy, the trope of the mirror, and Christ as reader ("Women Writers").

⁵ And as Susanne Woods points out, arguing that Lanyer's women are more akin to Milton's Adam, Milton's Eve is also vulnerable to the "visually appealing"; not only is she enraptured by her own image, she is also deceived both by the beautiful snake and the fruit, "which to behold/Might tempt alone" (*PL* 9.735,36; Woods, *Lanyer* 157,158).

⁶ As Margaret Miles explains, "In physical vision, the will focuses the energy of the visual ray on a sensible object in the presence of the illumination of the sun. In spiritual vision, the focused and intensified longing of the eye of the mind reaches out, in the divine illumination provided, to touch God 'in a trembling glance'" ("Vision" 134). With the "ray theory of vision," even spiritual vision is an immediate process, configured in physical terms: "By the vehicle of the visual ray, the object is not only 'touched' by the viewer, but also the object is 'printed' on the soul of viewer. The ray theory of vision specifically insisted on the connection and essential continuity of viewer and object in the act of vision" ("Vision" 127).

⁷ In *Timaeus*, Plato had written of the physical functioning of the eye. In his view, there is a fire within the eye that flows through the entire fabric of the eyeball, so that only an external fire of a like kind can filter into the eye: "Whenever there is daylight round about the visual current, this latter flows forth, like to like, and coalesces with it and forms into a single homogeneous body in a direct line with

the eyes, wheresoever the current issuing from within collides with some external object." Thus, when it is day, the eye can see, but when it is dark, because the kindred fire has been withdrawn and the fire flowing forth no longer meets with its like, sight is impossible (1.7). It was in 1604, only six years before Lanyer published her work, that Johannes Kepler established, for the first time in scientific terms, the function of the pupil and the transmission of light rays through the cornea and lenses to the retinal wall.

⁸ Georgia Christopher has commented about Milton and Protestant hermeneutics that in *Paradise Lost*, "Milton is only dramatizing the Reformation topos that in Christian doctrine we see the face of God" (127). In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, too, language provides the postlapsarian alternative to the physical vision of God lost with the Fall. Adam recalls how God had once "stood visible" in the Garden (11.320-322), but he learns that even though such literal sight has been lost, it can be replaced with spiritual vision. Adam's eyes, purged with euphrasy and rue and instilled with drops from the Well of Life, can pierce "Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight" so that he can see, and thus understand, the visual spectacle that Michael presents to him (11.418). Even this perception is difficult to maintain in the postlapsarian world, where Adam's mortal sight begins to fail because "objects divine/Must needs impair and weary human sense" (12.9,10). Ultimately, physical vision is replaced with listening to the Word—as Luther would have had it. Language is the means by which the presence of God is attained, no longer the literal reality, but through a simile. Through obedience and love, he can walk "as in his presence" (12.563). Mary Ellen Lamb has also commented on the devotional function of reading in Lanyer's poem with regard to the way in which it heightens Lanyer's ambivalence towards her patrons. The devotional subject matter, the configuration of the encounter with the poem as Christ's entrance into the reader's heart or the wise virgin's filling of the lamp with oil, and Lanyer's assumption of the role of spiritual advisor to the Countess of Cumberland all destabilize the asymmetrical relationship between poet and patron; even as

Lanyer defers to the Countess as her patron, the author guides the reader in meditation ("Patronage" 45,48-49).

⁹ Susan Woods also outlines connections between love and beauty, saying that they are "a complex of Renaissance Platonism, Neoplatonism, Petrarchism, and Protestantism" that entered England through the work of Italian poets such as Dante, Petrarch, Neivieni, Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola, Pietro Bembo, and Giordano Bruto (*Lanyer* 56).

¹⁰ The story of Lucrece was told in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* (1593) and Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608). The story of Rosamund formed the basis for Samuel Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) and that of Matilda, Michael Drayton's *Matilda* (1594) (Woods, *Lanyer* 36-41).

¹¹ Susanne Woods' note in her edition says that the metaphor comes from *Song of Solomon* 3:4 but it is actually 4:3; the metaphor, as Woods notes, comes from a description of the Bride rather than the Bridegroom.

¹² To offer other examples from Bible commentaries, the provocatively titled *Ravishing Love Raptures between Christ and his Church, in a double Commentary* (1652) uses the Canticles as an opportunity for a discourse on church history. Verse eleven, "His head is as the most fine gold..." is interpreted to mean that Christ is the head of the Church, a headship that was defended by Frederick II, Emperor of Rome, who contended with Popes over that city (380,381). That "his locks are bushy, and black as a Raven," "aptly set forth how the Emperour and his Souldiers, with valour, and the learned men with their wit, and great knowledge, were couragious to oppose the corruptions of those times" (381). John Brayne's *Exposition Upon the Canticles* (1651) also interprets the beauty of Christ allegorically. That "His locks are bushy and black as a Raven" indicates "the unknownesse of the Divine Nature and glory...for the mercy seat was shadowed, and the womans hair was given her for covering" (22). Lanyer does use one similar move to allegory; for Brayne, too, that his "His lips are like Lillies" signifies that there is "no guile found in them" (23).

¹³ This is not to say, however, that Lanyer was without precedent in her writing of the body of Christ. Leo Steinberg has argued that the representations of Christ's genitals in Renaissance art celebrated the body of Christ as sexual. However, Caroline Walker Bynum, in "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg" disagrees. She argues that the concept of sexuality had not yet been formulated, and that Christ's body was not being sexualized but, more broadly, humanized; Christ's body took on the aspects of both male and female. Much more could be said on this point, but here I want only to emphasize that for Lanyer Christ's body is God incarnate as human-masculine and feminine—not God incarnate as theological abstraction; the theology itself is represented visually and materially.

¹⁴ Susanne Woods calls the claims for the possible Jewish origins of the Bassanos, Lanyer's father's family, "highly speculative" and outlines the case for and against such claims (*Lanyer* 5-7).

¹⁵ Mueller writes that Lanyer's Christ is "thoroughly feminized in demeanor and language, according to the period norms set out in conduct books and doctrinal tracts.... Her Christ, like the ideal woman of the Puritan manuals, is silent except when induced to speak, and modest and taciturn when he does; he is gentle, mild, peaceable, and submissive to higher male authorities" ("Feminist Poetics" 112).

¹⁶ Margaret Miles, in discussing the Protestant Reformation's rejection of visual images, cites Luther's anxiety and pleasure that image formation continued regardless of the absence of pictures: "Whether I will or not, when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart, just as the reflection of my face naturally appears in the water when I look at it" (qtd. in Miles, *Image*, 107). For the reader/hearer, reading the text is analogous to seeing it, and sufficient for the mind's eye to create an internal picture.

¹⁷ Platt's *Delightes for Ladies* was published fourteen times between 1600 and 1654.

¹⁸ It is divided into four sections: "The art of preserving, conserving, candying,"

"Secrets in Distillation," "Cookerie and Huswiferie", and "Sweet Powders, Oyntments, Beauties, &c. " Thus, along with recipes for food and drink, there are also recipes for products that promise to remedy aesthetic complaints. The aims of these concoctions are to remove spots from the face and hands, to make the teeth and skin white, and to turn the hair yellow or from black to chestnut. Domestic compilations of this sort, according to Sara F. Matthews Grieco, were published throughout Europe and were written mostly by men (59).

¹⁹ There is also an imagined threat to masculine authority in the use of cosmetics, with respect to feminine control over creation, time, and desire. The crux, though, is less the alteration of the appearances than the power over male desire that women attain by the connection to art that cosmetics gives them. Transformations, for men, conversely, can be medical: men, he says, who put oil on their faces are not the problem because oil is good for the health (35). But for a woman, the use of cosmetics is not related to health but to artifice. She is also engaging in an unauthorized use of her time, spending more time pranking and painting than praying (58). This sort of woman is also potentially more sexually autonomous, because she pleases men, not in obedience to a man's commands, but to satisfy herself. Beauty is a disruptive power which overturns masculinist hierarchies because men are drawn to it; the absence of cosmetics, which indicates virtue for Tuke, is also about the diminution of female power.

²⁰ Mercury and lead cause damage to the skin and rot the teeth, as Tuke and other critics point out, and even Galen had noted 1400 years before. Michel Montaigne also reports seeing women swallow gravel, ashes, coals, dust, or tallow candles to spoil their stomachs in order to achieve a "pale bleak colour" (in Corson 103). What this indicates, I think, is that women regarded the use of cosmetics (and the achievement of standards of beauty that they brought) as enabling and risked their health to attain it, for however short a time. Something of these concerns about veracity, power, and health also congeal around comments about Queen Elizabeth. Ben Jonson comments that "she never saw herself after she became old in a true

glass; they painted her, and sometymes would vermillion her nose." A French ambassador also noted that she appeared very aged, and her teeth were yellow. Issues of class and economics are also related to the use of cosmetics. Cosmetics were particularly recommended for use by upper-class women, and indeed one Richard Surflet recommends that the country wife not use cosmetics herself but learn to make them to profit by their sale to lords and ladies who "paint up themselves" (in Corson 104). Indicating status, the use of cosmetics reveals that a woman possesses the money to purchase such products and that she inscribes her body with particular cultural signs.

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