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Abstract

This dissertation illuminates how the hermeneutic of biblical typology influenced the conception of the female life cycle in early modern English literature, especially the social roles of maid, wife, and widow. Reading texts from a variety of genres and by both male and female authors, this dissertation argues that a typological understanding of marriage gave additional, spiritual import to those social roles, thus further upholding ideologies that defined women by their proximity to marriage. However, this dissertation also demonstrates how a typological understanding of marriage and the female life cycle could also be used to critique gender norms. After providing an introduction that overviews the theoretical premise of the dissertation, each chapter offers a reading of a text that demonstrates the purchase for early modern feminist and queer literary criticism of recognizing marriage's typological implications.

My first chapter argues that Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611) figures its titular character, Moll Cutpurse, as a secular prophet whose perpetual maidenhood, coupled with her prophetic speech, challenges the typological assumption that marriage advances Christian women towards a spiritually superior life stage. My second chapter argues that Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611) presents spiritual marriage as an alternative to earthly marriages, as well as a means through which her dedicatees might achieve typological spiritual ascent. My third chapter argues that by suggesting her act of publication is part of her performance as a Good Widow (a figure who remains chaste to her deceased husband despite his death), Dorothy Leigh avoids succumbing to the typologically and socially ambivalent associations of widowhood in *The Mothers Blessing* (1616). My fourth chapter argues that John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) proposes that a true, godly marriage cannot exist unless it adheres to the tenets of what I call "monist marriage"—a marriage wherein couples unite both body and soul for "mutual help" towards spiritual advancement. Milton's argument also supports the right to divorce if couples find themselves in marriages that do not meet this definition.

Wifely Figures: Gender, Marriage, and Biblical Typology in Early Modern England

by

Melissa Welshans
B.A., George Mason University, 2007

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

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In many ways, this project is the culmination of the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Even before graduating high school I was certain I wanted to get a PhD, mostly because I was attracted to the idea of being a “college professor,” or what I thought one was based on television portrayals of people with PhDs. Of course, I had no idea what achieving that dream would entail. To say graduate school was more difficult than I anticipated would be an understatement. But what I also did not anticipate was the supportive, encouraging community I would find at Syracuse University. First, I must thank my dissertation committee members, Crystal Bartolovich, Dympna Callaghan, and Stephanie Shirilan, who have each held me to a rigorous intellectual standard while being infinitely patient as I gained the knowledge and confidence necessary to complete the dissertation. Without the guidance of these individuals, and especially Crystal, this project would remain an unfulfilled dream.

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Introduction

*“If I am always constituted by norms that are not of my making, then I have to understand the ways that constitution takes place.” -Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender**

“To understand the arbitrary nature of coincidence and convergence, of sequence and consequence, and to follow them through to the entirely contingent outcomes to which they contributed: this is not a historicism that creates categories of identity or presumes their inevitability; it is one that seeks to explain such categories’ constitutive, pervasive, and persistent force.” -Valerie Traub, “The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies”

“Wifely Figures: Gender, Marriage, and Biblical Typology in Early Modern England” argues that the biblical hermeneutic of typology had significant impact on how gender was articulated and understood in the literature of early modern England. I begin my introduction with the above epigraphs because my dissertation, like the work of Butler and Traub, is primarily invested in advancing our knowledge of gender norms and their constitution, with the belief that historicizing norms often brings about new strategies for challenging their persistence. As Butler and Traub suggest, we are all placed in a world not of our making that acts on us, as we act in it. To understand the effects of this world on us or, in Butler’s words, how the “I” we imagine ourselves is “constituted by norms that are not of my making,” we must investigate “the ways that constitution takes place.” This dissertation seeks to provide a better understanding of one of the pervasive constitutive norms of early modern England as it informed early modern attitudes to gender and, specifically, women: the practice of interpreting the scriptures, and even the female life cycle itself, typologically. My dissertation explores the effects of this norm on literary

depictions of the prominent stages in the female life cycle—maid, wife, widow—focusing attention on texts across a variety of genres to show how it further solidified normative gender roles, as well as provided early modern authors invested in progressive social reform a language through which to articulate social critique.

Butler claims that knowledge of gender norms' constraining force on the lived experience of individuals provides those same individuals with opportunities to challenge those norms. Yet in the intervening years since her writing, queer scholars have persuasively argued that some forms of knowledge production, particularly traditional historicism, often impose restrictive binaries that limit, like gender norms, the possibilities of experience and agency. Madhavi Menon and Jonathan Goldberg have been influential in this argument, as they have advocated for a new "unhistoricism" that "would be invested in suspending determinate sexual and chronological differences while expanding the possibilities of the nonhetero with all its connotations of sameness, similarity, proximity, and anachronism" (1609). Practicing an "unhistoricism," is the only way, they claim, that one can "queer the Renaissance" and "resist mapping sexual difference onto chronological difference" as well as "challenge the notion of a determinate and knowable identity, past and present" (1609). For Menon and Goldberg, "unhistoricism" would avoid the "compulsory heterotemporality of historicism," and resist the binaries of "sameness" and "difference" that organize both traditional historicism (which separates the then and now) and sexuality (gay / straight) (1616).

Menon and Goldberg's critique is importantly indebted to Lee Edelman, who argues against "reproductive futurism," or the logic that history operates as a "linear narrative (the poor man's teleology) in which meaning succeeds in revealing itself—*as itself*—through time" (2, 4). A "queer" temporality, on the other hand, challenges the valorization of futurity and represents

“the bar to every realization of futurity, the resistance, internal to the social, to every social structure and form” (4). If “queer” as a concept troubles, challenges, and resists the social structures delimited by reproductive futurism, then a truly queer history would need to reject a linear temporality since it reinscribes a view of time that values, above all, the future fulfillment of the present (which, for Edelman, is embodied in the figure of the Child—the emblem of heterosexual reproduction for which social order, however ideologically defined, must be maintained) (10-11). For Edelman, Menon, Goldberg, and others, linear historical narratives, and specifically those that present time as moving towards a telos or end that concludes with contemporary identity categories, limit the possibility of a truly queer history by foreclosing any readings of past sexualities that do not, in effect, lead to those experienced in the present. Indeed, their arguments seem to present any linear historical narratives as inherently teleological, and, therefore, unhelpfully constraining to queer criticism.

Valerie Traub, on the contrary, pushes against this theoretical trend and claims that investigating certain “categories of identity” as they appeared at different times is not the same as reinforcing or reinscribing them (36). That is to say, Traub argues against the assumption that historicizing terms such as “gay” or “straight” must necessarily reaffirm these binaries and limit the potential to read alternative sexualities in the historical record. She insists that “Neither straight identity nor heterosexual desire is the same as linear time. Not every diachronic or chronological treatment of temporality needs to be normalizing, nor is every linear arc sexually ‘straight’” (31). For Traub, advocates of the type of queer history described above have unhelpfully coupled linear temporal modes such as diachrony (change over time) and chronology (a sequential order of events) with straight sexuality. Instead, Traub posits that studying the “arbitrary nature of coincidence and convergence of sequence and consequence,” can be just as

critical of heteronormativity as can an “unhistoricism” (35). Outright rejecting any linear temporal or historical mode as inherently normative and/or teleological risks preventing the nuanced comprehension of the “relative incoherence and relative power of past and present conceptual categories, as well as the dynamic relations among subjectivity, sexuality, and historiography” (Traub 36).

The assertion that traditional historical narratives unhelpfully uphold restrictive social and sexual categories implicitly questions the continued efficacy of feminist criticism and feminism itself vis-à-vis queer theory, since one could argue that it is those constitutive identity categories that have so shaped feminist studies and continue to be the grounds on which feminism finds its most compelling critiques. Coppélia Kahn’s recent essay on the history of feminist scholarship and its relationship to queer theory’s recent “anti-identarian” investments make this debate explicit (51). Following Traub, Kahn also challenges the assumption that traditional modes of historicism (i.e., those that deploy diachrony and/or chronology in their methodology) necessarily uphold heteronormativity, and asserts that,

Feminist criticism in the last decade has increasingly registered the imprint of queer criticism, attending to the incoherence, indeterminacy, and instability of sexual relations. Moreover, in doing so, it has drawn extensively on historical research, without arguing teleologically that Renaissance sexual identities or constructions of sexuality are precursors of later ones. (56)

Kahn contends that feminist criticism continues to be a useful means through which scholars can critique persistent norms precisely because it has heeded queer criticism’s call to question the stability of identity categories. In terms of the study of history, Kahn asserts that feminism can do so *without* arguing teleologically that such norms lead directly to the establishment of present

identity categories, and even demonstrates the ways in which even presumably unhistorical queer criticism continues to make use of traditional historiography.¹ The study of categories and their constitution through time need not necessarily reinforce them. In fact, it is often through identity and categorization—recognition of community and collectivity—that political action takes place.²

I find it necessary to open a dissertation on typology with this clarification as typology's presumed teleological thrust exposes it to critiques of temporal oppression (I shall discuss some of these in more detail in the following pages). But to reject typology out-of-hand for its normative effects, as well as the dangers of imposing its teleological logics, would be to miss its complex presence in the literature and culture of early modern England as a hermeneutic that could both impose *and* expose gender's artifice. It is my hope that this dissertation's exploration of typology through a feminist lens informed by queer theory's cautious approach to teleological temporalities will expand the horizon of interpretive possibilities available to early modern scholars by further elaborating the instability of early modern gender categories.

In what follows, I will offer a description of some key concepts and historical movements that serve as the basis for my project's argumentative framework. First, I will describe the concept of the human life cycle as it was understood in early modern England. Then, I will briefly discuss the importance of marriage and the role of "wife" to the social and spiritual legibility of early modern women. The discussion then shifts to an overview of key developments in reading practices influenced by the Protestant Reformation—especially the adaptation of typological reading from Catholic to Protestant practice. Next, I will explain how Reformation-inflected typological reading practices encouraged an understanding of the life cycle, particularly that of women, as a typological temporal relationship. Finally, I briefly outline

the chapters of my dissertation and how each explores the ramifications of this reading practice on the literary representation of women and marriage in early modern England.

The Life Cycle in Early Modern England

The term “life cycle” refers to a way of understanding human existence as a series of predictable stages or states of being, wherein social and religious expectations are mapped onto one’s biological age.³ As David Cressy observes: “In a tradition reaching back to the ancient world, Tudor and Stuart authors imagined the life cycle in terms of a succession of ages. Infancy gave way to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to maturity, and maturity to old age” (*Birth* 5). One was born with the expectation that he or she would move through life on this well-defined trajectory; to step outside of its bounds was to risk disrupting social order, a grave sin in a social system that saw disorder as a sign of God’s displeasure.⁴ Perhaps the most famous description of the life cycle in early modern literature appears in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* (1603), where the character Jacques offers an overview of what he refers to as the “seven ages” that man performs on the “world’s...stage” (II.vii.150; 146). In Jacques retelling, human’s progress through seven discrete “parts” in their life: infancy, childhood, youth, soldiering, justice, old age, and finally extreme old age or “second childishness” (II.vii.145; 172). His catalogue is decidedly masculine, as he links childhood with the “whining school-boy,” youth with the “lover” sighing ballads to his mistress, the self-explanatorily masculine “soldier” and “justice” who stand in for early and middle-aged adulthood, and finally the old man whose “manly voice” now sounds with “childish treble” (II.vii.152; 154; 156; 160; 168-69). Per this schema, humans age in a predictable, distinctly masculine pattern. Or, as Frances E. Dolan observes, “The speech does not imagine a life course for women; nor does it grant men’s relations to women much significance...In this speech, manhood is both hard earned and short lived” (“Gender” 16).

Whereas a man's biological age was largely linked to his civic function, a woman's was coupled with her reproductive roles and position in a heterosexual union. The 1667 engraving *The Women's Looking Glass* tellingly articulates this idea. Originally printed in Dutch in the 1650s and reprinted and sold in London, this engraving demonstrates the perceived succession of ages from infancy to death for a female audience (or at least an audience interested in female comportment and morality) and highlights the intrinsic relationship between biological age and social rites of passage for early modern women.⁵ Atop the engraving appears an intricate visual depiction of life's stages (here ten—moving through one's decades of life until "100") presented as a pyramid. Accompanying the image is a rhyme in stanzas that describes each of the ten ages depicted above it, drawing attention to the social categories of wife and mother. In the stanzas for those women in their twenties and thirties, for instance, the poem reads: "Behold, but the next Stage of Life / Young pretty Miss is made a Wife / From this last Scene they Shift into another / And from a Wife soon grow up to a Mother." And at the pyramid's apex—fifty or the halfway point of one's life—a woman must presumably "consider what comes after / To lay up portions for her Son and Daughter." Obviously, it would be *highly* unlikely for any early modern individual to live until they were one hundred, yet the image is nonetheless informative when considering the dominant ideologies at work regarding gender and the human life cycle in early modern England. For unlike Jacques's decidedly masculine and civically-focused speech in *As You Like It*, *The Women's Looking Glass* highlights the domestic roles of wife and mother as natural and inevitable stages of a woman's life. A woman grows from "pretty Miss" to "Wife" to "Mother," all roles defined and policed by early modern patriarchal ideology.

In addition to defining the social roles for both women and men, the life cycle importantly emphasized a cyclical view of time with a definitive beginning (birth) from which

the individual progressed towards its end (death), but not before returning to a state similar to their first life stage: what Jacques referred to as “second childishness.” Even *The Women’s Looking Glass* depicts the final life stage (the person at one hundred), featured at the bottom right of the image, in a manner resembling the swaddled infant at the beginning of the pyramid on the bottom left. The life cycle defines the expected activities and behaviors of early modern individuals and places them in a broader, collective temporal framework—to succeed is to progress through each stage until inevitable biological regression, at which time it is assumed that new generations will pick up the mantle in perpetuity. Importantly, it was one’s gender that defined the stages one was expected to traverse.

The largely secular view of human life as a cycle was not entirely incompatible with early modern Protestant presentations of a Christian’s life. As Barbara Lewalski famously argued, Protestantism viewed the human life as a progress of the soul, whereby the individual soul moved from birth towards death, inching closer to everlasting union with Christ in the heavenly realm (“Typological Symbolism”). At death, the body remained on earth where it awaited reunion with the soul at Christ’s second coming, while the soul fled to heaven where it would stay until the apocalypse. These alternative frameworks for understanding human life—the biological/cyclical and spiritual/progressive—underscore the multi-layered understandings of temporality at work in early modern English culture. The life cycle served as a governing principle that helped explain the natural cycles of life experienced by the broad population: humans are born, grow up, and die, while new life is created again and again to replace those who have passed on. The individual moved through these cyclical stages, but even as a human biologically returned to a state similar to childhood at their life’s end, they were also figured as continuing on their spiritual journey towards the eschaton.

I shall further discuss the interrelation between these two conceptions of human life and the implications of that relationship later in this introduction. But for now, I merely wish to underscore that the early modern life cycle held powerful implications for both gender roles and conceptions of time in early modern England at both the individual and collective level. It reflected an ideology that insisted upon man's civic engagement and woman's auxiliary relationship to man. Furthermore, it valued a cyclical view of time whereby the individual is figured as moving forward towards a determined future, only to regress at life's end in a pattern that has been and will be repeated collectively through time. For even though Jacques's articulation of the life cycle is at points melancholy and cynical, it is presented as inescapable—a fact of life. Similarly, *The Women's Looking Glass* offers no opportunity for deviation, presenting the transition between stages in the matter-of-fact present-tense of inevitability.

That this view of the life cycle was not, in fact, inevitable, has not been lost on historians and literary critics. Of course, before the Protestant Reformation in England women and men could join a monastic order instead of entering the married state.⁶ Even after the Reformation, some English women chose to attempt to live as nuns and founded, in the words of Frances E. Dolan, “expatriate English cloisters” abroad (“Why are Nuns Funny?” 510).⁷ Indeed, Amy Froide's research suggests that roughly 13 to 27 percent of the people born between 1575-1700 remained unmarried throughout their entire life (2). Even if such numbers are slightly inflated due to the difficulty of accounting for clandestine marriages, Froide still asserts that “At least one-fifth of men and women in early modern England did not marry” (2). Despite the assumption explicit in depictions of the life cycle that all would marry, there were still many throughout the period who would not.

Even Jacques's less marriage-driven view of masculine society depicts an ideal to which many did not adhere. The work of scholars such as Linda Woodbridge and Patricia Fumerton, for example, have shed light on the lives of vagrants and the working poor—groups of individuals largely excluded from the decidedly middle-class view of the life cycle presented by Jacques in *As You Like It*.⁸ The life cycle did not, then, always reflect the realities of or capture the complexities of the lives of early modern English individuals. Nevertheless, it remained a powerful ideological force through which they were defined and against which they were judged.

Marriage and the Role of Wife in Early Modern England

Even as one fifth of the English population remained unmarried in early modern England, marriage was increasingly seen as essential to a woman's fulfillment of expected social norms, particularly after the Reformation. Writing on the marriage ceremony itself, David Cressy observes that "the solemnization of matrimony signaled important changes for those who took part. The ritual marked the passage from one state to another. At its completion the parties were no longer as they were before" (*Birth* 286). Men and women entered the ceremony as single individuals with different social responsibilities and statuses. Upon exiting the ceremony, they held the culturally powerful titles of "husband" and "wife" (Cressy, *Birth* 286). While the Anglican Church did not officially consider marriage a sacrament by the late sixteenth century, marriage nonetheless "assigned new privileges, advantages, and obligations. It redefined social and sexual roles, rearranged patriarchal obligations, and conferred new duties of status, authority, and dependency" (Cressy, *Birth* 287). Jacques may give marriage short shrift for men in his overview of the life cycle, but as Cressy shows, marriage was a defining moment in both a man and woman's life.

Yet while both men and women were supposedly transformed by this social rite, it was only women who were primarily defined in relationship to it. As Amy Froide elaborates,

Early modern England was a patriarchal society in which contemporaries thought of women in terms of their familial roles: as daughter, wife, mother, and widow. The position of women who had married was clear: wives assisted their husbands in their running of households, and widows, by virtue of being the deputies of their deceased husbands, headed households. (16)

Women were defined by their proximity to their patriarchal guardians and were expected to be subordinate to male figures, fathers, and husbands. As I mention above, Froide's work has usefully shown that there were many women who lived outside of the confines of marriage, either becoming single after their spouse's passing or remaining single all their lives. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that while the ideology of the period positioned women as daughters, wives, mothers, and widows, women did live independent of these patriarchal ties and in increasing number throughout the seventeenth century. Despite this reality, however, the written record of early modern England depicts a society that struggled to see a place for women outside of their prescribed, life-cycle roles.

This is due in large part to the Biblical creation story of Adam and Eve. Christians had two versions of the tale with which to contend. First, one reads a brief description of Adam and Eve's creation in Genesis 1:27-28: "Thus God created the man in his image: in the image of God created he him: he created them male and female. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Bring forth the frute and multiplie" (*The Geneva Bible*). This passage's importance lay mostly in the exhortation to reproduction which was upheld by the marriage ceremony as the chief reason for marriage well into the seventeenth century (a point I will discuss at greater length in my

fourth chapter). It was the lengthy elaboration of Adam and Eve's creation in Genesis 2:18-25, however, that would have the most impact on early modern ideas surrounding marital conduct and its gender hierarchy:

Also the Lord God said, It is not good that the man shulde be him selfe alone: I wil make him an helpe mete for him...Therefore the Lord God caused an heavie slepe to fall upon the man: & whiles he slept, he toke one of his rybbes and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rybbe which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, this now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shalbe called woman, because she was taken out of the man. Therefore shal man leave his father and mother, and shal cleave to his wife, and they shalbe one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.⁹

This passage provided the grounds for the early modern idea of companionate marriage: a union based on mutual love and support between husband and wife that nevertheless placed them in a gender hierarchy.¹⁰ Eve was made specifically to be man's "helpe mete," created from his "rybbe" and brought to Adam for the purpose of uniting as "one flesh." Eve was secondary, but she was also clearly designed to assist Adam in a way that resembles partnership more than servitude. But as the final verse states, Eve was specifically designed to be Adam's "wife," a role that, unlike Adam's, links her divine purpose specifically to her union with her (male) spouse.

That the Genesis story of Adam and Eve was largely interpreted as arguing for a companionate model of marriage can be seen throughout the literature of the period. In Henry Smith's popular *Preparative to Marriage* (1591), for example, the author writes:

It is saide, that the wife was made of the husbands rib: not of his head, for *Paule* calleth the husbände the wifes head: nor of the foote, for he must not set her at his foote: the

servant is appointed to serve, and the wife to helpe. If she must not match with the head, nor stoope at the foote, where shall he set her then? He must set her at his heart, and therefore she which should like in his bosome, was made in his bosome, and should bee close to him as his rib of which she was fashioned. (B3v-B4r)

Echoing the language of Adam and Eve's creation story, Smith makes a distinction between servitude and "helpe"—one a utilitarian hierarchy, the other a position of subordination but also tender care and affection. Eve's creation from Adam's rib highlights that while a wife is not to be equal or superior in intellectual capacity, neither was she to be placed beneath her spouse. She belongs at his side where she may best provide her "helpe."

Likewise, Rachel Speght's critique of Joseph Swetnam's famous anti-woman pamphlet deploys similar language to argue for a more companionate view of marriage. Eve, Speght argues, "was made of a part of man, after that he was a living soule: yet was shee not produced from *Adams* foote, to be his too low inferiour; nor from his head to be his superiour, but from his side, neare his heart, to be his equall; that where he is Lord, she may be Lady" (10). In the hands of Speght and Smith, the creation of Eve out of Adam's rib becomes a symbol of a power dynamic that, in theory if not in practice, positioned women as equal to men.

Of course, Genesis also provided more explicit evidence for God's ordination of patriarchal social order. As a result of Eve's beguilement by the serpent and subsequent persuasion of Adam to join her in sin, God punished Eve (and therefore all womankind) thus: "I wil greatly increase thy sorowes, & thy conceptions, In sorowe shalt thou bring for the children, and thy desire *shal be subject* to thine housband, and he shal rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16; original emphasis). God's punishment complicates the much more egalitarian relationship depicted earlier in Genesis, and partially accounts for the tension between subordination and

companionship found in early modern conceptions of companionate marriage. The very same Henry Smith, for example, also writes in his *Preparative to Marriage* that “To her silence and patience she [a wife] must adde *The acceptable obedience*, which makes a Woman rule while she is ruled. This is the Wives tribute to her Husband; for she is not called his head, but hee is called her head” (G1r; original emphasis).¹¹ The creation story of Adam and Eve found in Genesis could be used as a source for those arguing both for or against women’s social and spiritual equality with men.¹²

Due in large part, then, to Genesis’s ambiguity regarding the relationship between the sexes, the definition of a “helpe meete” or ideal wife was up for debate. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw an abundance of sermons, conduct manuals, plays, and ballads providing advice for women (and men) on precisely this topic. These texts often sought to identify and cultivate what Margaret Ezell calls the “Good Wife,” a “character” that “indicates conventional assumptions about the ideal marriage for seventeenth-century authors and readers, whether or not their own marriages bore any resemblance to it or not” (38).¹³ The “Good Wife” is an ideal woman—chaste, silent, and obedient to her spouse. She is largely a “conservative force, whose appeal is to tradition, not innovation” as those attributes praised in her are those that uphold the patriarchal status quo (Ezell 38).¹⁴ She is dutiful to her “Good Husband,” supporting his godly endeavors for their social and spiritual edification. As Kenneth Charlton observes, the excess of advice literature on female comportment also suggests that there were many women in early modern England who “behaved as they wished, refusing to fit into the feminine mould designed for them by men” (56). Nevertheless, the Good Wife was an ideal with which early modern women had to contend, regardless of their actual desire or ability to comply.

Importantly, then, it was assumed that even if one was not born with the characteristics necessary for a Good Wife, one could learn how to become one. Perhaps no other work was as influential in delineating the parameters of a good woman and arguing for the importance of female education as the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives's *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* (1524). Vives's book, dedicated to Henry VIII's daughter Mary was, according to Susan Wabuda, "prepared under the patronage of Catherine of Aragon as one of several books on matters of conduct and education" (116). In the words of Wabuda, Vives "presented a vision of womanhood that infused Pauline tropes and the mandates of Genesis with the breath of Aristotelian moderation. Restraint, obedience, silence, modesty, and above all chastity, were the qualities that Vives elevated" (117). Vives champions female education (both reading and writing) but only insofar as women limit their intellectual pursuits to "the study of wysedome: the whiche dothe enstruct their maners, and ensurme theyr lyvyng, and teacheth them the waye of good and holy lyfe" (22-23). His advice demonstrates the perceived benefit of educating women—that in studying the correct topics and under the proper tutelage, they may better become dutiful Christian subjects submissive to husband, King, and God.¹⁵ Despite *The Instruction of a Christian Woman's* Catholic author and influence, its emphasis on education as a means of cultivating a woman's obedience to patriarchal powers, whether they be secular or religious, transcended the Reformation's concerns over specific aspects of Christian doctrine and ensured that it continued to be a best seller throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁶

Like the humanist Vives and his contemporaries, the famous Church reformers, Luther and Calvin, would also argue for the importance of creating an educated populace that included women. For them, however, the ability to read was crucial for Christian salvation under the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, or the idea that scripture alone, rather than the ritual and ceremony of

the Catholic Church, provided the keys to salvation. Indeed, the humanist movement's stress on the importance of education for a learned and civil society, coupled with the reformer's insistence on the necessity of individual scriptural engagement for salvation, encouraged the continuing creation of a literate female populace. Women's literacy rates lagged behind their male counterparts throughout the early modern period (although class was often a more defining factor than gender in terms of literacy), yet the cultural acceptance of women's literacy increased, as did women's literary production. In the following section, I will briefly overview some of the hallmarks of Reformation reading practices as they pertain to female literary engagement in early modern England.

Reformation Reading Practices

The Reformation saw a decentralization of scriptural authority that had a broad impact on literacy in early modern England. The printing of the vernacular Bible was in direct response to the Lutheran belief in *sola scriptura* and, as David Cressy observes, the reformers believed that "A person who could read" was "better equipped to prepare for salvation than his illiterate fellow Christians and was more likely, in the view of protestant divines, to lead a life of duty and godliness" (*Literacy* 1). Thomas Cranmer, for instance, instructs English Christians to

diligently searche for the welle of life, in the bokes of the new and old Testament, and not ronne to the stinking podelles of mennes tradicions, devised by mannes imaginacion, for our justificacion and salvacion. For in holly scripture, is fully conteined, what we ought to do, and what to eschewe, what to beleve, what to love, and what to loke for at Gods hands at length.

Knowing full well the limited rates of literacy, Cranmer does note that "a man maie prospere, with onely hearing," but he adds, "he maie mucche more prospere, with bothe hearyng and

readyng.” Reading the Word of God, rather than practicing “mennes tradicions,” was the way to access Christian salvation in England’s Reformation theology.

Making the scripture available in the vernacular was also seen as a way for Henry VIII, now head of the Church in England, to ensure that his subjects were attending to *his* theology as opposed to Rome’s (as long as they were reading the right editions). Yet the passage in 1543 of the *Act for the Advancement of True Religion* is, as Peter Marshall observes, a testament to the fact that Henry found it difficult to control the proliferation of rebellious biblical exegesis in the early years of Reformation (*Heretics*). This Act, as Femke Molekamp notes, explicitly forbade “women and lower class men” from “reading the English Bible” for fear their potential misinterpretations could cause spiritual and political strife (*Women 2*). Despite attempts to curtail biblical interpretation (and, therefore, political sedition), however, a wide swath of the English population, including both lower class men and women, were “engaged in interpretive and activist reading” since the early days of the Protestant Reformation (Molekamp, *Women 3*). Kate Narveson even notes that by the middle of Elizabeth’s reign, devotional guides appeared for the common reader, offering directions on how “to read, to take notes, to compare place with place, and to apply the Word to their own lives” (3). Such guides stand as a testament to the fact that, as the century progressed and Protestantism took hold over the English populace, reading and writing on the scriptures was deemed standard devotional practice for learned and lay individuals alike.

Whether or not women (and men, for that matter) should publish their biblical interpretations was another issue. While Vives supported the (limited) education of women, he would not go so far as to overturn the teachings of St. Paul which forbade women from speaking publicly (an act under which printing was often understood as well). For Vives, a woman should

only study “for her selfe alone and her yongue children or her sisters in our lord” as it “neither becometh a woman to rule a schole, nor to live among men, or speke a brode and shake of her demureness and honestie” (23). Vives’s opinions were in line with developing Protestant ideas on the subject of literacy. As members of the Protestant faith, women had a duty to know their Bible since their salvation (and that of potentially their children and household staff) depended on it. Yet the appropriateness of sharing their exegesis beyond the home was still in question (a topic I will discuss at greater length in my second and third chapters).

Of course, even from the beginnings of the Reformation in England, women were interjecting a public voice in the Reformation conversation. As Edith Snook remarks regarding two famous examples of publicly engaged women—Anne Askew and Katherine Parr—“Faith provides them with a language in which to make claims to knowledge, to represent themselves as legal and knowing subjects, and to justify speaking publicly” (56). Once encouraged to read as a matter of faith and feminine fashioning, women quickly began to engage in public conversations, through both print and the spoken word, on the very grounds that their faith encouraged them to do so.¹⁷

Thus, the Protestant Reformation provided women with the means to justify their own intellectual / spiritual labor and, at times, the public presentation of that labor. Yet even as the reformers stressed the importance of direct textual engagement and the Bible became a common household object, reading scripture was never an entirely unmediated experience. The reformers may have rejected the notion that one needed compendious extra-textual commentary to understand the Bible, but they still believed that the Bible was best read when accompanied with commentary that either illuminated a passage’s relation to others within the Bible itself, or offered the Greek or Hebrew form of important words from the “original” Biblical source texts.

The extensive notes that accompany the vernacular Bibles of the early modern period, as well as the proliferation of scriptural reading guides, attest to this belief.¹⁸ Reflecting specifically on women's individual access to scripture through the Geneva Bible, Femke Molekamp concludes that "as well as potentially opening up the possibilities of individual reading to women, the Geneva Bible can also be thought of as attempting to 'intervene' in the interpretations a reading woman might have made" precisely because of the extensive notes that appear in the text's margins (*Women* 25). Even personal, private acts of scripture reading for both men and women were shaped and steered by the commentary of Protestant exegetes.

Nevertheless, the critical apparatus of England's vernacular Bibles, as well as biblical reading guides, did not stop women from engaging in their own unique scriptural exegesis. In fact, it likely provided them with a community through which they could fashion their own biblical interpretations. For, as the works of Barbara Lewalski, Patricia Crawford, Femke Molekamp, Kate Narveson, Shannon Miller, Erika Longfellow, and Paula McQuade (to name but a few) have shown, women throughout the early modern period engaged in scriptural exegesis in a variety of ways, using interpretive strategies developed from earlier Catholic exegetical practices to arrive at their conclusions.¹⁹

One such exegetical practice, and the one that will be under investigation in this dissertation, is the hermeneutic of biblical typology. I argue that biblical typology—a term that initially referred to the medieval practice of reading Old Testament persons and events as types and figures of a supersessionary future fulfilled in New Testament antitypes—influenced an early modern understanding of the female life cycle, whereas the life cycle pattern of maid, wife, widow *itself* could be understood typologically. In this framework, maidenhood was superseded, rather than merely succeeded, by the wifely state. Viewing the life cycle in this way strengthened

the cultural understanding of marriage as the social and spiritual pinnacle of a woman's life. Men and women were supposed to teleologically advance towards marriage, yet the typological significance attributed to marriage underscored the spiritual importance of one's entrance into marriage as well. Given the secular *and* religious significance of marriage, then, deviation from this temporal schema could and would cause great anxiety amongst those who did not neatly conform to its linear trajectory. The following section, then, will overview biblical typology's use under the Protestant Reformation, and outline my argument for its influence on early modern understandings of marriage and the early modern life cycle.

Biblical Typology in Early Modern England

Scholars have long been interested in biblical typology's impact on the literature of medieval and early modern England. Erich Auerbach's chapter on the concept of "figura" usefully traces the application of typological thinking in early Christian literature through the medieval period. He argues that at least since Tertullian, the term "figura" was used to denote a biblical type to be "fulfilled" in a later biblical/historical event. He points to a few influential Church fathers (specifically Tertullian and Augustine) to demonstrate how such a reading would operate, citing the tendency, for example, to read the Passover as a figure of Christ's saving blood (29-30). For medieval exegetes, typology was a part of the "fourfold sense of scripture" which, per William Madsen, encouraged reading scripture for "literal, allegorical, tropological, and analogical" interpretations (35). While reformers attempted to distance themselves from this reading practice on the grounds that the Word was sufficient for the elect to understand without extensive exegetical training, the Bible was still read with attention to its figurative, allegorical, and, importantly for my study, typological meanings; the Reformation did not so much eradicate

Catholic exegetical traditions as it did adapt them to comply with Protestant beliefs in the importance of an individual's direct scriptural engagement for spiritual salvation.

Given Protestantism's assertion that believers should read scripture for signs of their election, typology evolved into an even more complex hermeneutic that could illuminate the individual's place in biblical history. Barbara Lewalski was perhaps the first to note the Protestant emphasis on the individual application of typology, arguing in her examination of the influence of biblical typology on seventeenth-century religious poetry that "typological symbolism became in the earlier seventeenth century an important literary means to explore the personal spiritual life with profundity and psychological complexity, and that certain characteristic Protestant alterations in the traditional typological formulae facilitated this exploration" ("Typological Symbolism" 81). She notes how the "new Protestant emphasis upon the application of Scripture to the self, that is, the discovery of scriptural paradigms and of the workings of Divine Providence, in one's life" influenced a newfound penchant for "recognizing the biblical stories and events" and "salvation history, not merely as exemplary to us but as actually recapitulated in our lives" ("Typological Symbolism" 82). In the hands of Protestant reformers, typology became a hermeneutic practice whereby the believer could place him or herself in "God's vast typological patterns of recapitulations and fulfillments operating throughout history" ("Typological Symbolism" 82).

Lewalski provides a number of close readings to prove her point, but I will focus on one specifically as it is illustrative of the ways in which marriage would and could be understood typologically. Early in the essay, Lewalski presents Donne's sermon from the marriage of Margaret Washington as exemplary of the ways in which one's personal life events could be read in a typological framework. Donne's sermon reads Hosea 2:19, "And I will marrie thee unto me

for ever,” with attention to “all the typological associations between the marriages of Adam and Eve, of Christ and the soul, and of the Lamb and his Bride” (Lewalski, “Typological Symbolism” 84). According to Donne, “this secular marriage [is] a type of the spirituall, and the spirituall an earnest of that eternall, which they and we by thy mercie shall have in that kingdome, which thy Sonne our Saviour hath purchased with the inestimable price of his incorruptible bloud” (Donne 24). For Donne, “secular marriage” refers to “Adam and Eve; and after, every man and woman, and this couple in particular,” the “spirituall” refers to “Christ and his Church...but more particularly, Christ and my soul” (that is, the mystical marriage of Christ to every Christian believer) and finally, the “eternall” represents the “the triumphant Church...the Lambe and my Soul,” or the Christian’s unity with Christ at the apocalypse (16, 21). In other words, the human relationship between husband and wife becomes for Donne (like Adam and Eve) a type of Christ’s marriage to his believers, which is itself prefigures the eternal soul’s unity with Christ at the resurrection.²⁰ As read by Lewalski, this sermon offers but one example of the ways in which Protestant theology encouraged the individual to see themselves in “the typological patterns of recapitulation and fulfillment ordered by Divine Providence” (“Typological Symbolism” 85).

More than just evidence of the presence and individual application of typology in early modern England, Donne’s sermon demonstrates the typological significance accorded to marriage in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. Marriage had always been spiritually significant; under the Catholic Church it held sacramental status. While this was rejected during the Reformation on the grounds that marriage’s mystical power was superseded in spiritual significance by the Lord’s Supper, marriage remained a crucial way through which Christians could insert themselves into God’s typological historical narrative, begun in Genesis. Marriage

was more than a stage in the life cycle into which they must enter. It enabled their typological advancement in Christian history. To remain unmarried was to potentially prevent oneself from participating in the sacred narrative outlined by Donne above, threatening one's very union with Christ in this world and the next.

While Donne focuses on Hosea 2:19 to make his argument for marriage's typological implications, many early modern commentators read Ephesians 5:25-30 as essential evidence of this relationship. The passage appears in the Geneva Bible as follows:

25. Housbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, & gave him self for it,

26. That he might sanctifie it, & clesne it by the washing of water through ye worde,

27. That he might make it unto him self a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or anie suche thing: but that it shulde be holie and without blaim.

28. So oght men to love their wives, as their owne bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth him self.

29. For no man ever yet hated his owne flesh, but nourisheth & cherisheth it, even as the Lord *doeth* the Church.

30. For we are members of his bodie, of his flesh, and of his bones. (91)

Making the typological significance of this passage explicit, the editors of the Geneva Bible add the following note to verse 30: "This our conjunction with Christ must be considered as Christ is the housband, and we the wife, which are not onely joined to him by nature, but also by the communion of substance, through the holie Gost and by faith: the seale and testimonie therof is the Supper of the Lord" (91). The Lord's Supper—communion—joins the individual with Christ, as husband and wife are joined in marriage.

Jean Calvin himself would use this passage to argue for the typological link between Adam and Eve, and Christ and his followers. In *The Institutions of Christian Religion*, for instance, Calvin offers the following commentary:

when Eve was brought into his [Adam's] sight, whom he knewe to have bin shapen out of his side: this woman, sayeth he, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my fleshe, which Paul testifieth was spiritually fulfilled in Christ and us, when he sayeth, that we are members of his body, his flesh, and of his bones, yea and one flesh with him. (264)²¹

Here Calvin typologically links Ephesians 5:30 “For we are members of his bodie, of his flesh, and of his bones” with the creation story of Genesis 22-23: “And the rybbe which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and broght her to the man. / Then the man said, this now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shalbe called woman, because she was taken out of man.” Eve’s creation out of Adam was “spiritually fulfilled in Christ and us.” Each individual Christian who partakes in the Lord’s Supper (the symbolic consumption of Christ’s body) fashions himself as Christ’s Bride (the Church) and thus fulfills the spiritual promise made in the union of Adam and Eve.

Whereas the above passage speaks to the typological fulfillment enacted by the believer’s participation in the Lord’s Supper, Calvin’s ninth sermon on Ephesians 5 unambiguously presents a typological link between marriage itself and the relationship between the individual believer and Christ.²² Focusing his attention in this sermon on verses 28-30, Calvin warns married individuals to “consider what damnation is prepared for them” if they do not conduct themselves in marriage as is outlined in these verses. For Calvin, Paul commands husbands and wives to “live...in concord and freendship [sic]” and, failing to do so, they “willfully withstand God, yea and utterly forget themselves, and become worse than brute beastes” (*The sermons*

293r). Calvin follows these statements by drawing a direct link between marriage's typological implications and the further need to venerate the institution:

And furthermore let them knowe also, that forasmuch as mariage is a figure of the holy union that is betweene the some of God and al the faythfull: the same ought also too hold them in the greater reverence: and although there happen many contentions, yit ought they too subdew them, and too let them lye as dead, and too consider that sith our Lord Jesus sitteth over them, it is too shewe that wedlock was blisshed in such wyse by God his father at the first, that he himselfe also hath ratified the same blissing by his death and passion, yea and reconciled us too God. (*The sermons* 293r)

Unlike the earlier passage from *Institutions* which emphasizes the figural relationship between Adam and Eve and Christ and the Church, here Calvin directly claims that contemporary marriages serve as a figure “of the holy union” between God and the “faythfull.” As in Donne’s marriage sermon, Calvinist doctrine asserts that contemporary marriages can serve as a type of the relationship believers experience between themselves and Christ. Calvin uses this assertion to encourage marital conviviality, implicitly suggesting that marital discord excludes couples from participating in Christ’s salvation narrative. Through his “death and passion,” Christ “ratified” or solidified the place of marriage’s sacred import—through participation in the Last Supper (an act that calls to mind Christ’s Passion as well as Eve’s creation from Adam’s rib), Christians perform a sort of marital duty of which their own, temporal marriages should already reflect. Failure to do so holds potentially grave, spiritual consequences.

Of course, Calvin is not blind to the fact that marriages more frequently than not struggle to live up to the expectations outlined by this typological association. Calvin asks his readers, “For let a man looke into all housholdes one after another: and where shall he fynd such

friendship as may resemble Jesus Christ and his Church?” to which he soberly responds: “(Nowhere.)” (*The sermons* 293r). Despite the difficulty in maintaining the “friendship” mandated in the model between Christ and his Church, Calvin writes,

Yit notwithstanding wee bee unexcuzable, if wee profit not in this doctrine. So then, every of us must fight against his unruly affections: & if a man have not such a wyfe as he could wish, let him understand, that God intendeth to try his pacience by that meanes, and let him consider wel, that he behaveth himselfe worse towards our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the husband, too whom all of us are maryed. (*The sermons* 293v-294r).

Man himself is a wife to his husband, “our Lord Jesus Christ,” a fact that one should keep in mind when dealing with his own marital partner. While he should not “feede his wyves vyces,” Calvin concludes: “Too bee short, let every man so mynd this doctrine, that when the husband hath not all things in his wife that he desyreth, he may thinke thus with himself: yit am I bound unto hir, yea and I am not onely bound unto my wife, but also unto God, who is the mayster of mariage, and too our Lord Jesus Christ, who is as a mirror and Lyvely image of it unto us” (*The sermons* 294r). He repeats the same for wives as well—each is to participate in marriage in such a way as to reflect, as types, the “mirror” image for marriage demonstrated between Christ and his believers.

An awareness of the typological import given to marriage in Protestant theology, I argue, enables the twenty-first century reader to appreciate the ways in which such a narrative could further limit the socially acceptable roles available to early modern individuals, and women in particular. While men, as with the life cycle, were defined in ways that extend beyond their proximity to marriage, women would continue to be largely identified throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in terms of their marital status. To add to marriage’s social

significance the idea that it might also be the prime way for a woman to place herself in God's providential design was to exacerbate already extant ideologies that promoted marriage as the proper future goal of any woman. In this way, then, one could argue that typology helped promote a teleological understanding of women's lives, whereby they were thought to demonstrate their spiritual election primarily by advancing beyond maidenhood into the married state. Doing so ensures their marriage to Christ in this life and in the apocalypse, as well as guarantees the continued valuation of what Edelman calls "reproductive futurity," albeit with a more religious emphasis. Marriage is a necessary and expected step in one's social and spiritual advancement, for it places one squarely in sacred history.

The teleological thrust of typology's temporal organization has rightly led some scholars to criticize it as a normative temporal force. Perhaps one of its most vehement detractors, Kathleen Biddick points out the inherent violence embedded in what she calls the "Christian typological imaginary"—those ideas that tie "'Christian-ness' to supersessionary notions" (6). In Biddick's assessment, medieval Christianity used a typological hermeneutic to define itself as separate from, and superior to, Judaism. Specifically focusing on "graphic technologies" such as religious tracts and maps, Biddick points to a number of ways in which medieval Christians relegated the Jewish faith to a defunct "then" separate from a superior "now" (2). Her aims exceed medieval history, however, as she also seeks to demonstrate how "supersessionary notions...have rigidly bound the contexts in which Christians have encountered Jews, then and now" (2). Instead of replicating this division, she attempts to put forth a historiography that considers "'unhistorical' temporalities" defined by "passages, thresholds, gaps, intervals, in-betweenness" (12, 2). Again, as in the debates surrounding teleology in queer scholarship, one finds an argument for an "un" historicism that rejects a teleological model of history perceived as

positioning the “new” as separate and superior from the “then.” Even Auerbach is careful to note that typological language, specifically as it appears in the Pauline epistles, was written with the explicit purpose of defending Judeo-Christianity through an appeal to its superiority over Judaism (50). Typology was, without doubt, an ideological tool through which medieval Christians could claim their temporal and spiritual superiority over the Jewish faith.

I do not wish to challenge Biddick’s claim that Christianity was founded on a violent “typological imaginary” wherein the Jewish faith is relegated to a “then” inferior to the superior “now.” In fact, I concur that early modern uses of typology often commit a similar act of violence, especially when applied to marriage. And as I say above, typology upheld and further solidified the notion that marriage was the desired telos of any woman’s life, and all states of being outside of it are inherently inferior. Just as traditional biblical typology was used to present Christians and their religion as superseding those of the Jewish faith, a typological understanding of marriage renders those who wish to remain outside of its confines (maids who remain unmarried and widows who refuse to remarry, for example), as spiritually inferior to those who find themselves safely within the institution or advancing towards it.

Importantly, however, I would like to argue that typology could also serve as a powerful rhetorical tool through which authors invested in progressive social reform could articulate their social critique, and women could claim authorial agency. That is to say, further investigating the operations of typology in early modern England neither necessarily reenacts its violence as Biddick, Menon, and Goldberg might suggest, nor does typology itself *only* uphold patriarchal, heteronormative values. As this dissertation will show, while typology could and did bolster heteronormative temporalities, it *also* provided the mechanism through which authors could queer or trouble those same temporalities. Marriage might be presented as the end goal for the

women characters and authors of the texts under investigation in my dissertation, but as I hope to demonstrate, exactly when that marriage takes place and who participates in it is often up for debate in ways that trouble patriarchal social relations.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1, “‘This sounds like doomsday’: Moll Cutpurse, Marriage, and Prophetic Critique in Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl*” argues that *The Roaring Girl* (1611) figures Moll as a secular prophet whose own perpetual maidenhood, coupled with her prophetic speech, challenges the typological assumption that marriage is currently a superior life cycle stage. The play looks forward to the time when marriage will not require the de facto subordination of women, but cannot confidently assert that even then it will be a desirable institution for all. Moll’s refusal to marry and embrace a heteronormative future serves as a critique of contemporary marital practices and the ideologies on which they are built—a critique that accrues added gravity from its placement in the mouth of a figure who harnesses the rhetorical force of a secular prophet. Of course, the fictionalized account of Moll’s resistance to marriage demonstrates the flexibility of fiction not afforded to real-life women who, like the historical Moll (Mary Frith), often had to marry for reasons including financial security. Yet Moll’s maidenhood nonetheless challenges the idea that marriage is the means through which a woman might achieve spiritual ascent.

Chapter 2, “‘Deere Spouse of Christ’: Typology and Spiritual Marriage in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*” argues that Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), like *The Roaring Girl*, asserts the failure of contemporary marriages to live up to the companionate marriage ideal exemplified by Adam and Eve in Eden. Therefore, early modern marriages cannot enact one’s entrance into the Bible’s typological schema, whereby marriage is

meant to serve as a figure of Christ and His Church. Because of this, Lanyer argues that women are free to view Christ himself as their “Spouse” and unite with Him directly for spiritual advancement, lessening the requirement for wifely obedience within temporal marriage. Lanyer even goes so far as to suggest that her dedicatees need only to use Lanyer’s text as a devotional guide if they wish to bypass temporal marriage entirely in their pursuit of spiritual advancement. Such an argument would have been attractive to her dedicatees as each was familiar with the limits marriage placed on female agency, despite its depiction as the ultimate goal of any believing Protestant Christian. But Lanyer’s argument for a release from patriarchal control is also one driven by economic concerns: it is through literary patronage from her dedicatees that Lanyer hopes to elevate her own social status. In this way, then, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* depicts the possibility for spiritual *and* social advancement achievable outside of the patriarchal confines of marriage. In other words, Lanyer’s direct plea to these women for patronage undermines the social system of coverture, while the content of the text itself casts doubt on the necessity of patriarchal marriage for women’s Christian salvation.

Chapter 3, “Wife After Death: Typology and the Good Widow in Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing*,” argues that by suggesting her act of publication is part of her performance as a Good Widow (a figure who remains chaste to her deceased husband as if he were living) Leigh avoids succumbing to the typologically and socially ambivalent associations of widowhood in *The Mothers Blessing* (1616). Her assertion that marriage lasts beyond death counters contemporary protestant attitudes towards marriage and the afterlife which, even in the marriage ceremony itself, dictated that marriage lasted only “till death us depart” (*Book of Common Prayer*). She points to none other than the Virgin Mary to assert the value of marital chastity and its ability to secure a woman her place in the narrative of sacred history. By continuing to remain

chaste to her husband as would a woman with a living spouse, Leigh inhabits the best of both worlds: as a widow she can enjoy the additional freedoms that might accompany the lessening of patriarchal control, while also avoiding the spiritual ambivalence that acknowledging the freedoms that accompany widowhood might encourage in a social system that positioned marriage as a woman's telos but remained conflicted on her duty to her deceased partner.

Chapter 4, "'So hand in hand they passed': Hand-holding and Monist Marriage in Milton's Divorce Tracts and *Paradise Lost*" argues that Milton, like Leigh, continues to question the temporal terms of marriage. Milton, however, asserts the right of marital dissolution before death by arguing in *Paradise Lost* (1667) that marriage cannot exist unless the married couple are united in a "monist marriage"—a marriage wherein couples unite both body and soul for "mutual help" towards spiritual advancement. Put another way: like the texts considered earlier in the dissertation, *Paradise Lost* also questions the assumption that marriage in its current form typologically advances its participants in all its iterations, similarly challenging the marriage ceremony's command that the union remain indissoluble until death. Through its depiction of Adam and Eve's marriage as a monist one, *Paradise Lost* ultimately proposes that such a marriage is the only means through which true, typological advancement can take place, thus supporting the idea that a couple may lawfully divorce if a marriage fails to live up to this standard. Given the monist principle that body and soul are but two terms for the same substance, it is possible to read Adam and Eve's unity as "one soul" in marriage as monist and, potentially, egalitarian. Yet Milton's incorporation of Saint Augustine's gendered concept of the soul into his monism sanctions the poet's misogyny by enabling a reading of Eve as necessarily subordinate to Adam. The final image of Adam and Eve exiting paradise hand-in-hand, however, encourages Milton's readers to envision a future for marriage predicated on true gender equality. The U.S.

Supreme Court's recent use of companionate language to argue for same-sex marriage further demonstrates how companionate marriage ideals might challenge heteronormativity.

These four chapters, then, work together to demonstrate the varying ways in which literary depictions of marriage and the conceptualization of the categories of maid, wife, and widow in early modern England were informed by and grappled with the belief that marriage enabled one to insert oneself in Christianity's typological historical narrative. Each of these texts acknowledge, either implicitly or explicitly, the problem with the ideology that marriage was the most defining event of a woman's life, calling attention to the dissonance between marriage as it was designed in paradise and marriage as it appeared in the lives of early modern individuals. Acknowledging the typological significance of marriage in early modern England allows scholars a deeper appreciation for its position in the social and spiritual lives of early modern individuals and the stakes involved for those who deviate from the marriage norm. Furthermore, by considering texts across genres and written by both male and female authors, these chapters reveal the pervasiveness of a typological understanding of marriage. Genres as diverse as secular plays, motherly advice treatises, and religious poetry written by men and women contended with marriage's typological implications in ways that both challenge and uphold early modern gender norms and the institution of marriage itself.

Chapter 1— “This Sounds Like Doomsday”: Moll Cutpurse, Marriage, and Prophetic Critique in *The Roaring Girl*

Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton’s now canonical 1611 *The Roaring Girl* centers on Moll Cutpurse, a cross-dressing “roaring girl” who aids the lovers Sebastian Wengrave and Mary Fitzallard in attaining their marital ends while also provocatively resisting her own entrance into the institution. Criticism of the play most often attends to the feminist and queer implications of the titular character’s position as a “mannish-woman” or *hic mulier* figure as it relates to her strident marital critique. Additionally, the fact that Moll Cutpurse was inspired by a real London figure, Mary Frith, who notoriously appeared on stage after a performance of the play for which she was later tried, further attracts critics to this Jacobean city comedy.¹ That being said, for all the queer implications of Moll’s cross-dressing, recent criticism has also begun to acknowledge that *The Roaring Girl* nonetheless also presents her as a viable marriage option—she is a “girl” or maid who is ideally expected to grow out of her youthful rebelliousness, get married, and become someone’s wife (as the “real” Moll Cutpurse did).²

In fact, near the play’s conclusion and after Sebastian and Mary’s marriage, Lord Noland asks Moll when she thinks she will marry (V.ii.220-221) to which she offers this famous reply:

Who, I, my lord? I’ll tell you when, I’ faith.

When you shall hear

Gallants void from sergeants’ fear,

Honesty and truth unslandered,

Woman manned but never pandered,

Cheaters booted but not coached,

Vessels older ere they’re broached.

If my mind be then not varied,

Next day following, I'll be married. (V.ii.222-230)³

Upon hearing her catalogue of conditions, which includes reduced persecution of young, fashionable men, and, importantly for my chapter, the honest treatment of women in sexual and marital relations, Lord Noland claims it “sounds like doomsday.” To this Moll playfully replies, “Then were marriage best, / For if I should repent, I were soon at rest” (V.ii.232-233). With these statements, Moll perplexingly suggests that she will marry upon “doomsday,” or the apocalypse. The passage is often taken as a joke: Moll merely signals to Lord Noland that she will never marry. In this chapter, however, I will take seriously the implications of her apocalyptic utterance and argue that this speech, along with the play’s emphasis on Moll’s singularity, draw from the generic links between satire and prophecy and make it possible to read the play as a secular revelation that seeks to expose contemporary problems with marriage in attempts to offer a more equal future for men and women within it.

As David Norbrook once remarked on the structure of the New Testament Book of Revelation, the model for many revelatory texts in the early modern period, “Revelation ends with a vision of the New Jerusalem descending to a transfigured earth, and the whole perspective of the book is prophetic, valuing the present only in so far as it adumbrates a future fulfillment” (*Poetry* 34). Like the book of Revelation, *The Roaring Girl*, through Moll Cutpurse, offers a vision of a future meant to supersede the present. Rather than presenting a vision of the Christian eschaton, however, Moll presents a New Jerusalem that provides autonomy to society’s social inferiors, particularly women entering the married state. It is perhaps no surprise to find echoes of Revelation in a play that is generically aligned with social satire; as I will discuss at length later in the chapter, early modern individuals writing on literary convention understood the two genres to have similar etymological and historical origins. But despite this linkage, scholars have

yet to attend to the ways in which discourses surrounding prophecy and portentous signs proliferate the pages of this play, and to what effect. Most notably for my dissertation, the revelatory impulse is a typological one in that it follows the same pattern of supersession and fulfillment modeled by the historical understanding of the Old and New Testament. It looks forward to an end time that is only represented in shadows by the current state of the world. Attending to the ways in which *The Roaring Girl* resonates with the prophetic and its typological structure enables a more comprehensive understanding of the work the play accomplishes (or attempts to accomplish) in terms of social transformation.

I assert that *The Roaring Girl's* social critique, especially when delivered through the voice of Moll Cutpurse, encourages (however ambivalently) the social change necessary to typologically supersede the flawed world of early modern London and fulfill the promise of a more equitable future, particularly for women in marriage. As a cross-dressing, unmarried maid (and one with no desire to marry, no less), Moll's position outside of the heteronormative teleology sought by the play's main characters, as well as the play's generic links to the prophet tradition, enables a reading of Moll as both prophet figure and portentous sign. Thus, Moll's secular critique of early modern marriage practices gains spiritual gravity. And while the play's adherence to the conservative conventions of romantic comedies underscores the limited efficacy of prophetic speech and its ability to effect change, Moll's visionary speech towards the play's end, as well as her final Epilogue, emphasize how prophecy, as a mode of potentiality, can enable the *possibility* for progressive social reform and point to a future not limited by the play's otherwise normative conclusion.

Generically, *The Roaring Girl* is most often described as a city comedy. In addition to its convoluted marriage plot whereby the young Sebastian works to remove the impediments that bar his marriage to Mary Fitzallard, the play also contains other elements typical of early modern city comedies. These plays, as described by Jean Howard, “take London (or cities that are screens for London) as their setting and deal in some detail with the geography of that urban setting and with the non-noble characters who people it” (19).⁴ City gallants, merchants and their wives, noblemen, gentlemen, and underworld knaves all populate the play, presenting London as a richly textured, socially heterogeneous urban space. More than just a city comedy, however, *The Roaring Girl* is specifically a satirical one. Such plays, Jean Howard notes, stress “satire over celebration” in their representation of city life (21). Unlike city comedies that present more positive valuations of urban life and its inhabitants, *The Roaring Girl* depicts individuals engaging in perceived social ills (such as greed, adultery, and thievery), to critique their immorality, and, in so doing, encourages reform.⁵ As Richard McCabe observes, the publication of explicit satirical critiques in prose had effectively been banned in 1599 by members of the clergy.⁶ Yet this did little to suppress the production and publication of satirical city comedies throughout the early seventeenth century, largely because these plays offered a general censure of social ills, rather than an explicit attack on any person or political institution. These plays take aim not at specific individuals but at social types. Nevertheless, they remained rooted in a tradition deeply invested in direct social critique.

George Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) illuminates the generic link perceived between comedy and satire. Specifically looking to its Roman antecedents, Puttenham describes classical satire as a poetic genre originally designed to “taxe the common abuses and vice of the people in rough and bitter speeches” for the purpose of encouraging social change

(20). Comedy followed suit in its critical impulse, and indeed was “somewhat sharpe and bitter after the nature of the *Satyre*” but was still “more civill and pleasant” than its predecessor, “and not touching any man by name, but in a certaine generalitie glancing at every abuse” (Puttenham 26). The satiric city comedies of early modern England followed this comedic tradition (often called Roman New Comedy), offering points of social critique akin to the satiric mode while avoiding censure by remaining more general in their focus.⁷

The Roaring Girl, like classical Roman New Comedy, offers a general critique of perceived social problems. In this play, those include excessive consumption, lust, and laziness. Most importantly for this chapter, however, the play takes aim at the effects such vices have on the institution of marriage. From the depiction of the citizen couples to the lecherous gallants, the play lambasts contemporary marriage practices that seem to undermine middle class marital harmony. And in doing so, it stresses values in turns both conservative and progressive.

One social problem the play singles out for derision, for instance, is that of overbearing parents who emphasize marriage as an economic, rather than companionate, union. In Act I, Sebastian Wengrave describes how his “covetous father,” even after he first agreed to the match between himself and his betrothed, Mary Fitzallard, reconsidered once he realized how little financial gain the marriage would yield (I.i.83). Far from penniless, Mary would bring with her a dowry of five thousand marks—a sum which Jennifer Panek describes as “larger than average for women in her social status” (I.i.89n). In his rejection of this dowry (in addition to his violation of his own word), the play presents Sir Alexander as a parent irrationally driven by greed to thwart what should be a suitable union.

The play continues its censure of Sir Alexander in its depiction of the elder Wengrave’s resistance to Sebastian’s union with Mary. Sebastian calls out his father for his hypocrisy,

stating, “You on your knees have cursed that virtuous maiden, / And me for loving her, yet do you now / Thus baffle me to my face? Wear not your knees in such entreats! Give me Fitzallard’s daughter!” to which the obstinate Sir Alexander replies, “I’ll give thee ratsbane rather!” (I.ii.166-171). Sir Alexander’s unreasonableness persists throughout, a critique of which is most eloquently offered by Sebastian in a soliloquy from Act II.ii: “If a man have a free will, where should the use / More perfect shine than in his will to love? / All creatures have their liberty in that; / Though else kept under servile yoke and fear, / The very bonds slave has his freedom there” (1-5). According to Sebastian, the individual will takes precedent in matters of the heart.

Sir Alexander’s role as impediment to Sebastian and Mary’s marriage is partially generic, as the plot of most Roman New Comedies is organized around a young man’s attempt to circumvent the will of an elder social figure.⁸ But Sebastian’s (and the play’s) critique echoes early modern marriage advice that suggests that, while children are to obey their parents’ wishes in terms of marital choice, there are limits to parental control. The popular seventeenth-century London preacher William Gouge, for example, asserts that although children should “with the uttermost of their power...endeavor to bring their affection to the bent of their parents will,” they may, in cases where parents appear to have unjust reasons for the prevention of a “fit match,” “use the mediation of his kindred or other friends” or, as a last resort, the “Magistrate (who is in Gods place over the parent as well as over the childe, and ought to afford releefe unto the childe)” to attempt and persuade them otherwise (450).⁹ Even Gouge’s largely conservative approach to parental consent in marriage has its limits. *The Roaring Girl* takes satirical aim at such parents who would turn down a reasonable union for no other reason than greed.

While the play's criticism of Sir Alexander's behavior suggests a progressive attitude towards marital choice and individual will (i.e. it argues that one should marry for love and not, say, to gain wealth), its citizen marriages—namely the Openworks and Gallipots—often uphold conservative social norms surrounding marriage and female comportment.¹⁰ By the play's conclusion, both Mrs. Openwork and Mrs. Gallipot publicly repent their own susceptibility to the city gallants and submit to their respective husbands' wills, despite their repeated laments regarding their unfulfilling marriages. One reason the play offers for this marital dissatisfaction—unequal social beginnings—enables the play to assert the necessity of wifely obedience regardless of previous social rank. For example, upon learning that her husband might be unfaithful, Mrs. Openwork immediately calls to mind her initial social superiority over her spouse:

Tis well known he took me from a lady's service where I was well beloved of the steward. I had my Latin tongue and a spice of the French before I came to him, and now doth he keep a suburban [sic] whore under my nostrils. (II.i.318-321)

This admission directly links Mrs. Openwork's marital dissatisfaction with her assumed denigration in class status. Similarly, the audience learns from Laxton that Mrs. Gallipot was "a gentlewoman born...though it be her hard fortune now to shred Indian potherbs" (II.i.8-9). It is wise to be suspicious of Laxton's assessment given his untrustworthy characterization in the play, but his description of Mrs. Gallipot's marriage to her apothecary husband as "hard fortune" suggests that her discontent with her current class position is precisely what makes her vulnerable to Laxton's advances.

The play presents the wives' resentment of their husbands' presumed lower social statuses as a cause of marital strife and a behavior to be corrected. By play's end, both women

are made to see their folly and are transformed into silent emblems of wifely obedience. Act IV.ii begins with Mrs. Openwork and Mrs. Gallipot lamenting their susceptibility to the gallants, with Mrs. Openwork asserting, “Happy is the woman can be rid of ‘em all, ’Las, what are your whisking gallants to our husbands, weigh ‘em rightly man for man?” (IV.ii.45-47). Importantly, while Mrs. Openwork’s off-stage reconciliation with her husband facilitates the censure of the gallant Goshawk, the Gallipot plot concludes with the public rebuke of Mrs. Gallipot. Laxton successfully convinces Mr. Gallipot that he never intended to seduce his wife (sexually or financially) by the end of the scene, arguing that his advances were only meant to prove a point about female infidelity, a test which Mrs. Gallipot clearly fails. Gallipot believes this, and the scene ends with Gallipot praising Laxton and instructing his wife, “brag no more of holding out. Who most brags is most whore” (IV.ii.359-360). From this moment forward, the wives receive no more dialogue and instead stand mutely onstage as part of the “omnes,” when they do appear at all. As if to assert their transformation from scolds to demure spouses, Sir Alexander refers to them in the closing speech of Act V as “kind gentlewomen, whose sparkling presence / Are glories set in marriage” (V.ii.268-69). Their presence only sparkles when they are seen and not heard, silent now that they have learned their lesson.¹¹ *The Roaring Girl*, like many early modern city comedies, satirizes these women in attempts to curtail unruly behavior from London’s actual citizen wives.

Mario DiGangi has persuasively argued that it is these women’s perceived “economic and erotic agency” that provokes such anxiety (148). Because of the elision between domestic space and work place—“house and shop” (II.i.221)—seventeenth-century “citizen-class working women” were perceived as both “contributing to the household economy through the production and sale of goods” and “regarded with suspicion and anxiety due to their public mobility and

economic agency” (DiGangi 150). DiGangi demonstrates how *The Roaring Girl* uses “the imputation of sexual transgression” to mitigate their perceived threat “to orderly household government” (148). Even Moll, who the play presents elsewhere as the champion of mistreated women at all life stages and class positions, has a vexed relationship with the citizen wives. For example, in Act II Moll responds to criticism from Mrs. Openwork by calling her a “private pand’ress between shirt and smock,” essentially calling the citizen wife’s chastity into question (II.i.225). Following this insult, Moll even suggests that if Mrs. Openwork were a man she would physically fight her (II.i.226-227). So, while it might be tempting to read in Moll Cutpurse a proto-feminist champion of all women, she also participates in the type of policing that occurs elsewhere in the play regarding the citizen wives.

Therefore, the feminist politics of *The Roaring Girl* are best understood through the lens of intersectionality. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw’s pioneering work on intersectional feminism underscores the ways in which identity politics can often flatten difference at the expense of addressing the ways in which individuals may be victimized differently within a group because of “other dimensions of their identities” (1242). In the context of *The Roaring Girl*, the relationship between the female characters is best understood when one considers the varying class positions that they inhabit. Moll, while socially inferior to the play’s other women, is “more lofty” (as we are told in the prologue) than other “roaring girls” (Prologue). Her morality, then, raises her above those who would traditionally hold a superior position. Mary Fitzallard, seemingly by virtue of her class position, also appears to act in a way that makes her worthy of Moll’s care and protection. The citizen wives, on the other hand, are (of their own admission) more socially marginalized than they themselves would prefer. If any sense of feminist collective exists in the play, then, it is mostly rhetorical. Moll speaks as a champion for downtrodden

women, but in practice is only witnessed coming to the aid of the woman with whom she most identifies—the upper-class, morally unambiguous maiden, Mary Fitzallard. Due to their relatively marginalized social position and moral ambiguity, the citizen wives receive far less sympathy.

This is not to say that the husbands aren't also found at fault for the play's marital strife, but they are censured for those behaviors that seem to undermine their rightful patriarchal authority. For example, Mr. Gallipot's uxoriousness, in addition to Mrs. Gallipot's sense of social superiority, presents another potential reason for Mrs. Gallipot's wandering eye. In III.ii., the reader witnesses Mr. Gallipot's excessive affection for his wife in a speech peppered with pet names. The scene opens with Gallipot calling for his "sweet Prudence!" to which his wife responds: "What a pruing keep you! I think the baby would have a teat, it kyes so. Pray be not so fond of me; leave your city humors. I'm vexed at you to see how like a calf you come bleating after me" (III.ii.1-5). Mr. Gallipot continues to follow his wife around, calling her "honey Pru," "pretty Pru," "duck," "mouse," "a sweet drug," "sweetest Pru," all in the space of the scene's first forty lines. In response to his behavior, Mrs. Gallipot declares "I cannot abide a man that's too fond over me—so cookish" and "I cannot abide these apron husbands. Such cotqueans! You overdo your things" (III.ii.25-26; 32-33). Mrs. Gallipot condemns her husband's excessive attention and, as soon as he leaves, reads a letter from Laxton that encourages her to steal thirty pounds from him (which she appears more than happy to do). The implication is clear: Mr. Gallipot's effeminacy—his over fondness for his "honey Pru"—inverts the "proper" marital hierarchy as it places him in a submissive role to that of his wife. His inability to regulate his own gender performance seems to lead directly to Mrs. Gallipot's vulnerability to Laxton's

advances. Therefore, Mr. Gallipot's censure of his wife at the conclusion of Act IV serves to both critique Mrs. Gallipot for her infidelity *and* assert Mr. Gallipot's proper control of his wife.

The play's censure of Sir Alexander's behavior, as well as its critique of the citizen marriages, may at times offer commentary on contemporary marriage practices that both challenge and uphold conservative social norms. Despite this, *The Roaring Girl* largely leaves unquestioned the value of marriage as an institution by ultimately adhering to the typical plot conventions of romantic comedies. Early in the play, Sebastian Wengrave even offers a rather explicit description of the typical romantic comedy plot as it pertains to his own endeavors:

Though wildly in a labyrinth I go,
 My end is to meet thee. With a side wind
 Must I now sail, else I no haven can find,
 But both must sink forever. (I.i.96-99)

Here, Sebastian's description of his future actions aligns with the plot conventions of romantic comedies: a youth will work to overcome obstacles preventing him from wedding his beloved and ultimately secure his desired union by play's end. Sebastian's claim that his "end is to meet thee," i.e. Mary, simultaneously refers both to the purpose of romantic comedy's action—to unite the youths together in holy matrimony—and the value that such a plot explicitly places on that union. For by making marriage the literal "end" goal of the play, *The Roaring Girl* asserts marriage's status as an essential event in the early modern life cycle. Without marriage, the two "must sink forever" or, in other words, be doomed to unhappiness and possibly social ruin. As romantic comedy, the play narratively advances the central couple towards heterosexual marriage and thus upholds the institution as central to the fabric of early modern life.

Moll's support for Mary and Sebastian's union, despite her own aversion to the institution, adds to the sense that the play positively values marriage even as it satirizes some contemporary marriage practices. In IV.i., Moll facilitates a clandestine meeting between the two, claiming that she has chosen to help the couple since she "pitied [Mary] for name's sake, that a Moll / Should be so crossed in love, when there's so many / That owes nine lays apiece, and not so little" (68-70). She seems to have faith that somehow Mary and Sebastian's relationship stands above those exemplified by the citizen marriages or the lecherous relationships pursued by the city gallants. Indeed, Moll appears to believe Sebastian when he tells her "our loves are honest" (IV.i.42). Rather than challenge the entire patriarchal institution of marriage, Moll seems more than happy to ensure its success if it is free of exploitation and/or coercion. For Moll, marriage seems a fine "end" for those "poor ringdoves" who seem mutually desirous of the match (IV.i.75).

The presence of the less-than-perfect Openwork and Gallipot marriages, however, trouble the fantasy of wedded bliss that romantic comedies generally, and *The Roaring Girl* specifically, offer at their conclusions. The explicit dissatisfaction expressed by Mrs. Openwork and Mrs. Gallipot, and the lengths to which the characters in these marriages must go to maintain marital harmony, expose the fallacy that the "end"—the completion of the marriage ceremony—signals perpetual joy and happiness for those involved, even if their "loves are honest." By presenting an image of couples deeply dissatisfied with their unions, these marriages call into question the assumption embedded in romantic comedies that marriage presents a desirable future for *all* men and women.

Moll also explicitly questions the satisfaction marriage can bring despite her support of Sebastian and Mary's union. Moll famously claiming that she has

no humour to marry. I love to lie o' both sides o' th' bed myself;...a wife, you know, ought to be obedient, but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey; therefore I'll ne'er go about it...I have the head now of myself and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden loses one head and has a worse i' th' place.

(II.ii.37-45)

Moll refuses to relinquish her autonomy, unequivocally equating marriage with female submission. Like much of the marital conduct literature of the period, Moll knows marriage will require her obedience, but as she is already “the head now of myself” and “man enough for a woman,” she sees no point in joining the ranks of married women. Her statement playfully critiques marriage’s emphasis on female subordination while also directly challenging the notion that marriage is inherently superior to maidenhood. Indeed, Moll suggests that in its current iteration, marriage offers denigration rather than social advancement. For Moll, marriage’s insistence on obedience makes it “worse” than maidenhood and therefore she’ll “ne’er go about it.”

Such a speech foreshadows her later refusal to marry and general resistance to the institution of marriage. For Moll, early modern marriage’s demands on women make it incapable of living up to what she perceives as its promise—an institution that could, theoretically, allow for one to “lie o' both sides o' th' bed.” The citizen wives know too well the fallacy of Sebastian and Mary’s romanticized image of marriage. Moll also sees this and chooses to abstain at least, as we learn in the play’s final act, until marriage no longer threatens female agency. While it may occasionally be appropriate for individual couples like Mary and Sebastian, Moll refuses to enter marriage while the institution itself fails to live up to its promise of a superior future.

In this way, the play can be read as advocating *not* for marriage's dissolution, but more modestly for its future reform. Above all, the play operates under the fundamental premise that contemporary practices often lead to the types of marriages exemplified by the Openworks and Gallipots, rather than the presumably more equitable and satisfactory union of Mary and Sebastian. The play looks forward to Mary and Sebastian's match as one that, because it is "honest," stands above those witnessed elsewhere in the play. Moll's continued refusal to enter the institution herself, however, highlights the fact that even if *one* marriage has the chance to meet Moll's expectations, it is the exception and not the rule. As a satirical city comedy, *The Roaring Girl* includes depictions of dysfunctional marriages alongside the more ideal relationship between Mary and Sebastian to suggest that while marital equality is occasionally possible under current early modern marriage practices, much needs to be done before those practices which breed marital strife are eradicated from the institution.

But it is not only that Moll resists marriage; she importantly remains sexually chaste. Many of the play's characters assume that she is a woman of loose morals, with the gallant Laxton even presuming Moll is a prostitute and soliciting her for sex in II.i. Yet throughout the play Moll staunchly asserts her maidenhood. Challenging Laxton's advances in the play's longest speech (which I shall return to later in the chapter), for instance, Moll asserts that while she is "given to sport" and "often merry" she has "never yet / Had angling rod cast towards" her (III.i.104; 103). Likewise, after Moll agrees to play upon a viol de gamba (an instrument with long-held sexual connotations) for Sebastian and Mary, they engage in an exchange that, while filled with innuendo, ultimately provides Moll with another opportunity to assert her virginity:

Moll: I'll pay my part as well as I can. It shall ne'er be said I came into a gentleman's chamber and let his instrument hang by the walls!

Sebastian: Why, well said, Moll, I'faith. It had been a shame for that gentleman, then, that would have let it hung still and ne'er offered thee it.

Moll: There it should have been still, then, for Moll, for though the world judge impudently of me, I ne'er came into that chamber yet where I took down the instrument myself. (IV.i.87-95)

In a passage rife with sexual punning, Moll asserts here what she claims throughout the play: that despite her reputation, she has not lost her virtue. Other roaring girls might be less honorable, but, as Sebastian puts it: “she is loose in nothing but in mirth” (II.ii.181).

Moll's resistance to marriage as well as her perpetual virginity contribute to the play's overall critique of contemporary marriage practices by provocatively suggesting that there are alternatives for women outside of the heteronormative maid / wife / widow triad. Theodora Jankowski has even gone so far as to argue that Moll's chastity presents a queer challenge to patriarchal authority in that it troubles the very definition of “woman” by uncoupling it from marriage and, thus, suggesting a third gender beyond the binaries of “man” and “woman.” As I argue elsewhere, Moll's perpetual maidenhood and status as roaring “girl” also presents a queer challenge to reproductive futurity by enabling Moll to be read as what Kathryn Bond Stockton calls the “queer child”—a figure who “grows sideways” instead of up through the heteronormative life cycle (4).¹² Moll's perpetual maidenhood and status as “girl,” I argue, challenges the teleological forward advancement encouraged by heteronormativity.

Adding to these assessments of the import of Moll's virginity, however, I wish to argue that her perpetual maidenhood is also what enables a reading of the play's marriage critique as secular prophecy. For it is this trait that makes Moll a social outsider while also providing her with a certain level of moral authority, both of which are essential traits of early modern prophet

figures. This, in addition to the play's frequent deployment of language that resonates with popular prophetic literature, enables one to read in its critique of contemporary marriage practices a prophetic warning against the social and spiritual ruin that will befall early modern English society unless marriage practices are returned to a more equitable state.

That satire and prophecy share common aims has been long acknowledged. In her discussion of early modern city comedies, Gail Kern Paster asserts that the satiric playwright, like the author of the book of Revelation, is "moved to satire by the discrepancy between" the Old and New Jerusalem—the real and the ideal" (35). Similarly, Jan Wojcik and Raymond-Jean Frontain argue that both the prophet and the satirist "speak out concernedly to a degenerate society, calling destruction down upon the guilty members" (24). Both prophet and satirist envisions a reformed world lying just out of reach, separate yet similar to the fallen one presently inhabited. These texts speak to the desire to challenge contemporary social problems for the purpose of societal transformation, but prophecy places its reform in the context of Christian salvation, whereby refusal to heed the prophet's warning might unwittingly bring about one's untimely end or eternal damnation.

This is not to say that *The Roaring Girl* is, like the book of Revelation or the Bible's other prophetic books, invested in Christian eschatology. However, the fact that *The Roaring Girl* voices much of its marital critique through a character who bears the traits of figures often found in popular prophecy, in addition to the known generic links between satire and prophecy, enables a reading of the play's social critique that extends it into the realm of the prophetic. Moll's unique position among roaring girls as adamantly and perpetually chaste indeed presents a queer challenge to heteronormativity. But these traits, when considered alongside the play's other generic similarities with prophecy, allow *The Roaring Girl* to be read not only as a social

critique of marriage and its current problems but also as a secular prophecy. Moll's perpetual maidenhood helps the play agitate for the establishment of a marital New Jerusalem—a future that won't lead to the “chopping and changing” Moll fears.

But again, it is important to note the limits of the play's critique. For in suggesting that marriage will be a desirable end once the conditions for an equitable union are met, *The Roaring Girl* continues to privilege a teleological temporal mode whereby a heteronormative future (albeit a more equitable one) remains the most desired of social outcomes. Moll's continued placement outside of the marital economy, in addition to her resistance to narrative closure at play's end, however, suggests possibilities that expand beyond the heteronormative marital future she envisions (an idea I shall return to at the end of this chapter). But for now, let me provide some further context regarding the relationship between prophecy and satire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and *The Roaring Girl's* indebtedness to this tradition.

II

There are many ways in which those traits that mark Moll as unique among the play's characters align *The Roaring Girl* with early modern prophetic texts, especially when considered in light of the play's already satirical tone. Because of this, *The Roaring Girl* moves beyond mere satire and gains prophetic power when presenting its argument for marital reform, adhering to a typological temporal logic whereby, like in the book of Revelation, it is suggested that a “New Jerusalem” will eventually supplant the “Old” if present individuals heed the prophet's warning. In this reading, Moll becomes more than a social critic. Her censure takes on the air of prophecy, urging society forward towards her “doomsday” or a future where women have greater equality in marriage.

The generic similarities between satire and prophecy have long been recognized, particularly in terms of their emphasis on encouraging social reform. The Church of England clergyman John Downname, for instance, offers an illuminating general description of biblical prophecy: “First therefore they containe holy precepts, prescribed by God for the guiding and directing of men in the waies of godlinesse and righteousnesse” ; second, “they containe reprehensions and severe threatnings of grievous punishments against the transgressours of these holy precepts, and that both temporall and eternall”; third, “there are intermixed with these threatnings of common calamities, speciall consolations for those who continue in their integrity, and are not carried away with the universall deluge of wickednesse which overfloweth the land”; and finally, “they foretell the comming of the Messias [sic], who should be the Saviour of the world; for this was the maine end both of the Law & the Prophets” (2-3). Hosea’s prophecy in particular, Downname claims, typifies biblical prophecy as it admonishes the Israelites for their idolatry by using “divers arguments to perswade them to repentance...shewing also how they should repent and turne unto God” and finally by prophesying the coming “of Christ and of his kingdome, for the comforting of all those who did expect him, and did rest upon him for their salvation” (5). Hosea, as should all prophecies, offers the reader guidance in godly living, the threat of punishment for ignoring God’s will, hope for those who stay faithful, and the promise of the coming Messiah.

Although they tend to be less overtly explicit about Christ’s return, popular prophecies based on contemporary early modern events also fit a similar pattern, wherein some event seems to portend the downfall of a specific town, country, or the world if sinners refuse to repent for their wicked ways. Among early modern prophetic literature, one repeatedly sees references to miraculous events surrounding socially marginalized individuals (the elderly, children, women,

and the poor), the birth of misshapen children, and unexplainable celestial events. Of the first category, one might look to John Phillips's prose prophecy which recounts the tale of an eleven-year-old boy, William Withers, who awakens from a trance to declare that "the rypenesse of our sinnes was such and so great that without spedie repentance the day of our destruction was at hand." Of the second, one can find anonymous pamphlets recounting tales of ill-formed babes, suggesting the children's deformities are punishments for contemporary immorality.¹³ Of the last, one might look to Frances Shakelton's description of a blazing star that was sent to warn the world "of dreadfull warres, betweene God and those, that doe goe on still in wickednesse." Some prophetic texts even use elements of each category to offer their call to repentance.¹⁴ Although such texts differ in the way in which God's call to repentance appears, each interprets their notable event as a warning to its readers that they should shun wickedness and obey their sovereign Lord.

Comparing prophetic texts and their conventions to Puttenham's definition of satire makes clear the links between them. Puttenham defines satire as verse that places on display "the common abuses and vice of the people" so that such behavior might be censured and reformed. Like the satirist, both Hosea and the authors of popular prophetic texts call attention to the people's vices. Unlike the satirist, however, they explicitly draw attention to the spiritual stakes at hand. According to Puttenham, however, satire itself originally emphasized its message by attributing it to a divine source:

to make their admonitions and reproofs seeme graver and of more efficacie, they [satirists] made wise as if the gods of the woods, whom they called *Satyres* or *Silvanes*, should appeare and recite those verses of rebuke, whereas in deede they were but disguised persons under the shape of *Satyres* as who would say, these terrene and base

gods being conversant with mans affaires, and spiers out of all their secret faults: had some great care over man, & desired by good admonitions to reforme the evill of their life, and to bring the bad to amendment by those kinde of preachings, whereupon the Poets inventours of the devise were called *Satyristes*.(24-25; original emphasis)

Puttenham asserts that individuals feigning to be godlike creatures, Satyrs, delivered their message hoping that the threat of divine rebuke would better encourage the listeners to reform. They do so not to slander but out of abundant “care,” hoping their “preachings” will lead to altered behavior. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes the false etymological relationship between “satire” and “satyr” that permeated early modern English thought (“satyr” 1c). While no strict etymological link existed between the two words, “The confusion between the words *satiric* and *satyric* gave rise to the notion that the satyrs who formed the chorus of the Greek satyric drama had to deliver ‘satirical’ speeches” (“satyr” 1c). In satire, particularly in satirical drama, secular and sacred merge as the divine is used to underscore the importance of the speaker’s critique.¹⁵

Given prophecy’s association with social critique, it is perhaps unsurprising that some prophecy, like satire, was legally suppressed for the supposed safety of the realm. According to Keith Thomas, the first law of this kind was passed in 1541 or 1542, making it a felony to predict the future based on “heraldic devices or letters” in an individual’s name (397). This was eventually repealed in 1547, but a new Act against “Fonde and Phantasticall Propheesies” was passed in the year 1549 or 1550, and renewed in 1563 (Thomas 397). The Act did not forbid all forms of prophecy—general descriptions of portentous events, especially those with conservative moral messages, were less likely to be viewed as a threat to social order. But the Act did sentence individuals to one year of imprisonment and a fine of ten pounds if they were to

“advauce, publishe, and set forth by writing, printing, syngyng, or any other open speache or dede, to any person or persons, any fonde, phantasticall or false prophesie...to the intent thereby to make any rebellion, insurrection, dissention, losse of life, or other disturbaunce within this Realme, and other the Quenes dominions” (*Anno quinto* 51v-52r). Prophets spouting political prognostications were viewed as particularly threatening. For instance, Anne Askew, Edward Wightman, and Bartholomew Legate were all individuals who claimed God’s authority when offering their prophetic visions, and were eventually executed on charges of heresy. Likewise, Elizabeth Barton was charged with treason for her prophetic speech.¹⁶ If not executed, many individuals engaged in seditious speech in the name of prophecy were imprisoned. The state force exerted on supposed prophets underscores the threat state actors perceived in politically seditious speech during a time of great religious and monarchic upheaval.

Those texts engaged in popular prognostication, however, were far less likely to attract the attention of censors, and such works flourished throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁷ As with satirical texts, the key to preventing state censure appears to lie in the specificity of critique. The prophecies described above all offer a general social critique meant to call to the mind of each reader their unique sins and the need for repentance. These treatises are not directly critical of the state or its monarch, or even any particular religion. Instead, they are general chastisements of immorality defined broadly. They are to be taken seriously but to be applied at the level of individual spiritual practice.

As a citizen comedy, *The Roaring Girl* offers a satiric depiction of early modern London life, providing a general critique of behaviors that undermine an ordered state. Sir Alexander’s objection to Mary and Sebastian’s wedding stands as a rebuke of parents who would wrongfully prevent their children from achieving the paragon of heteronormativity: marriage. Likewise, the

citizen wives offer a censure of husbands and wives whose nonconforming gender roles threaten their marital harmony. But it is the play's inclusion of the notorious Moll Cutpurse to aid in offering this critique that adds potentially prophetic power to its social commentary. Moll is an amalgam of tropes and figures found in the prophetic literature of early modern England, turning *The Roaring Girl* from social satire to secular prophecy.

Like William Withers, or even the classical satyrs, Moll's status as social anomaly (a cross-dressing, marriage-refusing, lower-class woman) makes her prolific moralizing insights seem nothing if not divinely inspired, especially given their unlikely source. Take, for instance, the language used to describe Moll's penchant for dressing in men's clothes. Sir Alexander calls Moll a "A creature...nature hath brought forth / To mock the sex of woman" (II.i.128-129). She is a "strange thing" (I.ii.134), a "monster with two trinkets" (II.ii.79) and a "a thing / One knows not how to name; her birth began / Ere she was all made 'Tis woman more than man, / Man more than woman, and—which to none can hap— / The sun gives her two shadows to one shape (II.i.129-133). While such indictments make sense in the mouth of a character like Sir Alexander who views Moll as the downfall of his family's reputation, even Sebastian refers to Moll as "a creature / So strange in quality, a whole city takes / Note of her name and person" (I.i.100-102). This language aligns Moll with the tradition of portentous births and celestial signs by echoing the language used to discuss these figures in early modern English pamphlets. Moll's sartorial choices bolster her liminal status in the play and contribute to her notoriety in language that resonates with contemporary discourses of prophetic monstrosities.

Similarly, Sir Alexander's assessment that her cross-dressing makes her worse than a "blazing star" (I.ii.135) shining like a "beacon on a hill" aligns Moll with the tradition of prophetic, celestial signs (II.ii.140). According to Sir Alexander, Moll draws unwanted attention

to herself and her associates in a way damaging to their reputations. Yet it seems that Sir Alexander wrongfully assesses Moll's notoriety, since that which draws the most attention to Moll (her ambiguous gender) is precisely what enables her to capture the attention of those around her so that she may reveal her prophecy to the people. Sir Alexander reads Moll as a sign of his doom, and rightly so, for she signals the need to reform his and other characters' inequitable and predatory attitudes towards women. The attention she garners is put to righteous purpose.

Although the status of Moll's biological sex is in question among some of the play's characters, she is undoubtedly treated as female by others, including the gallant Laxton who so desperately wishes to find himself "nibbling with that wench" (II.i.177). But as I discuss above, the play supports Moll's assertion that she is a virtuous woman despite the other characters' assumptions. Therefore, it is also useful to consider the female prophet tradition and its implications for an understanding of Moll's prophetic tendencies. While most of the prophets and popular prophetic texts I have thus far discussed center around male figures, women had been historically associated with prophecy in both classical and biblical contexts. As Michele Osherow has shown, the Old Testament's praise of female prophets like Miriam and Deborah—the two women explicitly called prophets in the Old Testament—led to a somewhat positive valuation of women's prophetic powers in early modern England. For instance, Thomas Bentley's extensive compendium of admirable women links each woman's piety to her power of prophecy. Osherow also observes that the biblical descriptions of Miriam and Deborah as singing helped develop a tradition wherein female prophecy was associated with song (15, 85). These women provided biblical support to early modern authors and exegetes defending women's right to speak and to prophecy, despite the arguments to be found elsewhere for female silence.

The tradition of female prophecy has classical roots as well. In her discussion of the medieval prophetess Margery Kempe, Diane Watt notes many classical female prophet figures who contributed to the long-standing association between women and prophecy. They include “the Pythia at Delphi, the Greek oracle which flourished between 700 and 480 BC; the Sibyl, who directed Aeneas into the underworld in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and to whom were attributed some spurious cryptic verses; and Cassandra, granted the gift of prophecy by Apollo, who then decreed that no one should ever believe her” (Watt 23). Like Osherow, Watt observes that “prophecy could offer women a rare opportunity for direct involvement in the political sphere” precisely because it was viewed as a somewhat socially sanctioned form of female public speech (23). Women in classical, biblical, and early modern culture were, then, understood to have the capacity for, and even a predisposition towards, prophetic speech.

Moll’s forceful, verbal challenges to the play’s mistreatment of women can’t help but link Moll with the female prophet tradition, as does her maidenhood. For not only does the play present Moll as the most vocal of the play’s characters, but her virginity also ensures that her excessive speech is viewed as something other than an indication of sexual incontinence. Of all the play’s many characters, Moll speaks a total of 557 (or roughly 20%) of the play’s lines. The only other character who comes close to this many lines is Sir Alexander with 528, or 18%. Their voices compete for attention throughout *The Roaring Girl*, yet Moll comes out ahead in both quantity and quality, her righteous moral alignment sanctioning what might otherwise be understood as excessive female speech.

Her linguistic dominance is perhaps no more apparent than in III.i, the play’s central act, in which Moll delivers the longest single speech of the entire play. In this act Moll meets Laxton for what he erroneously believes will be a sexual encounter (for which he thinks he has already

paid). Moll instead challenges him to a duel, threatening that she “Shall lay thee up till doomsday” unless he draws his weapon (III.1.69-70). Here the audience receives the first explicit invocation of the apocalypse within the play. Then, when Laxton refuses to fight her, Moll unleashes upon him a sharp, biting critique through which she intends to “defy all men” (III.i.92). At 42 lines, it is twice as long as any other in *The Roaring Girl* and makes up roughly 25% of all of the lines in this scene. The sheer volume of words gives weight to her utterance in a play often crowded with characters speaking over each other in the bustling streets and shops of London.

That the speech is delivered in blank verse also signals its import to the reader. As is well known, Sir Philip Sidney claimed that poetry was the best form through which one might “teach” and “delight” his or her audience (1051). Poetry can “move men to take...goodness in hand” and “teach...them...that goodness whereunto they are moved” (1052). Blank verse self-consciously calls attention to its elevation above the quotidian while also mimicking everyday speech—it is *like* common speech, but is *not* common speech. Presenting Moll’s speech in blank verse stresses the passage’s moralizing content and elevates its status above the scene’s other, prose-speaking characters.

The long-held historical association between poetry and the prophetic also adds an additional layer of import to Moll’s words. When discussing poetry’s origins, Sidney observes: “Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words, *vaticinium* and *vaticinari* is manifest: so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge” (1048). Although Sidney is careful to label Roman prophecy as “superstition,” he nonetheless claims it shows “the great reverence those wits were held in; and altogether not without ground, since both the oracles of

Delphos and Sibylla's prophecies were wholly delivered in verses" (1048). Likewise, John Napier's popular *A plaine discovery of the whole Revelation of Saint John* (1593) points to this association especially in the context of female prophets.¹⁸ Although Sybil is a secular prophet, Napier nonetheless appends his exegesis on the book of Revelation with some of her poems "because of [Sybilla's] famous antiquitie, approved veritie, and harmonicall contentment thereof with the scriptures of God, and specially with the 18 Chapter of holy Revelation" (Tr). Linking John's prophecies with that of "this Sibyll," Napier demonstrates the powerful link understood to exist between the poetic and the prophetic, even across the secular/scriptural divide. Moll, like the Roman poets, bears prophetic truths in poetic form. And in this central speech, that truth is that contemporary social practices unfairly oppress Moll's fellow females.

Later in the play, Moll even offers her social commentary in the form of dream songs, further aligning her with the female prophet tradition. Patricia Crawford has observed how early modern dreams could be aligned with prophecy depending on their perceived source, citing a number of early modern women whose prophecies were conveyed through dreams ("Women's Dreams" 132-133). Early modern Christians would also have been familiar with biblical female prophets who were spoken to in dreams, including Pilate's wife who, at Christ's sentencing, begged her husband to spare Christ since she had "suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him" (Matthew 27:19). So, when in Act IV Moll performs two songs she claims are based on a "dream," it becomes possible to place Moll in this long tradition.

After she facilitates a secret meeting between Sebastian and Mary at the Wengrave household, Moll (at the behest of Sebastian) begins to play the viol and perform the following song:

I dream there is a mistress,

And she lays out the money.

She goes unto her sisters;

She never comes at any.

She says she went to th'Burse for patterns;

You shall find her at Saint Kathern's,

And comes home with never a penny. (IV.i.104-110)

The first of two, this “dream” has the distinct character of a bawdy ditty. Its rhyme scheme marks it as a playful sort of limerick, and its centered printing within the play draws attention to its generic singularity from the rest of the text.¹⁹ That being said, its content, as well as that of the song to follow, aligns it with the types of social critique on offer elsewhere in the play. This song describes a woman of potentially loose morals who, although she spends her money to ill purpose (on her “sisters” and at “Saint Kathern’s” – a tavern), she remains chaste. For as the last line makes clear, this “mistress” leaves the tavern penniless, a statement that would not be true for a woman selling her sexuality as one might suspect she does, given her other, objectionable behavior.

Following this song, Moll offers to “dream again” and sings again:

Here comes a wench will brave ye,

Her courage was so great;

She lay with one o'the navy;

Her husband lying I'the Fleet.

Yet oft with him she caviled.

I wonder what she ails?

Her husband's ship lay graveled

When hers could hoise up sails;
 Yet she began, like all my foes,
 To call 'whore' first; for so do those.

A pox of all false tails!

Unlike the woman described in the previous song, the figure here is presented as a hypocrite—a woman who, like Moll's own detractors, accuse her of immorality while they themselves engage in sexually lascivious behavior. Like all of Moll's "foes," this woman is one that is first to "call 'whore'" or point out perceived moral depravity in others, when women like the previous song's "mistress" are wholly undeserving. Through these two "dream" visions, Moll presents an argument for one of the key social problems critiqued throughout the play and, in doing so, she further links her character with the tradition of female prophecy.

Given the many ways in which Moll resonates with contemporary prophetic tropes and traditions, it seems possible to read Moll's social critique as more than mere satire. This is not to say that Dekker and Middleton *intentionally* cast Moll as a secular prophet sent to chastise the English people for their social ills; the playwrights more likely hoped to capitalize on Moll's notoriety for financial gain. But by choosing to make such a notorious figure the central voice of their play's social critique, Middleton and Dekker inadvertently add prophetic weight to a play that, by virtue of its generic precedents, already bears traits resonant with the prophetic tradition. Furthermore, Moll's frequent delivery of lines in forms generically associated with prophetic verse lends her an additional air of the otherworldly. Therefore, by the time the play presents its most explicit prophetic utterance at the end of act five, the reader should be less than surprised that Moll offers a prophetic vision to those around her. Attending to the form of Moll's act five speech further reveals its prophetic import.

III

This chapter has already discussed the extensive nature of Moll's speech throughout *The Roaring Girl*. In addition to the sheer quantity of lines given to Moll's character, she also deploys the greatest variety of poetic forms of any character in the play. Whether straightforward prose, refined blank verse, or pithy song, the form of Moll's remarks appears to change depending upon the occasion of their delivery, linking form and content in ways that add additional weight to her utterances. This is perhaps no truer than for the speech with which I began this chapter and that shall serve as the focus of this final section. As I have already begun to suggest, Moll's final diegetic speech can be read as a prophetic utterance meant to encourage social reform. A reading of it as such is strengthened when one contextualizes it within the tradition of prophetic verse.

Although I have thus far presented as evidence popular prophecies written in prose, there were many verse prophecies circulating in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. Of note is a ballad that overviews a prophecy from "Calebbe Shillocke" that appeared in 1607. Derived from a 1606 prose account out of Italy by Andrea Buonaccorsi, "Calebbe Shillocke" warns against a myriad of natural disasters doomed to afflict Christian nations if their people refuse to repent. The ballad begins:

TO Caleb Shillocks Propheesies,

Who list to lend an eare,

Of grieffe, and great calamitie,

A sad Discourse shall heare:

Of Plagues (for sinne) shall soone ensew

Prognosticated by this Jew:

O Lord, Lord in thy mercy,

Hold thye heavy hand.

The expressed purpose of this ballad is to catalogue the “calamities” that await the ungodly if they do not heed the warning and beg for God’s mercy as he casts judgment. The refrain featured at the end of each stanza heavily reinforces the intent of this tract—to steer the godly toward salvation. Only through searching the “wonderous thinges” can Christians begin to discern God’s mysteries—doing so helps Christians “flie those deadly sinnes” and keep their consciences free. Without adherence to Calebbe Shillocke’s warning, 1607 might be a particularly challenging year.

The anonymous author of *Miracle upon Miracle. Or A true relation of the great floods which happened in Coventry* (1607) lists “Calebbe Shillock’s Prophecy” as one among many contemporary prognostications not to be trusted, yet the text clearly adheres to many hallmarks of the prophetic genre. First, Jewish individuals were an extreme minority in early modern England, having been famously expelled from the realm in the thirteenth century. Akin to a cross-dressing character like Moll, Jews were objects of fascination, derision, and the source of social anxiety.²⁰ Second, the text explicitly marks itself as prophecy, and specifically one with connotations of female unruliness, when it suggests it should be *sung* to the tune known as “Bragandarie,” a popular (but now lost) ballad melody.²¹ As Sarah Williams observes in her recent study, Bragandary often “accompanied narratives describing witches, demonically possessed, abusive husband-murderers, prophecies, and supernatural wonders” (75). A ballad written for Bragandary would immediately bear connotations of “feminine disorder, the supernatural, and verbally abusive, not to mention murderous, wives” (79). The ballad’s topic and tune combine to create a supernatural aura that is also implicitly linked with the female

prophetic tradition. This prophetic ballad deploys hallmarks of the genre to convey its warning and encourage social reform, specifically calling attention to the feminine connotations of such prophecies.

While “Caleb Shillock” stands out as a rare example of extant prophecy in ballad form, examples of verse prophecy can be found elsewhere in early modern English literature. Dramatic literature, for example, contains many examples of prophecy, with perhaps the most famous coming from Shakespeare’s *King Lear* (1606).²² In Act III scene ii, Lear converses with his Fool during a tremendous storm, often read as a pathetic fallacy of Lear’s imminent destruction. At the end of the brief scene, the Fool concludes, “...I’ll / speak a prophecy ere I go” which he then delivers in fourteen rhymed lines:

When priests are more in word than matter,
 When brewers mar their malt with water,
 When nobles are their tailors’ tutors,
 No heretics burned but wenches’ suitors,
 When every case in law is right,
 No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
 When slanders do not live in tongues,
 Nor cutpurses come not to throngs,
 When usurers tell their gold i’ th’ field,
 And bawds and whores do churches build,
 Then shall the realm of Albion
 Come to great confusion;
 Then comes the time, who lives to see ’t,

That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time. (III.ii.80-96)

Here the Fool offers a prophecy he attributes to the future Merlin, prognosticating England's "confusion" or destruction which, he paradoxically claims, shall be caused by improved morality.

The Norton edition of *King Lear* notes the passage's connection to Chaucer by drawing attention to its similarities with a poem ascribed to the poet by George Puttenham.²³ The editors point to the Chaucerian verses "When faith failes in Priestes sawes, / And Lords hestes are holden for lawes...Then shall the Realme of Albion / Be brough to great confusion" to argue that the Fool's speech illustrates "merismus," or the rhetorical strategy of listing many parts to describe a whole (186-188). More importantly for this study, however, the editors' implicitly place the Fool's prophecy within a tradition stemming at least from medieval literature, wherein the rhetorical structure of "when / then" is deployed to, in Hallett Smith's words, "underscore the hypothetical nature of the situation that such a prophecy describes" (69). Moll's own concluding speech deploys this form, enabling the titular character to assert that she will only marry when "Gallants void from sergeants' fear / Honesty and truth unslandered, / Woman manned but never pandered" (V.ii.223-225). In other words, she refuses to marry until her conditions are met. Moll leaves the fulfillment of her prophecy in even further limbo, however, when she refuses to finish her construction with "then" and instead opts for the subjunctive "if," saying "If my mind be then not varied / Next day following, I'll be married" (V.ii.229-230). Moll playfully rejects the possible closure posed by the when/then construction, shifting to a when/if—a much less determined trajectory (the implications of which I shall return to at this chapter's conclusion).

The comparison of Moll's prophecy with the lyrical "when/then" construction of Lear's Fool's prophecy provides but one piece of evidence regarding the former's ability to be read as such. A consideration of her prophecy's meter provides further evidence. The other prophecies discussed above appear in ballad meter, iambic pentameter, or some form of rhymed irregularity. Moll's speech, however, notably appears in trochaic tetrameter—four foot lines, each containing one stressed and unstressed syllable. This meter often appears in early modern literature within the context of the fantastical and supernatural. For example, the fairies of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595/96) often speak in trochaic tetrameter. Take, for instance, Oberon's incantation as he squeezes juice from an enchanted flower into the eyes of his wife, Titania: "What thou seest when thou dost wake, / Do it for thy true-love take, / Love and languish for his sake: / Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, ... / Wake when some vile thing is near (II.ii.27-30, 34). Here the fairy king speaks in the same trochaic tetrameter found throughout Moll's speech. Notably, it is reserved in this play for the delivery of a spell. Elsewhere in the play the fairies speak in blank verse, but the poet reserves trochaic tetrameter for moments of heightened import.

As the reader may notice, the above lines appear to be missing the final syllable of the last foot. Complete trochaic tetrameter includes an ultimate, un-emphasized stress, yet Oberon's incantation appears in what is known as catalectic trochaic tetrameter—a line truncated by the absence of the final syllable of the final foot. Most of the lines in Moll's speech are also catalectic, or incomplete. There are several reasons why one might prefer to leave the verse catalectic, most notably the fact that it completes the line with a masculine rhyme. But also, leaving the line semi-formed keeps it open-ended, pointing to a future yet to be fulfilled. The

catalectic line draws explicit attention to the fact that what remains is incomplete, and that what is to come remains unknown.

Other supernatural beings besides fairies are known to speak in trochaic tetrameter. As David Kranz observes, another of Shakespeare's supernatural characters—the witches of *Macbeth*—deploy catalectic trochaic tetrameter as well. Act I.i memorably begins with the following exchange:

First Witch: When shall we three meet again

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch: When the hurlyburly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch: That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch: Where the place?

Second Witch: Upon the heath.

Third Witch: There to meet with Macbeth. (I.i.8)

Once more, we witness the deployment of a “when” construction in catalectic trochaic tetrameter, although the witches close their lines with a spatial, as opposed to temporal conclusion (“there” as opposed to “then”). Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker deploy this meter elsewhere in their oeuvre, always when giving voice to otherworldly or magical characters.²⁴ Whether fairy, witch, or some other magically-inclined character, trochaic tetrameter appears the verse of choice for the depiction of otherworldly creatures and social outsiders which Moll, the perpetually virginal, cross-dressing roaring girl, clearly is.

Moll's final diegetic speech, then, resonates with these prophetic, supernatural associations. Like the witches in *Macbeth*, Moll offers a secular prophecy of a time to come. Her

speech marries the secular and the spiritual so as to advocate for the fulfillment of a superior future, one that offers women more equitable treatment in the marriage market. Unlike the time in which the play takes place, Moll looks forward to one where “honesty and truth” are “unslandered,” and “woman manned but never pandered” (V.ii.224-225). Moll herself cannot marry until this future is realized. Her words here and throughout the play encourage movement in that direction. Unlike *Macbeth*, however, *The Roaring Girl* does not include the fulfillment of Moll’s prophecy within the play. Indeed, by play’s end Moll has done much to uphold patriarchal social order. For although her prophecy calls for the end of female mistreatment, it obviously remains, as is evidenced by Moll’s continued refusal to marry. The presence of both catalectic verse and end-stopped rhyme emphasizes this tension—the verse, like the play itself, emphasizes *both* the possibility of a future free from social inequalities, *and* the limits of her future vision. The final lines of Moll’s speech (“If my mind be then no varied, / Next day following, I’ll be married”) eschew catalexis all together, completing the line with the final unstressed syllable. Therefore, while Moll deploys the subjunctive “If,” which suggests potential freedoms even beyond a marital future, the lack of catalexis and the inclusion of end-stop punctuation (and a final period, no less) threaten to undermine the potential for a superior future Moll seems to desire.

Likewise, Sir Alexander’s praise in the final scene of what he perceives to be the restoration of social order also exerts normative energy on the play’s conclusion. Upon discovering that Sebastian has married Mary Fitzallard and not Moll, the patriarch offers a prayer of thanksgiving to all onstage (which, at this point, is the play’s entire cast):

Blessings eternal, and the joys of angels,
Being your peace here to be signed in heaven!

How short my sleep of sorrow seems now to me
 To this eternity of boundless comforts,
 That finds no want but utterance and expression! (V.ii.178-182)

Sir Alexander describes his joy in imagery that resonates with descriptions of Christian salvation. His prior state was a “sleep of sorrow,” yet now he finds “blessings eternal, and the joys of angels.” He has entered an “eternity of boundless comforts,” an ineffable, spiritual realm that echoes the language of spiritual fulfillment. Sir Alexander laments that “Sorrow and willful rashness grew like films” over his eyes, but “now so clear / I see the brightness of thy worth appear.” (V.ii.198-200). This is Sir Alexander’s conversion. Like the man whose blindness Jesus cures in John, 9:1-41, Sir Alexander “was blind” but now can see, and what he sees is *his* version of time’s desired trajectory, which is the restoration of patriarchal social order.

Moll makes sure to say to Sir Alexander, “Now are you gulled as you would be. / Thank me for’t; / I’d a forefinger in’t,” asserting her guiding hand in the achievement of Sir Alexander’s “eternity of boundless comforts” (V.ii.172-174). Like the prophet, Moll aids those around her in recognizing their own faults so they might repent their transgressions. Moll later articulates her role as “simple service” performed for the benefits of both the younger and elder Wengrave, a statement that calls to mind the tradition of Roman New Comedy from which the play derives (V.ii.211). But she has largely operated in service of re-establishing the normative social order. Sir Alexander rejoices *because* that order is restored as his son marries a socially appropriate match—one that will ensure the continued legacy of the Wengrave name. Moll, Sir Alexander believes, has enabled the characters’ entrance into a future that looks strikingly like the present of early modern London.

The play's final diegetic speech, delivered by Sir Alexander, further seeks to suggest that all is now well in the London marriage market. As the characters gather around, Sir Alexander entreats them:

Come, worthy friends, my honorable lord,
 Sir Beauteous Ganymede, and noble Fitzallard,
 And you, kind gentlewomen, whose sparkling presence
 Are glories set in marriage—beams of society,
 For all your loves give lustre to my joys.
 The happiness of this day shall be remembered
 At the return of every smiling spring;
 In my time now 'tis born, and may no sadness
 Sit on the brows of men upon that day,
 But as I am, so all go pleased away! (V.ii.266-275).

Sir Alexander's concluding remarks seek to erase the challenges the play has elsewhere posed to heteronormativity. Despite his attempt to underscore the reestablishment of social order, however, Sir Alexander's assertion of his temporal ownership over Sebastian and Mary's marriage undermines his claims. As he concludes his speech, he declares, "In my time now 'tis born," a phrase that gestures to the limited scope of the play's successes. Sir Alexander tries to inscribe the reader/audience within his own "blessings eternal," insisting all are now "as I am." The play's conclusion satisfies Sir Alexander by resolving the marriage of his son. However, it still leaves unresolved the conditions which led to the citizens' marital strife and the gallant's lecherous behavior. Sir Alexander assumes his repentance is enough to save the degenerate

world, but especially because of Sir Alexander's rashness and bad judgment throughout the play, his words ring hollow.

Even more than this, Moll's presence on stage after the play's formal conclusion both exposes the limits of Sir Alexander's attempts at narrative closure and suggests the possibility for a future not limited by the heterosexism of romantic comedy's teleology. Moll's epilogue serves as an apology for the play, arguing that as much as it sought to satisfy the audience, it is impossible to "please all" (30). If audience members are disappointed with the play's depiction of the roaring girl, however, "The Roaring Girl herself, some few days hence, / Shall on this stage give larger recompense" (35-36). By breaking the fourth wall, Moll concludes the play with an act that gestures beyond the play's limited temporal and romantic scope. Her action does not stop with Sir Alexander's concluding couplet or the play's final coupling of Mary and Sebastian. She continues on, expanding beyond the limits of the play's formal conclusion in a gesture that suggests possible futures beyond that which is presented at play's end. The inability of romantic comedy's generic conventions to contain "The Roaring Girl herself" gestures to the inability of the plays' narrative to contain all forms of desire and their presumed "end."

Extant court records show that the "real" Moll Cutpurse, Mary Frith, did appear on the Fortune's stage—an event for which she was criminally tried. What's more, Mary Frith is also known to have married a few years after the play's debut, succumbing to the heteronormative future resisted by her theatrical namesake. But the play's epilogue nevertheless underscores the ineffectual nature of Sir Alexander's attempt at narrative closure and his suggestion that a superior marital future has been achieved. Like the "real" Mary Frith, the marital future envisioned by Moll Cutpurse remains unfulfilled at play's end. The ambiguity the epilogue poses to the play's conclusion resonates with the ambiguities of Moll's "when / then" speech as the

text's attempts at narrative closure cannot completely suppress the potential also to be found in its prophetic message. Through the enactment of social reform, England might one day become a New Jerusalem—one where marriage no longer requires the subordination witnessed throughout the play. Individuals may even abstain from the institution all together, theoretically presuming a future that offers women social roles not tied to the duties of wife and mother, or even heterosexuality. Like all prophecies, however, their fulfillment relies on contemporary reform. And like Moll, we continue to wait.

Chapter 2—“Deere Spouse of Christ”: Typology and Spiritual Marriage in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*

Aemilia Lanyer, like the “real” Moll Cutpurse, Mary Frith, was among the nearly two thirds of early modern women who left maidenhood behind and eventually married. Unlike most women from the period (and men, I should add), however, Lanyer left her imprint on the historical record in the form of her published book of poetry, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611). *Salve Deus* is comprised of three distinct sections: eleven dedications addressed largely to noble women, the titular work which takes the form of an extensive devotional poem, and a concluding country-house poem titled “The Description of Cooke-ham.” Lanyer’s book does not appear to have had much impact on the literary scene in the time of its publication—it was not printed beyond its first edition, and there is scant record of readership. Nonetheless, Lanyer’s book has received abundant critical attention from feminist scholars since the 1980s who see it as a rich textual testament to female agency in the early modern period.

The earliest studies of *Salve Deus* focused most of their attention on gender and female community in Lanyer’s poem—an unsurprising fact given her text’s explicit gestures to women as a collective body, and her stated desires to defend women from slanderers of their sex.¹ Paralleling developments in feminist criticism, scholars since have drawn attention to the importance of nuancing any claims of feminist unity in Lanyer’s work with attention to the influence of class and the demands of the literary marketplace on her poem.² It is among this latter body of scholarship that this chapter can be situated. Keeping in mind the typological associations of marriage in early modern England, this chapter will argue that Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* attempts to offer her readers an alternative, spiritual marriage with Christ that counters the unequal, temporal marriages of early modern England. Although the text cannot possibly enact that which it seeks to achieve—the ability for women to eschew ungodly

marriages and their own patriarchal subordination—it nonetheless clearly outlines the insufficiency of most early modern marriages to live up to the relationship of which they are supposed to be a type: that of Christ and the Church. Despite the text’s seemingly spiritual focus, one must also keep in mind that Lanyer’s project is always informed by her own temporal desire for patronage; her argument that her dedicatees might be able to free themselves from their temporal marriages speaks to Lanyer’s assumption that such a proposition would be attractive to the specific women she addresses and, thus, make her more likely to win their favor. Lanyer may open a space for women to righteously challenge their earthly spouses, but her argument to do so is carefully chosen with her specific audience, and their own struggles with patriarchal restrictions, in mind.

Lanyer’s text is perhaps an obvious one to include in a project invested in the relationship between gender and typology in the period, as it has been well established by literary scholars that typology serves as a central paradigm through which Lanyer wrote *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. John Rogers, for instance, has persuasively argued that through Lanyer’s dedicatory poem to Mary Sidney, the author presents her poetic work as the typological supersession of the psalms written by her would-be patroness (“The Passion”). According to Rogers, Lanyer’s poetic description of the Passion serves “as the Christian typological fulfillment of Mary Sidney’s Hebraic achievement,” just as Sidney herself superseded her own brother, Sir Philip Sidney, after his death (“The Passion” 445).

Whereas Rogers limits his argument to the presence of typology in one dedication, Marie Loughlin usefully traces the influence of biblical typology on *Salve Deus* as a whole, arguing that

Lanyer aims at producing a typological and even apocalyptic genealogy of women: typological in the sense that the poem's Old Testament women become types for its New Testament and contemporary women; apocalyptic in the sense that the poem depicts woman's history as a teleological progression from the times of the Old Testament to those of the New Testament and finally beyond time itself into her glorious future union with Christ. (135)

Lanyer presents The Countess of Cumberland in particular, Loughlin argues, as the "apotheosis" of this genealogy, finally taking "her place beside Sheba, that representative of Old Testament womanly faith, at the foot of Christ's judgement throne" (138). Beyond focusing on the role played by the Countess of Cumberland in *Salve Deus*, Loughlin also draws attention to Lanyer's dedication to Mary Sidney, Susan Bertie and her daughter, as well as Anne Clifford, to demonstrate how typology enables Lanyer to place her dedicatees in a typological genealogy that both offers spiritual elevation and validates their temporal trials (such as the dispute over Anne Clifford's inheritance).

Both Rogers's and Loughlin's arguments are indispensable for their thoughtful consideration of typology's presence in Lanyer's text, usefully underscoring the importance of typology for Lanyer as a paradigm that informs the many disparate parts of her literary work.³ However, while each essay emphasizes how typology provides Lanyer and her dedicatees a means of authorial and spiritual inheritance, neither acknowledges the profound implications of this paradigm on Lanyer's presentation of marriage. Other scholars including Aschah Guibbory and Theresa DiPasquale have taken up the issue of marriage in Lanyer's work. Guibbory argues that Lanyer's text proposes that a celibate life focused on devotion to Christ is the only way to circumvent early modern patriarchal subjection, while DiPasquale amends Guibbory's claim and

argues that Lanyer's "embrace of celibacy is not a rejection of men as objects of desire; it is a rejection of men as predatory lovers (who violently pursue women as the objects of their own desire) and as Pauline husbands (who insist upon ruling their wives)" (358). Both essays usefully attend to *Salve Deus*'s presentation of marriage in a way that enriches a reading of Lanyer's feminist politics. Failure to understand the centrality of typology to Lanyer's rejection of early modern patriarchal attitudes towards marriage, however, leaves even persuasive arguments like these lacking, as typology enables the poet to offer a more profound, spiritually significant critique than their arguments allow.

As I outlined in my project's introduction, marriage was understood in early modern England as an act that enabled the engaging couple to become types, like Adam and Eve, of Christ and his relationship with individual Christians, communicated through the sacrament of communion. This, however, presumes a charitable and loving relationship between Adam and Eve appropriate for an interpretation of Christ as a second Adam. Lanyer's treatment of Adam and Eve, and her general presentation of marriage, I will argue, demonstrate the failure of contemporary marriage to provide early modern individuals, and women in particular, with the possibility of recapitulating in their own lives the relationship ideally experienced between Adam and Eve. Instead, centuries of misreading have corrupted marriage into a state tinged with tyranny. For marriage to operate in a way that places women in the narrative of sacred history, it must first conform to the model presented in Genesis, the one currently corrupted by Lanyer's contemporaries.

In this way, *Salve Deus* is not unlike *The Roaring Girl* in its social critique—both texts suggest that marriage as practiced in early modern England is far from the institution designed by God and, therefore, can offer little in the way of salvation for its participants. However, *Salve*

Deus's attention to real early modern women who have already entered the married state—women already joined to their husbands in holy matrimony—plus the argument's presentation in a religious poetic form and Lanyer's status as a female author, all add rhetorical and spiritual weight to her presentation of the problem(s) of early modern marriage. For Lanyer, this is not a dramatic exaggeration of social ills for the purpose of critique; it is a profound challenge to contemporary theology through a familiar poetic form that bears significant spiritual and social consequences for herself and her dedicatees. For these reasons, *Salve Deus* proves a provocative counterpoint to Middleton and Dekker's treatment of marriage and its typological associations. Instead of the indefinite deferral of appropriately fulfilling marriage, Lanyer offers Christ to her readers as He who can provide a fulfilling marriage *now*, despite the inadequacies of temporal marriage. And unlike Loughlin, who claims such a union must wait until the second coming, I argue that Lanyer provocatively presents this as an immediate possibility for her dedicatees, especially through textual engagement with her book.

I

From the text's opening pages, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* depicts an ambivalent relationship between women and the patriarchal networks in which they find themselves. After presenting the collection's title and its contents boldly, the title page claims the text is "Written by Mistris Aemilia Lanyer, Wife to Captaine Alfonso Lanyer Servant to the Kings Majestie."⁴ The title page presents Lanyer's marital status in unambiguous terms, announcing her as "Wife" and naming her husband explicitly in a way that situates Lanyer, even as a female author, safely contained by patriarchal networks. Furthermore, this authorial statement reflects contemporary theories of patriarchy: Aemilia and Alfonso, in their marriage, mirror the servitude that Alfonso provides as subject to the King. Despite the potential anxieties surrounding the social

order that female publication could cause, the authorial description on the title page works to mitigate that anxiety by placing the Lanyers in a properly deferential position in England's hierarchically ordered society.

Despite this, Lanyer's first dedication "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie," immediately begins to undo this work. As Mihoko Suzuki observes, while Lanyer's first dedication clearly acknowledges early modern social hierarchy in its choice of addressee in Queen Anne, Lanyer does not mention the King himself. Instead, Lanyer spends the dedication—one of her longest at twenty-seven six-line stanzas—praising the Queen's virtues and even suggesting that the Queen mirrors Christ himself (Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects* 49, 44). Additionally, her dedication to the Queen repeatedly references the superiority of God and Christ over temporal kings, undermining the authority of those who hold earthly rule. Of course, this is not remarkable in itself—it was a common (and theologically necessary) belief that God was King of all. However, when read next to Lanyer's title page, her first dedication begins to outline one of the central argumentative threads of her text: that temporal hierarchies, both political and domestic, hold little weight when compared to God and Christ's spiritual offerings.

Early in her dedication, for instance, Lanyer entreats the Queen to "Looke in this Mirrour of a worthy Mind" claiming, "Here may your sacred Majestie behold / That mightie Monarch both of heav'n and earth, / He that all Nations of the world controld, / Yet tooke our flesh in base and meanest berth" (37, 43-46). The enjambment of the first two lines connects the spiritual and temporal realm in a continuous flow of power between the Queen's "Majestie" and the "mightie Monarch" or Christ, yet the alliteration between "sacred Majestie" and "mightie Monarch" helps underscore the fact that it is the Queen's "sacred" or spiritual position, and not the worldly "Majestie" one might expect to see praised, that makes the Queen a worthy object of veneration.

Lanyer's dedication to Queen Anne continues in this vein, emphasizing the disparity between earthly and heavenly nobility. For according to Lanyer, Christ alone

is Crowne and Crowner of all Kings,

The hopefull haven of the meaner sort,

Its he that all our joyfull tidings brings

Of happie raigne within his royall Court:

Its he that in extremity can give

Comfort to them that have no time to live. (49-54)

In a passage that challenges the hierarchical deference exemplified in the title page's authorial description, Lanyer asserts Christ's ability to offer "joyfull tidings" to the "meaner sort" who, with their exclusion from exclusive earthly social preferment, can hope to "raigne within his royall Court." As critics have noted, such lines cannot help but ring slightly disingenuous, as it is well known from Simon Forman's recorded meetings with Lanyer that she very much did long for the days she had spent at court as the mistress of Henry Carey (first Baron Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain under Queen Elizabeth) and judged her husband harshly for his inability to secure the king's preferment through his military service.⁵ And, most obviously, Lanyer's entire textual project seems geared towards securing literary patronage—a means of earthly social advancement. Nevertheless, it is clearly not to the male-governed patriarchal system, at least in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, that Lanyer appeals for advancement. Lanyer instead directs her energies towards praising noble female patronesses and their spiritual gifts, rather than their worldly wealth and position.

Lanyer's dedication to Queen Anne continues to undermine patrilineage when it shifts its attention to the Princess Elizabeth. Lanyer refers to Anne's only daughter as the "patterne of all

Beautie, / The very modell of your Majestie, / Whose rarest parts enforceth Love and Duty, / The perfect patterne of all Pietie” (91-94). Lanyer eschews any references to the Queen’s male heirs, who stood to inherit the crown of England. But again, it is not this “Majestie” that Lanyer’s text emphasizes. Instead, it is that which Queen Anne promulgates, which we know from the earlier stanza is of the “sacred” variety. “To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie” praises Elizabeth as heir to the Queen’s spiritual gifts, for they, rather than the earthly hierarchy expressed on the text’s title page, “enforceth Love and Duty.”

Thus far, then, Lanyer’s first dedication undermines patriarchal social networks by emphasizing the superiority of spiritual gifts which, as this dedication argues, are most prominently found in the female members of the Stuart court. From here, the text will continue to downplay the temporal, male-controlled political sphere and emphasize her dedicatees’ unique fitness as members of Christ’s kingdom. The use of this rhetorical strategy to curry favor with her dedicatees makes sense when one considers that these women, both the aforementioned and those to come, would have been intimately familiar with the constraints placed on women (even those with elevated social status). Leeds Barroll, for example, has characterized Queen Anne as a woman who, at times, endured great strife between her and her husband, James I. And it is well known that Lanyer’s principal dedicatee, the Lady Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland, and her daughter, Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, were also intimately familiar with the constraints facing women regarding their relationship to the political sphere. The battle over Anne’s inheritance would occupy much of the Countess’s life, causing tension between Anne and her husband, Richard Sackville, and James I’s courtiers.⁶ Indeed, Clifford’s life was shaped by the land debates between her mother and the controllers of her father’s estate from her childhood.

Likewise, Lanyer's dedicatee Arabella Stuart would also have known the frustrations of being a woman in a man's courtly world. Stuart was the first cousin to James VI of Scotland, and her grandmother was first cousin to Elizabeth I, giving Arabella strong ties to the English throne upon Elizabeth's death. In fact, she was often suspected of being involved in plots to usurp James after he had ascended the English throne. Stuart married William Seymour in a clandestine ceremony at Greenwich Palace in 1610, a union that dangerously strengthened Arabella's monarchical claims.⁷ After an exciting few days of imprisonment and escape, Arabella was finally escorted to the Tower where she would remain until her death on 25 September 1615.⁸

And even Lanyer herself had reason to be familiar with the customs and constraints of patriarchal political control. Despite the possible social marginalization that could have arisen from her family's Jewish heritage and status as professional musicians, Lanyer nonetheless became the mistress of Henry Carey, enabling her to move in courtly circles throughout her teens and early twenties. Yet the pregnancy and child (named Henry) that resulted from her affair ended her social ascent; on 18 October 1592, Lanyer married Alfonso Lanyer, a court musician with ties to the Bassano family in attempts to cover the affair (Woods xviii). If we are to believe Simon Forman's characterization of Lanyer's visits to him in 1597, she seems largely dissatisfied with her husband's social rank. No longer was she "favored much of her mati [majestie, Queen Elizabeth] and of mani noble men" she tells him, apparently lamenting her bygone days when her affair placed her in close contact with influential men and women (a longing she will continue to express throughout *Salve Deus*) (Woods quoting Foreman xviii).⁹

Even after her marriage to Lanyer, the poet does appear to have continued to hope for upward mobility. In a meeting with Forman on 16 June 1597 she enquires as to whether her

husband “shall com to Any preferment before he com hom Again or no. & how he shall speed...& wh[eth]er he shall com home Again or no” (Woods quoting Forman xx). Alfonso did make it home from his expedition with the Earl of Essex, but he was not offered any social advancement. Although one must remember to approach Forman’s observations with a degree of skepticism, the historical record suggests the potential for some truth in these accounts. The characterization one might be left with from Forman’s account of Lanyer is of a woman who was “ambitious, attractive, and strong minded”—a woman who had once traveled in the most privileged social circles in England, but, by the time we see her through Forman’s records, now rested her ambitious hopes on the possibility of her husband’s “preferment” (Woods xxiv). Such an arrangement would not have been uncommon (i.e. once married, a woman’s fortunes were reliant on her husband [one might recall the Openworks and Gallipots examined in the previous chapter]). That being said, Forman’s account registers a frustration on Lanyer’s part with the limiting nature of marriage regarding female agency. Lanyer, like her dedicatees, was constrained by marriage and the political networks of early modern England in ways that, while conventional, were also met with frustration.

This historical context helps to partially explain Lanyer’s desire to craft an imaginary female court free of masculine influence through her abundant dedicatory materials (if only in verse). The men surrounding these women could be understood as a limiting force from which Lanyer hoped to free herself and her dedicatees. The following dedication “The Lady *Elizabeths* Grace,” for instance, eschews any reference to Elizabeth’s paternal heritage and instead underscores her descent from England’s former monarch, Queen Elizabeth I:

Most gracious Ladie, faire ELIZABETH,
Whose Name and Virtues puts us still in mind,

Of her, of whom we are depriv'd by death;
 The *Phoenix* of her age, whose worth did bind
 All worthy minds so long as they have breath,
 In linkes of Admiration, love and zeale,
 To that deare Mother of our Common-weale. (1-7)

The semicolon following “death” highlights the mythological connotations of the Phoenix—while the bird dies, it soon resurrects and thus, like a semicolon, is merely a temporary pause.¹⁰ So while all are “depriv'd by death” of Queen Elizabeth, they shall not be for long, as the Princess Elizabeth suggests her resurrection has occurred. Providing this image of lineage—linking Elizabeth to England’s deceased Queen through her first name and not paternity—crafts an alternative patriarchal narrative for Elizabeth whose real paternal grandmother was Mary, Queen of Scots, a woman beheaded for treason by Queen Elizabeth I. “To the Lady *Elizabeths* Grace” buries this history, instead linking Elizabeth I, the Princess Elizabeth, and “our famous Queene” in a maternal genealogy untainted by patriarchal influence. Again, the spiritual gifts or “Virtues” of women and their supposed preternatural piety stand above patrilineal bonds.

Obviously, the patriarchal networks to which these women belonged could hardly be entirely excised from the text, despite Lanyer’s attempts to rhetorically reduce their presence. The reader would know to what King the Queen was married, and who was the father, as well as mother, of Princess Elizabeth. For it is their placement in the social hierarchy—a place only accessible through these patriarchal associations—that makes them worthy as possible patrons. But the text’s rhetorical maneuvers clearly work to direct the reader’s attention elsewhere, emphasizing alternative temporal and spiritual inheritances beyond those made possible through the patriarchal institution of marriage. As the text progresses, however, Lanyer’s rejection of

patriarchal political networks becomes increasingly less about ignoring their influence and more about critiquing it through the presentation of Christ as a superior object of romantic and marital attachment. Lanyer's dedicatees may be in the position to serve as patrons because of the patriarchal networks that enable their social power, but they are also (and more importantly) fit *marital* companions for Christ. In the following section, I will trace the frequency with which Lanyer refers to Christ in language that echoes the marital bond, arguing that Lanyer's references to Christ as "Bridegroom," "Lover," and "Spouse," coupled with Lanyer's minimal reference to her dedicatees' temporal marital relationships, provide a subtle critique of contemporary marriage—an institution rife with problems to which Lanyer offers a solution.

II

The tendency to depict Christ and his relationship with his followers as that which is shared between a husband and wife appears repeatedly in the New Testament, as can be seen in the three Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Perhaps most famously, the book of Matthew contains the parable of the wise virgins, which explicitly casts the relationship between Christ and his believers in marital language. As told in Matthew 25:1-13, "the kingdome of heaven shalbe likened unto ten virgins, who toke their lampes, and went to mete the bridegrome." Of these ten, "five of *them* were wise, & five foolish. / The foolish toke their lampes, but toke none oyle with them" (2-3). As the bridegroom was long in coming, all the virgins "slombred and slept," only to be awakened at midnight by a crier announcing his unexpected arrival (4-6). The wise virgins are prepared to go with their bridegroom because their lamps have oil and they are thus outfitted for the wedding, while the foolish ones miss the opportunity, being distracted at his coming by their search for lamp oil (7-10). The parable ends with the following warning: "Wathe therefore: for ye knowe nether the day, nor the houre,

when the Sonne of man will come” (Matthew 25:13). This passage is notable for its obvious eschatological connotations—the Christian must seek to emulate the “wise virgins” who are prepared for Christ, their “bridegroom,” at his coming.

In addition to this famous parable from Matthew, one can find within each gospel a variant on the following passage which again presents Christ as bridegroom to his followers:

Then they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and pray, and *disciples* of the pharises also, but thine eat, and drinke? / And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the wedding chamber to fast, as long as the bridegrome is with them? / But the days will come, even when the bridegrome shalbe taken away *from* them: then shal they fast in those dayes. (Luke 5:33-35, HH.ii.r)

The early modern annotations to Luke 5:34 (as found in the Geneva Bible) also offer a variant on the following explanation: “The friends and familiars of Christ: and herby Jesus Christ declareth that he wil not *burden* his, before *yt* he hathe made them able to beare.” In these depictions of Christ’s life, Christ explains to “Scribes and Pharises” that his own disciples, unlike the Jewish people, have no need for fasting as their own Messiah (or “bridegroom”) is still present with them (Luke 5:30). The time for fasting shall be after his departure, but not before “he hathe made them able to beare” it—that is, provided his disciples with the hope of future salvation through his crucifixion.

Undergirding the above references to Christ as bridegroom is the exegetical tradition of reading The Canticles or Song of Songs, the erotic epithalamion of the Old Testament, as an allegory for the relationship between Christ and his followers. As the headnote for the Geneva Bible’s translation of “An Excellent Song which was Salomons” reads:

In this Song, Salomon by moste swete and comfortable allegories and parables describeth the perfite love of Jesus Christ, the tru Salomon and King of peace, and the faithful soule or his Church, which he hathe sanctified and appointed to be his spouse, holy, chast, and without reprehension. So that here is declared the singular love of the bridegrome toward the bride, and his great and excellent benefities wherewith he doeth enriche her of his pure bountie and grace without anie of her deservings. Also the earnest affection of the Church which is inflamed with the love of Christ desiring to be more and more joined to him in love, and not to be forsaken for any spot or blemish that is in her. (&.iiii.r).

Through this reading, Solomon and his beloved become a type of Christ and his Church, where their relationship, with all its praise and longing, prefigures that which will be established in the New Testament.

These examples demonstrate how the early modern Christian Bible made use of imagery depicting all Christian believers—both male and female—as brides of Christ. If they considered themselves members of his Church, they were, like a wife to her husband, subject to Christ’s governance. It is a metaphor of subjection and obedience, but also one that could be deployed, specifically by female authors, to radical purpose. In her study of two late seventeenth-century women who use the language of the Song of Songs (particularly the language of Christ as Lover or Bridegroom) to articulate desire, Sharon Achinstein argues that doing so is a radical act precisely because it evinces an “assault upon patriarchal marriage” (422). While her study connects this rhetoric to these women’s involvement in the radical religious movements of late seventeenth century England, I will argue that *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* also deploys the image of Christ as bridegroom to radical purpose. As I will show, Lanyer’s invocation of the bride/bridegroom metaphor, her erasure of references to her dedicatees’ spouses, and her critique

of men as found in “Eve’s Apology,” enable Lanyer to make a powerful case for the superiority of spiritual marriage above earthly unions.

In Lanyer’s third dedication, “To all virtuous Ladies in general,” one finds the first of many references to Christ as “Bridegroom” in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Presumably the “Ladies” referred to in the dedication’s title are those women Lanyer has singled out for patronage: noblewomen worthy of serving as the Queen’s fictive ladies-in-waiting. Instead of offering these women as appropriate consorts for the Queen due to their social status, however, it is their spiritual superiority that makes them worthy to “wait on hir whom winged Fame attends” (3). The second stanza reads,

Put on your wedding garments every one,
 The Bridegroome stayes to entertaine you all;
 Let Virtue be your guide, for she alone
 Can leade you right that you can never fall;
 And make no stay for feare he should be gone:
 But fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale,
 That to your Faith he may his Truth reveale. (8-14)

Lanyer uses the parable of the wise virgins from the New Testament to entreat her dedicatees to metaphorically prepare themselves like brides awaiting the return of their bridegroom, Christ. But this imagery, when read in light of *Salve Deus*’s minimal references to Lanyer’s dedicatees’ patriarchal partners, further underscores the text’s desire to undermine the importance of the temporal marriages to which Lanyer and her dedicatees would be, or would have been, conscripted.

One finds another, more erotically charged reference to Christ as “Bridegroom” in Lanyer’s dedication “To the Ladie *Susan*, Countesse Dowager of Kent, and Daughter to the Duchesse of Suffolke.” Here, the poet calls for her dedicatee to “Receive your Love whom you have sought so farre, / Which here presents himselfe within your view...And in his humble paths since you do tread, / Take this faire Bridegroome in your soules pure bed” (42). Lanyer describes a scenario that again, while making use of conventional metaphors to depict Christ’s relationship with his followers, seems to undermine the importance of earthly marital relationships. And this time Lanyer even goes so far as to suggest that the believing woman might consummate her relationship with her “Bridegroome.” The Dowager Countess, having avoided “those weake inticements of the world, / That have so many thousand Soules insnarld,” can now enact the connubial rites of marriage with Christ (35-36). While this metaphorical presentation of Bertie’s consummation with Christ is no doubt intended to praise her piety, this imagery also presents spiritual marriage and consummation as acts which take the place of patriarchal unions through their erasure of temporal marriage bonds. Lanyer prioritizes the heavenly, rather than worldly, gifts of her dedicatees with imagery that suggests the only truly fulfilling marriage is that which occurs between the (female) believer and Christ.¹¹

Christ appears again as a bridegroom in the dedication “To the Ladie *Anne*, Countesse of Dorcet,” this time with an even more explicit assertion of Lanyer’s role in the union between bride and bridegroom. In language that echoes the usage from “To all virtuous Ladies in general,” Lanyer invokes the parable of the wise virgins in the dedication’s second stanza:

Blest by our Saviours merits, not my skil,
 Which I acknowledge to be very small,
 Yet if the least part of his blessed Will

I have perform'd, I count I have done all:
 One sparke of grace sufficient is to fill
 Our Lampes with oyle, ready when he doth call
 To enter with the Bridegroome to the feast,
 Where he that is the greatest may be least. (9-16)

The stanza develops a metaphor whereby Lanyer's "skil," even if "very small," provides enough of a "sparke of grace" to "fill / Our Lampes with oyle" in preparation for the "Bridegroome." The inclusive use of the word "Our" indicates that Lanyer's offering extends to those who read her book and herself—they are the "virtuous ladies" referenced in the earlier dedication, and it is through Lanyer that they may be prepared to follow Christ into his eternal kingdom.

Beyond characterizing herself as an essential component of Anne's access to the spiritual realm, Lanyer's dedication to the Countess also defines the nature of these heavenly rewards. Lanyer presents Christ's kingdom as one "Where he that is the greatest may be least" and the humblest will receive the greatest spiritual rewards. Echoing passages throughout the New Testament, Lanyer promulgates an argument through this dedication where virtue, rather than birth (which is also often linked to merit), is the proper measurement of one's right to inherit *both* earthly and heavenly rewards. For instance, the following stanza claims that "No worldly treasure can assure that place; / God makes both even, the Cottage with the Throne," and "Those he holds deare" are in fact those "Whose virtuous deeds by his especially grace / Have gain'd his love, his kingdome, and his crown" (18-23). One inherits the kingdom of God not through "worldly treasures" such as wealth and status, but "virtuous deeds" made possible through Christ's "grace." Loughlin notes the precarious line Lanyer must walk in this argument, especially when presented to a would-be patroness who has spent, and would spend, much of her

life in court attempting to claim her rightful inheritance (164). But as Loughlin observes, instead of rejecting any temporal rewards outright, Lanyer argues that earthly and heavenly gain only belong to the virtuous. For as the following stanza begins: “Titles of honour which the world bestowes, / To none but to the virtuous doth belong” (25-26). Lanyer’s text facilitates Anne’s recuperation of temporal and spiritual wealth by providing her with the “oyle” or virtue needed to do so.

The above references make clear that Lanyer finds the metaphor of believer and Christ as bride and bridegroom to be a useful tool that allows her to challenge the preeminence of temporal marriage, flatter her dedicatees, and elevate her own significance in their spiritual undertaking throughout her dedication. Unsurprisingly, then, Lanyer’s reference to Christ as “bridegroom” extends into the body of *Salve Deus*’s title poem. Early in the poem, the poet praises Christ as one

With Majestie and Honour is He clad,
 And deck’d with light, as with a garment faire;
 He joys the Meeke, and makes the mightie sad,
 Pulls downe the Prowd, and doth the Humble reare:
 Who sees this Bridegroom, never can be sad. (73-77)

The first line echoes the language used to describe Christ in the dedication to Queen Anne—there, as here, Christ’s “Majestie” is upheld above those who assert the superiority of earthly riches. But Christ is a more appropriate “Bridegroom” than any of those “mightie” individuals who Christ will pull down and, in their place, raise up those who show humility.

Her last section to look at Christ explicitly, sub-headed “A briefe description of his beautie upon the Canticles,” depicts Christ as the “Bridegroom that appears so faire, / So sweet,

so lovely in his Spouses sight.”¹² This language both echoes the Song of Songs and calls to mind the blazon tradition of secular romantic poetry (1305-1306). Lanyer claims that

Unto Snowe we may his face compare,
 His cheeks 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 so beauteous to behold; (1307-1312)

The “snowe” white skin, “skarlet” cheeks, “gold” head and “curled lockes” all invoke the typical language of secular love poetry, whereby the beauty of the female beloved is idealized and anatomized. Lanyer continues this process for another stanza, describing Christ’s lips “like skarlet threds” or “honey combes,” and “Lillies, dropping downe pure mirrhe” (1313-1319). As Catherine Keohane observes, Lanyer’s blazon “redirects the conceits of Petrarchan love poetry into the realm of marriage”; as “Bridegroom,” Christ serves as the perfect husband and object of love (375).¹³ Concluding her narrative of Christ’s Passion and preceding her descriptive praise of the Countess of Cumberland’s pious virtues, Lanyer presents Christ in a sort of spiritual blazon that leaves the reader with the impression that He, unlike the men (and specifically husbands) of her dedicatees’ lives, is a worthy subject for romantic adoration.¹⁴

Even when not directly referring to Christ as a bridegroom, Lanyer nonetheless deploys spousal language to characterize his relationship with the Countess of Cumberland and her other dedicatees, both in the dedicatory material and the text’s title poem. We have already seen this in the dedication to Susan Bertie when she describes Christ as “your Love whom you have sought so farre” (37) and when she refers to Him as a “Lover much more true” in the above dedication

to Katherine, Countess of Suffolk (52). In the dedication “To the Ladie *Lucie*, Countesse of Bedford,” Lanyer also describes Christ as “The true-love of your soule, your hearts delight” (6). In each of these dedications, Lanyer valorizes her dedicatees for choosing Christ as their romantic partner, a companion whose love exceeds that which can be experienced in the temporal realm between mortal spouses.

One continues to see the way Lanyer casts Christ as a romantic partner for her dedicatees, namely the Countess of Cumberland, in the body of the title poem. Early in “Salve Deus,” Lanyer asserts the appropriateness of the Countess of Cumberland to serve as her text’s chief dedicatee on the grounds that her mind is “so perfect by thy Maker fram’d / No vaine delights can harbor in thy heart, / With his sweet love, thou art so much inflam’d” (41-43). Above all else, “his sweet love”—i.e., a love for Christ—consumes the Countess. As the poet continues, she entreats the Countess to “love him still, thou need’st not be asham’d, / Tis He that made thee, what thou wert, and art” (45-46). In Lanyer’s assertion that the Countess need not feel shame at her love comes the odd suggestion that some might think she should; as an active lover, such desire might come across as impious for it reverses gender roles as outlined in courtly love conventions. Furthermore, the suggestion of actual sex between the Countess and Christ even leaves the Countess open to charges of adultery, however textual. But there is no shame when such love is directed at one’s maker, and Lanyer later entreats, “Long mai’st thou joy in this almightie love” (65) for “Thy patience, faith, long suffering, and thy love, / He will reward with comforts from above” (71-72). It is through this love for Christ that Cumberland may achieve heavenly rewards, despite what others might think. And lest the reader is unclear as to what shape the relationship between Christ and the Countess takes, the following stanza finds the first reference in “Salve Deus” to Christ as bridegroom: “Who sees this Bridegroom, never can be

sad” (77). The love outlined in the previous four stanzas is for a being who, unlike earthly husbands, can provide true “joy” to his lovers in a way that cannot be mirrored by their temporal marital relationships.

Moving on to critique the tendency to value women for their physical rather than spiritual beauty, Lanyer describes Christ as the “Husband” of the Countess of Cumberland’s “Soule” (253). Unlike the lust-filled relationships depicted in the previous stanzas between earthly partners, Lanyer offers the Countess of Cumberland as Christ’s wife. “Husband” could, of course, be read as generally denoting a caretaker. Indeed, Christ was often called the “second Adam” who, like his typological precursor, was understood as acting as both husband to Eve and the garden they tended. But given the repeated characterization of Christ and Cumberland as bride and groom, this stanza, which Lanyer places next to the sub-heading “To the Ladie of Cumberland the Introduction to the passion of Christ,” encourages the reader to perceive Christ as one acting as an ideal spouse.

After presenting Christ’s death later in “Salve Deus,” Lanyer directly addresses the Countess in language depicting her bond with Christ as a marital one. Lanyer writes: “This with the eie of Faith thou maist behold / Deere Spouse of Christ” (1170). Directly adjacent to this entreaty is the sub-heading “To my Ladie of Cumberland,” an honorific that cannot help but draw attention to the Countess’s place in temporal patriarchal networks. The proximity of this title to the poetic description of the Countess as Christ’s “Spouse” emphasizes the tension between these two roles—the “Ladie” is an object covered by marriage to George, third earl of Cumberland, yet she is also depicted as spiritually wedded to Christ (1172). While capitalizing on familiar biblical rhetoric that fashioned all believers in a spiritual marriage with Christ this passage also, I would argue, underscores the overall theme that runs throughout Lanyer’s *Salve*

Deus—temporal marriage is a disappointment, not least because it limits women’s direct social and political engagement. The biblical narrative Lanyer presents underscores the insufficiency of temporal marriage to reflect the relationship it is possible to have with Christ.

At times within “Salve Deus” Lanyer even explicitly casts Christ as a superior “Lover” to those partners that can be found on earth. In the section titled “The terror of all creatures at that instant when Christ died,” Lanyer entreats the Countess of Cumberland specifically to look upon the “union of contraries” found in the Passion,

Which I present (deare Lady) to your view,

Upon the Crosse depriv’d of life or breath,

To judge if ever Lover were so true,

To yield himselfe unto such shameful death; (1265-1268)

Lanyer’s claim that the Countess is to “judge if ever Lover were so true” rhetorically positions Christ as superior to any presumably temporal lover that the Countess or others might encounter; he is the ideal romantic partner. Through his sacrifice, Christ becomes a superior “Lover” to any other that the Countess might have encountered including, presumably, her own (now deceased) husband, George Clifford.

Importantly, this passage also places the Countess of Cumberland in a position “to judge” the merits of Christ’s position as a superior “Lover.” Although Lanyer’s request that Cumberland do so seems somewhat rhetorical (for who would assess Christ’s Passion and find him wanting?), it still places Cumberland in an active position whereby she is given the power to assess the qualities of her suitor before reciprocating his love. This is a powerful offering to a woman whose own marriage, although apparently at times a loving one, was also one arranged out of political expediency. As Peter Holmes notes in his entry on George Clifford for the *Oxford*

Dictionary of National Biography, George's father, Henry Clifford, had been negotiating a marriage to "one of the Bedford's daughters" between himself and Francis Russell, second earl of Bedford, before the elder Clifford's death in 1570. Upon Henry's passing, George became a ward of Francis Russell and was eventually married to Margaret in 1577 (Holmes). If this timeline is correct, it is possible that as early as age ten Margaret Russel had been told who she was likely to marry. Lanyer, then, not only offers her dedicatee the chance to embrace a deeply affective bond with her "Lover," but to *choose* to do so—an option not presented to her in her temporal marriage.

Lanyer's choice to present even Mary as married to Christ highlights Lanyer's insistence that Christ's love is of a spousal nature, even between himself and his own mother. In the sections sub-headed "The sorrow of the virgin Marie" and "The salutation of the virgin Marie," Lanyer marvels at the grief Mary must have felt in losing Christ and praises the Virgin for her sacrifice (1009). Throughout each, Lanyer deploys common language that emphasizes Mary's maternal role, referring repeatedly to Christ as "her Sonne" and her as "Mother" (1009). But Mary's roles extend beyond this for Lanyer; at one point, she refers to Christ as Mary's "Sonne, her *Husband*, Father, Saviour, King" (1023) and later, refers to Mary as Christ's "Servant, Mother, *Wife*, and Nurse / To Heavens bright King, that freed us from the curse" (1087-1088; emphasis added). Gary Kuchar has written persuasively on how Lanyer's description of Mary places her in the role of active agent imbued with spiritual power, much of which stems from her maternal role. Even his thorough analysis of Mary's role in Lanyer's "Salve Deus," however, does not stop to acknowledge or explain the implications of the strange figuration of Mary as Christ's wife. One obvious explanation for this reference is, of course, the commonplace description of all believers as brides of Christ—a role in which even Mary might be understood

to participate. Additionally, as observed by Helen Hackett, a tradition stems from the medieval period wherein the bride in the Canticles was read as Mary (15-16). Drawing specific attention to the theological position of Mary as a bride as well as mother in “Salve Deus,” however, further suggests Lanyer’s desire to link the women of *Salve Deus* through their role as wives in both the secular and spiritual sense.

The only time *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* invokes the word “Spouse” *without* referring to Christ is in the dedication “To the Ladie *Katherine* Countesse of Suffolke,” the wife of Lord Admiral Thomas Howard. After presenting her customary plea for a favorable reading of her book, Lanyer praises the Countess of Suffolk for her “beautie, wisdom, children, [and] high estate,” which “all concur to make you fortunate” (23-24). Above this, however, Lanyer praises her husband as part of the Countess’s edification: “But chiefly your most honourable Lord, / Whose noble virtues Fame can ne’r forget: / His hand being alwayes ready to afford / Help to the weake, to the unfortunate” (25-28). Thomas Howard is notably the only man praised in *Salve Deus* besides Christ for his “virtues,” described here as a charitable and warm-hearted individual. Lanyer continues in the following stanza to praise his lineage from the “honourable *Howards* antient house, / Whose noble deedes by former times commended” and who now “remaine in your most loyall Spouse, / On whom God powers all blessings from above, / Wealth, honour, children and a worthy Love” (32-36). As Theresa DiPasquale observes, Lanyer presents Thomas Howard as the model of a virtuous husband on earth, one who helps enhance the virtues of his wife as a “loyall Spouse”—an ideal representation of companionate marriage. Katherine, the Countess of Suffolk, and her husband Thomas Howard stand as the only praise-worthy temporal marriage in *Salve Deus*.

But even this “worthy Love” is no match for the lover that Lanyer claims she will present in her book (52). The poet entreats the Countess to “let your noble daughters likewise reade / This little Booke that I present to you; / On heavenly food let them vouchsafe to feede; / Heere they may see a Lover much more true” (49-52). Although the Howard daughters have a virtuous model of spousal affection in their parents, the model nonetheless remains insufficient when compared to the relationship one can have with Christ. For, unlike human men, Christ truly represents “all that Ladies can desire” (85). Rejecting the earlier praise of temporal virtue presented in Thomas Howard, Lanyer emphasizes heavenly legacy in the dedication’s penultimate stanza: “Of his rare parts, true honours faire prospect, / The perfect line that goodnesse doth direct” (101-102). The Countess may be a “Fountaine from whence his chiefe delights do flow. / Faire tree from which the fruit of Honor springes” (40-41), yet Lanyer concludes the dedication by proposing an alternative “spring”:

And unto you I wish those sweet desires,
 That from your perfect thoughts doe daily spring,
 Increasing still pure, bright, and holy fires,
 Which sparkes of pretious grace, by faith doe spring:

Mounting your soule unto eternall rest,
 There to live happily among the best. (103-108)

Although the Howard legacy “spring[s]” or grows like the branches of a tree from the Countess in the form of her children, faith alone serves as the “spring” from which “sparkes of pretious grace” derive. And unlike procreation and parenting, which requires both partners, only the Countess’s thoughts can “daily spring” that which is needed to find “eternall rest.” Notably, the repeated use of the verb “spring” in this stanza crafts an image whereby the Countess’s soul can

be pictured ascending or “Mounting” towards heaven as she becomes her own, singular version of a family tree. Perhaps her husband, due to his virtue, will join her in this ascent, but that prospect appears irrelevant in this dedication’s concluding stanzas.¹⁵

Lanyer’s presentation of Christ as a superior marital partner throughout *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* has not gone unnoticed in the poem’s critical reception. DiPasquale, for instance, observes that “Christ is thus to be preferred over human males not so much for the *prime facie* reason that he is divine while they are mere mortals, or because spiritual desire is superior to physical desire, but because God incarnate in the male body of Jesus is the best lover, the best object of female desire: spiritual, emotional, and erotic” (362). Whereas DiPasquale’s argument usefully emphasizes the way in which this allows Lanyer to present a model for heterosexual desire predicated on equality between desiring individuals, it fails to consider the typological implications of the bride / bridegroom metaphor, an awareness of which enables a reading of *Salve Deus* that shows the complete spiritual import of Lanyer’s depiction.

The reader might recall from this project’s introduction that the interpretation of Christ and his Church as a bridegroom and bride—a married couple—had broad-ranging implications for early modern interpretations of other, biblical married couples (namely Adam and Eve) as well as the marriages of early modern Christians. Ephesians 5:22-33 famously analogizes the relationship between wives and husbands as that between Christ and his Church, reading: “Wives, submit your selves unto your housbands, as unto the Lord. / For the housband is the wives head, *even* as Christ is the head of the Church, & the same is the savior of *his* bodie. / Therefore as the Church is in subjection to Christ, *even so let* the wives *be* to their housbands in everie thing” (5:22-24; original emphasis). This passage was frequently cited as Biblical justification for wifely subordination. Less often cited was the passage’s following lines, which

entreat husbands to “love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, & gave him self for it, / That he might sanctifie it, & cleanse it by the washing of water through ye worde, / That he might make it unto him self a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or anie suche thing: but that it shulde be holie and without blame” (25-27). In a passage that also gestures to the sacrament of baptism, Paul outlines a spiritual *and* marital relationship of mutual reciprocity—a hierarchical order that nonetheless relies on the love and mutual care of both parties for the other’s benefit.

As the passage continues, the mutually constitutive nature of this relationship takes on a bodily metaphor: “So ought men to love their wives, as their owne bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth him self. / For no man ever yet hated his owne flesh, but nourisheth & cherisheth it, even as the Lord *doeth* the Church. / For we are members of his bodie, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Ephesians 5:28-30). Husband and wife, like Christ and the Church, honor each other by loving each other as themselves. For they are mystically united as one body and should, therefore, attend to each other’s physical and spiritual well-being for the sake of the other. While these verses were understood to outline the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, whereby the Christian becomes one with Christ’s body through holy communion, exegetes also saw in this passage an allusion to Adam and Eve, a couple who were literally of the same flesh.¹⁶ The following verse repeats Genesis 3:24, reading “For this cause shal a man leave father & mother, & shal cleave to his wife, & they twaine shalbe one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31). Like Adam and Eve and their bodily unity, so in present marriages do husband and wife unite, their bodies mingled in matrimonial mystery. Paul calls this union “a great secret,” a passage that had led, under Catholicism, to the understanding of marriage itself as a sacrament.¹⁷ But Paul’s clarification, “I speake concerning Christ, & concerning the Church. / Therefore everie one of you, *do ye so*: let everie one love his wife, even as him self, & *let* the wife *se* that she feare her housband” was taken by Reformation

exegetes to underscore marriage's figure of that other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, rather than describing marriage as a discrete sacramental act (Ephesians 5:32-33). The marriage between husband and wife mirrors on earth the mystery of Christ's union with the Church, a union also enacted through the sacrament of communion.

I have taken the time to reiterate this passage of Ephesians as it is key to understanding the typological relationship between Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church (or bridegroom and bride), and early modern Christians that, as I will argue, informs Lanyer's argument in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Given the common typological reading of Ephesians 5:22-30, Christ's Passion can be read as always already a story about marriage—the marriage of each believer with Christ which is presented as the typological fulfillment of the marriage witnessed between Adam and Eve in Genesis *and* early modern individuals. Each Christian, male and female, is a bride of Christ (the bridegroom): a relationship also prefigured in the erotic Song of Solomon. And although theoretically each Christian is a bride of Christ, this relationship was used in patriarchal theory to underscore the need for a wife's submission to her husband. Since women were the ones to act literally as brides in the marital relationship, their subjection to their husbands was described as indices of their proper participation in the typological chain woven between Genesis, the Song of Songs, Ephesians, and the stories of Christ's Passion.

An understanding of these typological associations can help inform a reading of Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* as a text that, like the narrative of Christ's Passion itself, is inherently a text about marriage and the typological relationship between Adam and Eve, early modern marriages, and Christ and the individual believer. But unlike most early modern narratives that read these typological associations as justification for female marital subjection, Lanyer instead uses them to craft an argument for a woman's ability to theoretically become a

bride of Christ without first participating in a temporal marriage. And Lanyer presents this as desirable precisely because the relationship between Christ and his believers, unlike that which is found in early modern marriages, honors the mutual reciprocity originally envisioned as the true fulfillment of the marriage witnessed between Adam and Eve.

It should be noted that the depiction of the affective bond between women and Christ as that of a bride and bridegroom resonates with the Catholic tradition, whereby women were provided a sanctioned social space to eschew temporal marriage and live out their lives as brides of Christ. But Protestant reformers had removed the possibility of convent life for early modern English women, thus officially foreclosing the possibility of spiritual marriage as an alternative to temporal, patriarchal unions. Thus, at the time of Lanyer's writing, a woman would not have been able to openly take religious orders in England as could her female counterparts in continental Catholic countries. I would argue that this makes Lanyer's offering to her dedicatees even more radical since it reestablishes the possibility for early modern women to engage in spiritual, rather than temporal, marriages. Furthermore, Lanyer's suggestion that a union with Christ might be sufficient for a woman's spiritual advancement lessens potential anxieties that to ignore or reject a temporal spouse might threaten their spiritual salvation. Early modern Protestant ideology might position temporal marriage as the central way for women to fulfill God's will, but *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* suggests another, potentially more rewarding, pathway to salvation that is not defined by patriarchal bonds.

III

One does not have to wade deeply into the pages of *Salve Deus* before coming across its first explicit typological linkage between man's first marriage and Christ. A mere thirteen

stanzas in to “To the Queenes Most Excellent Majestie,” Lanyer rather forcefully commands the Queen to

Behold...faire *Eves* Apologie,
 Which I have writ in honour of your sexe,
 And doe referre unto your Majestie,
 To judge if it agree not with the Text:
 And if it doe, why are poore Women blam'd,
 Or by more faultie men so much defam'd? (79-84)

Lanyer draws the Queen’s direct attention to this particular section of “Salve Deus,” claiming that her approval of its argument should, as Lanyer herself believes, free women from the subordination and misplaced blame they have suffered thus far at the hands of “faultie Men.” Having already established Queen Anne’s uniquely virtuous nature, Lanyer presents her as an appropriate arbiter for the veracity of Lanyer’s reading. Additionally, in drawing the Queen’s direct attention to this section, Lanyer signals its importance to her literary project—Lanyer will present Christ in her “holy worke,” but she will also attempt a recuperation of Eve meant to “honour” Anne’s “sex,” or fellow women.

It is not narratively necessary to include any references to Adam and Eve in a story about Christ’s Passion, as they are not characters in the Passion story. Lanyer nevertheless asserts the importance of Eve to her narrative:

And this great Lady I have here attired,
 In all her richest ornaments of Honour,
 That you faire Queene, of all the world admired,
 May take the more delight to looke upon her:

For she must entertaine you to this Feast,

To which your Highnesse is the welcom'st guest. (85-90)

Lanyer presents “this great Lady,” Eve, as the conduit between the Queen and Lanyer’s text or “Feast”; it is through Eve that Anne may have access to Christ. Importantly, however, the poet suggests that Eve is only made appropriate to do so through Lanyer’s exegesis, as the passage suggests it is Lanyer’s “Apologie” which “attire[s]” Eve in the “richest ornaments of Honour.” Eve as characterized by “faultie men” would not be sufficient to “entertaine” the Queen. But once “attired” in Lanyer’s defense, Eve gains the “Honour” necessary to participate in the Queen’s spiritual journey. Indeed, the emphatic “must” of line 78 further suggests the importance of Eve’s recuperation for Lanyer—it is only through Eve that the Queen may access Lanyer’s presentation of Christ, and thus Lanyer finds it imperative to defend her place in history. But why? Why does Lanyer find Eve so crucial to her dedicatee’s engagement with her text?

The answer, as revealed in the following stanza, relies on an awareness of the typological association delineated in the previous section of this chapter. Clarifying her reference to her text as the “Feast” to which the Queen is “the welcom'st guest,” Lanyer writes, “For here I have prepar'd my Paschal Lambe, / The figure of that living Sacrifice (85-86).¹⁸ The feast referenced is, as Susanne Woods observes in her note on line 85, the “Passover lamb, a figure for Christ, sacrificed for the sins of mankind”; the text of *Salve Deus* itself becomes a type of Christ—the Passover lamb. (ln85n). For the early modern Christian, it was the sacrament of communion (the Lord’s Supper) that was understood to serve as the antitype of the “Paschal Lambe,” and Lanyer’s language makes explicit reference to this. As I pointed out above, however, the Lord’s Supper was *also* understood in Reformation theology as a sacrament that reflected the

typological relationship between the marriage of Adam and Eve and the unity of each Christian with Christ—an act also recapitulated through the marriage ceremony. Eve *must* entertain the Queen at the feast, as she, by nature of her creation out of Adam, is the first in the typological chain that propels each “bride” or Christian towards a biblical future in which Christ becomes their “living Sacrifice.”

For this reason, it is imperative that Eve not be a character unfairly slandered like those “poor Women” of her sex. Lanyer seeks to present an Eve who is not demonstrative of an inherent propensity for sin, but a “great Ladie” worthy, like Lanyer’s dedicatees themselves, to act as Christ’s bride. The tradition of presenting Eve in a negative light to which Lanyer’s “Eves Apologie” responds was a long and compendious one that undergirded many early modern texts critical of women, from the misogynistic offerings of the *querelle des femmes* to the milder, yet nonetheless thoroughly misogynistic, marriage advice literature of the period. Joseph Swetnam’s polemical invective against women, for instance, famously concludes that women are “crooked by nature,” having been made from “a crooked thing”—Adam’s rib (Br). According to Swetnam, Eve “was no sooner made, but straightway her mind was set upon mischief, for by her aspiring minde and wanton will, shee quickly procured man’s fall, and therefore ever since they are and have been a woe unto man, and follow the line of their first leader” (Br). Swetnam’s assessment of Eve, although possibly overstated for rhetorical effect, nonetheless encapsulates the misogynistic logic that permeated discourses of Eve and stereotypes of early modern women.

Given the typological association between the New Testament pair and Christ’s union with the Church, a patriarchal relationship between Adam and Eve would suggest that the relationship between Christ and the individual must be that of a hierarchy as well, where women (and the individual believer) are ruled as subordinates, subject to their spouse’s will. In this

schema, the relationship experienced between Lanyer's dedicatees and Christ would be no better than that which they experience on earth. But as I have shown, Lanyer unequivocally presents Christ as a superior spouse to human husbands. "Eves Apologie" uncouples Christ from early modern patriarchal ideology by advocating for a re-reading of the relationship between Adam and Eve—the foundation upon which contemporary understandings of the individual's relationship to Christ, and the relationship between husbands and wives, was based. For Lanyer, Christ fulfills a relationship that grants women more autonomy and agency than is currently allotted to early modern women, a fact that becomes even more clear when one turns attention to the text of "Eves Apologie" itself as presented in the body of the title poem.

Powerfully offered in the voice of Pilate's wife—a woman who, like Lanyer's dedicatees, was married to a man intimately involved in political affairs—"Eves Apologie" argues against the practice of basing patriarchal social relations on Eve's temptation of Adam in Genesis. Eve, the poet claims, was "simply good, and had no powre to see, / The after-comming harme did not appeare: / The subtile Serpent that our Sex betraide, / Before our fall so sure a plot had laide" (765-768). Pilate's wife suggests that Eve's innocence excuses her, and her female predecessors, from the unjust treatment they have received at the hands of men. Eve had not the foresight to see the effects of her actions, and pitifully faced a foe much more cunning than she. As many scholars have observed, the distinction between the textual voice of Pilate's wife and Lanyer's own critique is ambiguous at best—Pilate's wife's plea to her husband becomes a polemical invective from Lanyer to her readers that reaches beyond the narrative of *Salve Deus*.

Her crimes seem even less so, Lanyer contends, when compared with Adam who, "Her fault though great, yet hee was most too blame; ...Being Lord of all, the greater was his shame: ...For he was Lord and King of all the earth, / Before poore *Eve* had either life or breath" (778-

784). While Eve lacked the capacity or knowledge to see what danger the Serpent presented, Adam, on the other hand, was intimately familiar with God's knowledge and should have had the foresight to turn down Eve's offering of sin. As "Lord and King" he should have had the capacity to resist her temptation. Alas, he did not heed his greater senses, and ignored God's "strait command" (787). Because of this, Lanyer contends, women have been unjustly subsumed under man's will—an injustice she hopes to expose. Adam's characterization as "Lord and King of all the earth" importantly recalls Lanyer's repeated critique of patriarchal, temporal power in the prefatory material. Even among humanity's first pair, man's dominion did not increase his propensity for virtue. Indeed, Adam's fall does nothing but place him beneath Eve in their spiritual capacity and undermine his right to rule.¹⁹

As the above passage demonstrates, Lanyer does not try to argue that Eve was entirely blameless. Rather, she more modestly suggests the inequality in Adam and Eve's treatment vis-à-vis their respective roles in the Fall. Given Adam's greater culpability, Lanyer finds it unjustifiable that "we (poore women) must endure" the entirety of blame for the Fall (794). Man's sexist treatment of women seems even more baseless when one compares Eve's transgression in Eden to that of the men in the Passion narrative. These individuals—Pilate, Caiphias, Herod, the Jewish soldiers, and even Christ's disciples—did "in malice Gods deare Sonne betray" (816). In the face of Pilate's condemnation of Christ, his wife proclaims, "Her [Eve's] sin was small, to what you doe commit; / All mortall sinnes that doe for vengeance crie, / Are not to be compared unto it" (818-820). Pilate, as proxy for all men, commits an even greater crime in condemning Christ; the justification for women's subordination falls flat when compared with man's repeated denial of Christ's divinity during the Passion.

Lanyer's critique of men, at least in her description of the Passion, appears directed specifically at those who hold higher social rank and, therefore, should be in a greater position to stop injustice. Indeed, what makes Pilate's actions seem particularly misguided is the fact that he directly rejects sound counsel from his wife in favor of actions that stand a better chance at advancing his career. Prior to the formal beginning of "Eve's Apologie," Lanyer offers an apostrophe to Pilate that draws explicit attention to his political position in the hierarchy of the Roman occupation of Jerusalem: "O noble Governour, make thou yet a pause, / Doe not in innocent blood imbrue thy hands; But heare the words of thy most worthy wife, / Who sends to thee, to beg her Saviours life" (749-752). By identifying Pilate as a "Governour," Lanyer gestures to the exegetical tradition of describing Pilate as a political figure who was unwise not to heed the counsel of those around him. Examples of this can be found in the sermons of Calvin, Robert Abbot (the Archbishop of Canterbury), and John Boys (a Dean of Canterbury), where each uses Pilate as the exemplum of an unjust or tyrannical ruler.²⁰ Even the Geneva Bible's annotation accompanying Pilate's wife's attempted intervention reads, "This was to the greater condemnation of Pilate, whome neither his owne knowledge colde teache nor counsel of others, to defende Christ's innocencie" (16).²¹ Pilate's rejection of sound counsel is key to his presentation as an unwise and ineffectual political figure.

This critique aligns with early modern theories of governorship, where authors repeatedly stress that one of the crucial distinctions between a just ruler and a tyrant is their willingness to surround themselves with wise advisers and heed their counsel. Thomas Elyot's advice manual for rulers encourages them to take into account counselors whose guidance is motivated by the "thre thynges" necessary for right rule: reason, virtue, and honesty. Counselors driven by these principles "maye be named a perfecte Capytayne, a trustye companyon, a playne and unfayned

frende” (236). For biblical support of his claim, Elyot paraphrases Ecclesiastes 32: ““My sonne, without counsayle see thou doo nothyng, and than after thy dede thou shalt never repent the[e]” (237). Sir Frances Bacon would also address the topic almost a century later, writing: “The wisest Princes need not thinke it any diminution to their greatnesse, or derogation to their sufficiency, to rely upon counsel. God himselfe is not without: but hath made it one of the great names of his blessed son. *The Counsellor Salomon* hath pronounced, that *In Counsel is stabilitie*” (E3r; original emphasis). Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, wise rulers were those who surrounded themselves with advisors who could support them in their pursuit of just governance.

Elyot and Bacon are no doubt envisioning male counselors when offering their advice, yet the exegetical tradition surrounding Pilate and his wife explicitly argues that a Good Wife can be a godly and wise counselor to her husband. Although Pilate’s wife had been characterized in the medieval tradition as a shrewish woman who selfishly tried to impede man’s salvation with her attempted intervention, sixteenth and seventeenth-century theologians tended to praise her for her recognition of Christ’s divinity.²² The Geneva Bible’s aforementioned annotation is but one example of this at work. Elaine Beilin points to Cornelius Agrippa, Edward Gosynhyll and C. Pyrrye as authors who chose to deploy a more favorable view of Pilate’s wife (323). One also sees this in Gervase Babington’s 1592 commentary on the book of Genesis. As with most commentators of Genesis, Babington directs much of his attention to Adam and Eve and the nature of the Fall, lamenting how easily persuaded men are to their wives’ will, a flaw both illuminated by, and warned against in the story of Adam and Eve (17). However, Babington does concede that “good wyves will learne by this what they perswade they husbands too, and wise men what they consent unto,” adding the following marginal note to bolster his point: “Pilate had

doone well if hee had followed his wife” (17). For Babington, the wife of Pontius Pilate serves as an example of one Good Wife who, unlike Eve, offered sound counsel that tragically went unheeded. Henry Smith also counts Pilate’s wife among “good wives” since she “counselled her husbände not to condemne Christ,” as does Thomas Bentley, where the author praises her since she “Counselled hir husbände in no wise to consent to shed the innocent blood of our saviour Christ, &c” (Smith 58; Bentley 90).²³ Early modern commentaries, then, present the story of Pilate and his wife as examples of what might befall a governor *and* a husband if they fail to heed the sound advice of those around them.

Offering her defense of Eve in the voice of Pilate’s wife, then, adds weight to Lanyer’s argument that it is ludicrous to uphold Eve’s actions in Genesis as justification for wifely subordination. For as Lanyer’s contemporaries would know, there have been many women, including Pilate’s wife, who have demonstrated women’s fitness as spousal support in domestic, spiritual, and political affairs. Husbands, like kings, can behave in ways counter to God’s design. And in those instances, they should heed godly advice regardless of the sex of the person providing it. Given the evidence at hand for women’s equal capacity for sin, then, Lanyer concludes “Eves Apologie” thus:

Then let us have our Libertie againe,
 And challenge to your selves no Sov’raigtie;
 You came not in the world without our paine,
 Make that a barre against your crueltie;
 Your fault beeing greater, why should you disdain
 Our beeing your equals, free from tyranny?
 If one weake woman simply did offend,

This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end. (825-832)

Pilate's wife's final plea to her husband blends with Lanyer's own voice to call for an end to unjust female oppression. Men and women are "equals," the passage maintains, and therefore should have "Libertie" from male "Sov'raintie," and freedom from "tyranny." Shannon Miller argues that by invoking such political language, this passage simultaneously frees women "from a household-based governmental structure" while also "announc[ing] how linked the family is to larger political structures in Lanyer's thinking" (67). Likewise, Mihoko Suzuki observes that this passage "makes evident [Lanyer's] understanding that the hegemonic discourse of misogyny—and its foundation on biblical authority—justifies the subordination and exclusion of women from the polity, and shores up the position of males as political subjects, who arrogate to themselves the prerogative of 'Sov'raintie'" (*Subordinate Subjects* 120). To these scholars, then, Lanyer's deployment of political language demonstrates the author's investment in challenging patriarchal authority for the purpose of providing women a place in the political sphere.

While insightful, such claims do not go far enough when assessing what Lanyer seeks to offer her patrons through this stanza. In addition to granting women authority to engage in the political sphere, this passage also underscores what Lanyer hopes to accomplish with her defense of Eve as it relates to typological interpretations of marriage. It suggests that men are in danger of excluding themselves from Christ's Church by continuing to enact the "tyranny" towards their wives, behavior that hardly reflects the relationship of which their marriages should prefigure. For without the type, the historical fulfillment cannot be completed—an unequal union founded on "crueltie" cannot possibly reflect the future fulfillment of Christ's will. That is to say, unless one maintains the companionate relationship between Adam and Eve, which Christian marriages *should* fulfill so as to serve as types themselves of the relationship between Christ and his

Church, the future fulfillment of this typological schema cannot take place. Adam and Eve's relationship must be one based on mutual love and care, since that which is found between Christ and his Church is as well. The suggestion that "one weake woman" justifies women's perpetual debasement falls flat when one considers the "sinne" of those men who failed to prevent Christ's death. To fulfill God's typological design and insert themselves in this sacred history, men *must* treat women as their counselors and help meets, rather than unwise subordinates.

The text highlights the spiritual authority on which Pilate's wife speaks in the following stanza, calling direct attention to the prophetic nature of her utterance: "Witness thy wife (O *Pilate*) speakes for all; / Who did but dreame, and yet a message sent, / That thou should'st have nothing to doe at all / With that just man" (834-837). Pilate's wife was informed by a "dream"—a prophecy direct from God—to warn her husband against the cruel act he was about to commit. This passage undoes the patriarchal hierarchy suggested on the title page of *Salve Deus*, which presents wives at the bottom of a hierarchical chain that includes her husband, then monarch, and then, implicitly, God. Pilate's wife attests to a direct link between her and the divine word that Pilate himself could not access. His unjust treatment of his wife (in this case, his failure to heed her warning when she offered it) places him and his fellow men further from God's divine grace.

Lanyer herself justifies her poem with the suggestion of prophetic knowledge and divine inspiration. In her address "To the Doubtfull Reader," which concludes the entirety of *Salve Deus*, Lanyer explains that she titled her work *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* as it "was delivered unto me in sleepe many yeares before I had any intent to write in this maner, and was quite out of my memory, until I had written the Passion of Christ." Having recalled her dream, then, and "thinking it a significant token, that I was appointed to performe this Worke, I have the very same words I received in sleepe as the fittest Title I could devise for this Booke." Like Pilate's

wife, Lanyer holds direct access to God: a fact that underscores her unique spiritual aptitude and, more importantly, suggests that she does not require the mediation of an earthly spouse to interact with the spiritual realm.

And it is in this suggestion—that women might be able to bypass their earthly husbands and access Christ unmediated—that is her text’s most profound argument. For if they (earthly spouses) will not conform to the original design of marriage as outlined in Genesis, Lanyer suggests that women are free to circumvent temporal marriage entirely. Unlike Calvin, who encourages spouses to perceive undesirable marital partners as a sign that “God intendeth to try his pacience by that meanes,” Lanyer asserts her dedicatee’s ability to unite directly with Christ without the typological mediation of marriage. They need not suffer under an unjust marriage, for such a marriage cannot serve as a type for Christ’s love and is therefore an unnecessary burden upon them. By presenting her text itself as the “Bridegroom,” *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* becomes the medium through which Lanyer’s dedicatees might enact this typological bypass.

Of course, such an argument is wishful thinking. Although Lanyer may be able to write herself into an unmediated relationship between herself and God, the hierarchy delineated on her title page remains; in the spiritual realm she may not need her husband to access Christ, but in patriarchal early modern England, she nonetheless needs to declare herself as the “Wife” of a temporal spouse to legitimate her social status and her authorial agency. Even so, her assertion of the possibility that one might not necessarily need to become a temporal bride to also, then, become a “bride of Christ” offers a powerful, if fantastical, way out for women in marriages that fail to live up to the companionate marriage described in Genesis.

Although Lanyer’s title poem frequently gestures beyond its diegetic setting to make its critiques of early modern practices explicit, Lanyer underscores her argument that contemporary

marriages fail to live up to the typological schema outlined in the Bible by concluding *Salve Deus* with her country house poem, “The Description of Cooke-ham.” As scholars have observed, Lanyer presents Cooke-ham at once as a type of heaven as well as a lost Eden: it represents “dimme shadowes of celestially pleasures” (15). It is a gynocentric space from which the Countess of Cumberland and her daughter, Anne, could retreat from the political sphere for quiet, spiritual reflection. Historically, it is known that this estate was “leased to the Countess of Cumberland’s brother, William Russell of Thornhaugh, where the Countess resided periodically until 1605 or shortly after” (Woods, note on the poem’s title, 130). It is unclear how much (if any) time Lanyer herself actually spent at Cooke-ham, although the poem would have us believe that she was a welcomed guest at the estate at some point. What is clear, however, is that the expulsion of the Cumberland women from this earthly Eden appears partially the fault of temporal marriage.

When writing of Anne in this poem, for instance, Lanyer emphasizes her virginal state while she was in residence at Cooke-ham. Lanyer first refers to her as “that sweet Lady sprung from *Cliffords* race, / Of noble *Bedfords* blood, faire steame of Grace; / To honourable *Dorset* now espows’d, / In whose faire breast true virtue then was hous’d” (93-96). Now the lady is “espows’d” to “honourable *Dorset*,” yet she was previously the seat of “true virtue,” about to enter the marital state. The description of Dorset as “honourable” does suggest that Anne has advanced her status by this union. But the repeated references to Christ as superior bridegroom throughout the rest of *Salve Deus* undermine this brief gesture to the satisfaction of her match with the Earl.

Twenty lines later, the poet again refers to Anne in a way that calls to mind the potential superiority of her unmarried self, notably its ability to make room for affective bonds beyond the marital. Lanyer's memory works to recall

Those pleasures past, which will not turn againe:
 Remember beauteous *Dorsets* former sports,
 So farre from beeing toucht by ill reports;
 Wherein my selfe did always beare a part,
 While reverend Love presented my true heart:
 Those recreations let me beare in mind,
 Which her sweet youth and noble thoughts did finde:
 Wherof depriv'd, I evermore must grieve,
 Hating blind Fortune, carelesse to relieve. (118-126)

Yes, Lanyer refers to Anne by her married name, but immediately thereafter suggests we are to recall her "former sports" which then (as opposed to now) were "farre from beeing toucht by ill reports." Unlike the perilous minefield of her present marital state, her unmarried existence was a simpler time that, importantly, also included Lanyer herself, who was privy to Anne's "sweet youth" and "noble thoughts."²⁴ However, Anne's marriage appears to have severed that relationship, leaving Lanyer to "grieve" this loss.

Lanyer later emphasizes the role marriage plays in the cause of her "griefe" as the poem continues. Now adding that the estate itself felt "sorrow" at Anne and her mother's departure, Lanyer writes that the two were called away by "your occasions... That nothing there had power to make you stay" (147-148). Woods's note on the passage glosses the word "occasions" as "responsibilities" (147n). Yet this word also carries with it marital connotations, particularly as

they relate to women's social status as delineated by the creation of Adam and Eve. As exegetes were oft to note, Eve was to be obedient to Adam because, unlike Adam, she was made "occasionally" for him. That is, while Adam's purpose extended beyond his relationship with Eve, hers lay solely in her creation as Adam's "help meet." With this context, it seems possible to read Lanyer's reference to the Cumberland women's "occasions" as a suggestion that it was their marital roles that took them away from their Edenic space.

Indeed, it is only a few lines later that the reader finds another reference to Anne that emphasizes her pre-marital status at Cooke-ham. Lanyer writes that one of the women's favorite past-times was sitting under "that faire tree" (a stately Oak she references elsewhere in her poem) which "noble *Dorset*, then a virgin faire" would oft sit under and read "To this faire tree" (157, 160, 162). Again, Lanyer calls attention both to Anne's current, "noble" marriage while also conveying a sense of longing for her past, virginal state. For Lanyer cannot reference Anne's marriage without simultaneously acknowledging what it caused her to lose—an Edenic world that already, without marriage, served as a type of that heavenly realm to which all Christians strive. "The Description of Cooke-ham" presents an ambivalent attitude towards the occasion for Anne's departure. Despite Lanyer's praise for Anne's marriage, the cost is the loss of a gynocentric Edenic space that withers at her departure. Instead of typologically advancing Anne, Lanyer's poem suggests that Dorset's marriage actually causes her to *lose* paradise.

For Lanyer, the failure of early modern marriages to live up to the relationship they are supposed to prefigure—that of Christ and his Church—calls into question the notion that a wife should be obedience to that match. Rather than suggest that women must submit to their husbands for the sake of domestic peace regardless of their treatment, she instead offers the powerful suggestion that her dedicatees might look to her book as a means through which they

may directly become brides of Christ if the temporal marriages they belong to fail to meet her marital criteria. For until men grant women their “Libertie” again, (i.e. until early modern marriage practices resemble the more egalitarian relationship depicted between Adam and Eve before the Fall), marriage cannot operate as a type of that heavenly match. What’s more, Lanyer’s very act of writing works to demonstrate the possibilities of ensuring a legacy that is not controlled by the world of men. For while her text argues that wives might look to Christ for spiritual advancement, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* speaks to the possibility of *social* advancement as well, without the aid of patriarchal networks. Both woman’s temporal and spiritual fortunes, Lanyer provocatively claims, need not be tied to their husband’s. Until earthly husbands heed “Eves Apologie,” women may, and possibly even *must*, look elsewhere to achieve their aims.

Chapter 3—Wife After Death: Typology and the Good Widow in Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing*

Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing* (1616), like Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, positions its author’s marital status as partial authorization for her appearance in print.¹ Unlike Lanyer, however, whose wifely status appears only begrudgingly acknowledged in her work, Leigh’s text is explicitly intertwined with her social roles as wife and mother. The 270-page mother’s advice (or mother’s legacy) book announces itself on the title page as “The godly counsaile of a *Gentle-woman*” for her children, written by “Mrs. DOROTHY LEIGH.” As a mother’s role in the spiritual education of her children was culturally valued in early modern England, appealing to that role when writing presents a buffer against any charge of impropriety that might arise from her appearance in print. Announcing Leigh as a gentlewoman, and clearly referring to her as “Mrs.,” would also underscore her legitimate placement within patriarchal networks and her elevated class status. As the wife of a gentleman and mother to his children, this is an appropriate subject on which Leigh can write. If the reader were left with any doubt, however, the title page also includes the following from Proverbs 1.8: “My sonne, heare the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the lawe of thy mother.” The Bible commands here, as well as famously in the sixth commandment which it echoes (honor thy father and mother), for children to attend to the guidance of both parents, regardless of gender. Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing* harnesses an awareness of this tradition to assuage any concerns regarding immodesty on the part of the female author.

Observing the importance of these social roles to Leigh’s authorial agency is not new in literary criticism of Leigh’s text.² What has yet to be considered at length, however, is the fact that Leigh was a widow by the time of her writing—a fact she self-consciously announces early in her work. After a brief dedication to the Princess Elizabeth (the daughter of James I), the text

includes a dedication to her three sons that self-consciously draws attention to Leigh's widowed status. I will refer to the dedication repeatedly throughout the chapter, and thus provide it here in its entirety. Leigh writes:

My children, God having taken your Father out of this vale of teares, to his everlasting mercy in Christ, my selfe not onely knowing what a care hee had in his life time, that you should be brought up godly, but also at his death being charged in his will by the love and duty which I bare him, to see you well instructed and brought up in knowledge, I could not chuse but secke (according as I was by duty bound) to fulfill his will in all things, desiring no greater comfort in the World, then to see you grow in godlinesse, that so you might meet your Father in heaven, where I am sure hee is, my selfe being a witsnesse of his Faith in Christ. And seeing my selfe going out of the world, and you but coming in, I know not how to performe this duty so well, as to leave you these few lines, which will shew you as well the great desire your father had both of your spirituall and temporal good, as the care I had to fulfill his will in this, knowing it was the last duty I should performe unto him. But when I had written these things unto you, and had (as I thought) something fulfilled your fathers request, yet I could not see to what purpose it should tend, unless it were sent abroad to you: for should it be left with the eldest, it is likely the youngest should have but little part in it. Wherefore setting aside all feare, I have adventured to shew my imperfections to the view of the world, not regarding what censure shall for this bee laid upon me, so that herein I may shew my selfe a loving Mother, and a dutifull Wife: and thus I leave you to the protection of him that made you, And rest till death, Your fearefull, faithfull, and carefull mother, D.L.

This dedication presents Leigh's impetus for taking pen to paper as the death of her husband and the enactment of his "will," a term that could refer to an actual, legal document but also puns on its implication vis à vis wifely obedience. It is unlikely that Dorothy's husband, Ralph Leigh, explicitly bequeathed to his wife the charge "to see" their children "well instructed and brought up in knowledge" in his actual will. That being said, the dual meaning of "will" as legal document and as wish rhetorically supports Leigh's claim that she had no choice but to comply with her late husband's "great desire."³ Leigh states she was "duty bound" "to fulfill his will in all things" so that her children would one day meet their "father in heaven"—a phrase which points both to their deceased, earthly father and to God. Leigh argues that the only way to complete this task is to publish her work, ensuring that all three sons will have the equal opportunity to benefit from her instruction. Leigh's suggestion that her sons would not or could not share a single manuscript document is an odd one that further demonstrates Leigh's belief that her appearance in print calls for justification. By presenting her publication as an act of motherly love and wifely duty (to a husband that is no longer living), Leigh proves her fealty to early modern dictates for wives and mothers while simultaneously justifying her appearance in print.

Some scholars have attended to Leigh's discussion of her husband in the dedication and the implications of his presence for her writing. Catherine Gray, for example, reads in it a resistance to her husband, suggesting the author "does not so much supplement as usurp the father's will, replacing it with a maternal authority that she likens to the spiritual motherhood of Saint Paul" (47). Kristen Poole, on the other hand, suggests Leigh's reference to her children's ambiguously termed "father in heaven" "absolves herself of any indiscretion or violation of gender boundaries" (77). But more frequently than not, scholars fail to consider Leigh's

references to her husband and the implications of her widowhood for her text. Julia Combs comes closest to providing a thoughtful consideration of the implications of Leigh's widowhood for her "social engagement," arguing that Leigh "becomes her own example" of a "dutiful" widow so as to counter misogynistic attacks against widows (117-18). But Combs's paragraph on Leigh's performance of widowhood hardly does justice to the topic. Correcting this oversight, this chapter will contextualize *The Mothers Blessing* within existing discourses surrounding the prescribed roles for wives and widows, arguing that Leigh consciously invokes her widowhood within her dedication so that she can present her literary endeavor as part of her performance of the role of Good Widow, or a wife who remains chaste and dutiful even after her husband's passing.⁴ Specifically, Leigh's repeated use of the typologically resonant word "fulfill" in her dedication to her sons and elsewhere in the body of her work serves to situate Leigh as a woman whose widowhood does not undermine her wifely status. Through a rhetoric of typology, Leigh asserts the posthumous continuation of her spousal duties so as to eschew the more spiritually ambivalent aspects of widowhood. What's more, Leigh points to none other than Mary, the mother of Christ himself, to underscore chastity's ability to place a woman in the typological narrative of biblical history. Doing so aids Leigh in evading the social and spiritual anxieties of widowhood, enabling her to confidently assert her own literary agency.

I

Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* saw no less than twenty-three editions through 1729, making it one of the most popular mother's legacy books in and beyond the seventeenth century. Paul Salzman even goes so far as to call it "a genuinely early modern best-seller" (18). The advice within the text ranges from suggestions for the education of household staff, how to choose your children's names, and, for its majority, advice on how to properly worship the Lord

(including suggestions for how and when to pray, whom to do it with, and how to properly observe the Sabbath). Although much longer than other generic iterations, it was printed in a compact sextodecimo form so that it could be easily transported and referenced. Adding to the sense that this text was meant for daily usage and continual reflection, a 1634 edition housed at the Folger Shakespeare Library even contains a bookmark attached at the bottom of the spine for easy page marking.⁵

The Mothers Blessing may have been one of the most popular mother's legacy texts of the seventeenth century, but it was not the first. Earlier iterations of the genre appeared in the sixteenth century, first written (perhaps unsurprisingly) by men. For instance, the popular poet Nicholas Breton had previously written a text titled *The Mothers Blessing* (1602). Unlike Leigh's later extensive prose religious reflection, Breton's thirty-page poem offers light-hearted maxims appropriate for commonplacing. As is noted by Michael Brennan in his entry on Breton for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "Breton also specialized in the compilation of collections of popular verse aphorisms and maxims. *The Mothers Blessing* (1602), dedicated to Thomas Roe, contained a generous helping of such commonplace wisdoms." The contents of Breton's texts are largely secular aphorisms, but not strict religious teachings as will be found in later, particularly female-authored, iterations of the genre. He presents a sort of folk mother figure, a fictional image that women would soon correct in their own published works.

Around the turn of the seventeenth century, female-authored mother's advice books began to appear in print. This seems to be due in large part to the increasing belief throughout the Reformation period that mothers served an essential role in the spiritual health of the early modern household, lessening the taboo surrounding certain types of women's writing. As famously noted by Betty Travitsky, the renaissance saw the rise of what she calls the "new

mother,” a woman who was expected to be “learned and pious, responsible for raising her children and developing her own potential” (“The New Mother” 33).⁶ She was a woman who “would one day hope to find in her experience as a mother the outlet for her creative, spiritual, and intellectual needs” (Travitsky, “The New Mother” 33). As the other half in a companionate model of marriage, she was expected to share the household duties with her husband, or support his godly initiatives with her own good works. Within the frame of child-rearing, this relationship often came closest to presenting husband and wife as true partners. Robert Cleaver’s oft-reprinted domestic advice manual, for example, repeatedly references the role both fathers and mothers played in the rearing of children. Writing on the chief duties of parenthood, Cleaver begins: “First, that fathers and mothers do instruct and bring up their children (even from the cradle) in the feare & nurture of the Lord” (246).⁷ The purpose of bearing children is to perpetuate a community of believers. As is listed in Cleaver’s text, both the father and mother are responsible for this endeavor.

Robert Cleaver was hardly the only individual emphasizing a wife’s role in the spiritual education of her children. The anonymous seventeenth-century advice manual *The House-Holder’s Helpe* (1615) cites the eighth and ninth verses of Proverbs to argue, “*Salomon* presupposeth that al godly mothers will be helpers to their husbands, in the religious and godly instruction of their children” (A2v). Likewise, Church of England clergyman Josias Nichols offers the following praise of the influence of a godly woman on children and household staff:

A woman, being the *fruitfull vine on the house sides*, in whose sight the *children are tender and deare*: can by no meanes shew their naturall love better, then being alway at hand with their children and maides, to give them every day in milde and pleasant manner some of these golden apples: wherewith the young babes will take such delight,

that by the nourishment and exercise thereof, they will be made strong to confound the enemies of God and their countrie (Cv).

According to Nichols, a woman must always be present to instruct both her children and even her servants. She must provide them with “these golden apples” (presumably that which will be outlined in Nichols’ text) and in doing so will encourage them to grow “strong.” For Nichols, this strength is both of a religious and civic nature, as he contends that education allows English subjects to both “confound the enemies of God and their countrie.” Spiritual instruction ensures the development of a dutiful political subject who is loyal to England and, implicitly, its Reformation theology. Nichols’ text gives voice to common ideologies about women and their ideal, domestic role as pious exemplars and educators of the even more marginalized members of her household.

The female-authored mother’s legacy texts echo these ideals, as each text presents an image of women striving to do their best for their children. Perhaps the first female-authored mother’s legacy, Elizabeth Grymeston’s *Miscellania, Meditations, Memoratives* (1604) offers maxims of parental advice often borrowed from other sources, in keeping with established generic conventions of parental advice texts like Breton’s.⁸ As in Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing*, however, Grymeston feels the need to justify her presence in print. She writes that she “resolved to breake the barren soile of my fruitless braine” because of her doubts surrounding “thy fathers [her husband’s] life” (A3r). Her gesture to the ill health of her husband helps justify her publication—she writes because she fears they will both be gone when her children need instruction. Grymeston’s fears of temporal longevity as they pertained to her own life were not, unfortunately, unfounded. As Marsha Urban notes, Grymeston’s fear “was legitimate; she died shortly after completing her text” (40). References to her imminent death serve as a rhetorical

device authorizing a woman's publication at a time when so few women writers could be found in print.

Other legacies would follow this text and Leigh's, including those by Elizabeth Clinton and Elizabeth Joceline. Clinton's text uniquely presents the argument that women should breastfeed their own children, claiming to write "to redeeme my peace, first by *repentance* towards God...second by *studying how to shew double love to my children*...thirdly by *doing my indeavour to prevent many christian mothers* from sining in the same kinde, against our most loving, and gracious God" (16; original emphasis). Viewing her own failure to breastfeed as an affront to God's design, Clinton offers her text as a warning to all other mothers to avoid the same mistake.

Joceline, more akin to Grymeston and Leigh, offers her mother's legacy from a place of fear, concerned that she will not survive childbirth and therefore be able to instruct her child in the ways of the world. In her preface to her husband she admits:

I no sooner conceived an hope, that I should bee made a mother by thee, but with it entred the consideration of a mothers duty, and shortly after followed the apprehension of danger that might prevent mee from executing that care I so exceedingly desired, I meane in religious training our Childe. And in truth death appearing in this shape, was doubly terrible unto mee. First, in respect of the painfulnesse of that kinde of death, and next of the losse my little one should have in wanting me.

Joceline writes as a woman yet to give birth and, fearing the mortality she might face and her child's potential spiritual bankruptcy because of it, writes her legacy. It is her duty to ensure that her child grows up to be godly, and this text provides evidence of her motherly care even if she happens to pass away before she has the opportunity to raise her child.⁹

Grymeston, Leigh, Lincoln, and Joceline are united in the way they present their marital and motherly status as justifications for female authorship: a justification supported, as Betty Travitsky notes, by the most prominent Christian humanists and protestant reformers of the period (Travitsky, “Grymeston [Grimston; *née* Bernye], Elizabeth”). These women see it as their duty as good Christian wives and mothers to ensure their children receive religious instruction. And, as Kate Narveson’s work on early modern writing practices makes clear, leaving *written* ruminations on the Scriptures was entirely in keeping with Protestant views of godly comportment, even for women. Both reading and writing on the Scriptures was evidence of a devout and seeking faith, and a woman could do worse than leave evidence of these virtues for her children.

Despite *The Mothers Blessing*’s adherence to the generic conventions of early modern mother’s legacy books, Leigh stands out among these authors as a woman driven by *posthumous* marital fidelity to compose her text. That is, she presents her impetus to write as the pious act of a godly widow, rather than an obedient wife.¹⁰ But despite her widowed status, Leigh’s text spends no time (beyond the introduction) explicitly addressing the proper behavior of widows. Instead, Leigh repeatedly considers the proper comportment of women and wives generally, with some special attention to what it means to be a godly wife. As this chapter will show, Leigh’s delineation of godly female behavior, particularly for wives, underscores how her literary foray is entirely in keeping with God’s design for women, especially widows. For as Leigh’s dedication to her sons argues, her understanding of a widow’s behavior closely echoes that of a wife. Widowhood, for Leigh, is merely a continuation of one’s wifely duties—a Good Widow, like a Good Wife, remains devoted to her earthly spouse even after his death.

A thorough understanding of how Leigh defines godly women and wives, then, is necessary to comprehend the implications of Leigh's widowed status and its relationship to her writing. Like Lanyer, Leigh's understanding of wifedom is inflected with the logic of biblical typology, a fact that has recently been noted by Victoria Brownlee. Whereas Brownlee focuses her argument on the ways in which both authors use a typological reading of Mary to argue for the spiritual significance of contemporary women's maternal labor, however, I argue that Leigh uses Mary to suggest the typological significance of female chastity, specifically in marriage. Presenting chastity as an essential godly female attribute, and Mary's chief virtue, underscores the potential spiritual import for Leigh of remaining a chaste wife to her deceased husband. For if a woman places herself in the narrative of sacred history through the performance of chastity, the maintenance of that performance even after one's husband's passing might be necessary to eschew the possibility of spiritual denigration.

II

Leigh gestures to her familiarity with the traditional typological understanding of the Bible when, in her seventh chapter, she outlines guidelines for giving children names. Early in her chapter, Leigh suggests her sons use the names "Philip, Elizabeth, James, Anna, John and Susanna" if they happen to have children (29). Yet she pauses to ruminate on why she has not suggested the name Mary:

My reason was this, because I presumed, that there was no moan [sic] so senselesse, as not to looke what a blessing God hath sent to us women through that gracious Virgin, by whom it pleased GOD to take away the shame, which Eve our Grandmother had brought us to: For before, men might say, The woman beguiled me, and I did eate the poisoned fruit of disobedience, and I dye. But now man may say...The woman brought me a

Saviour, and I feede of him by faith and live. Here is this great and wofull shame taken from women by God, working in a woman...the shame is taken from us, and from our posterity for ever: *The seede of the woman hath taken downe the Serpents head.* (34-36; original emphasis)

Leigh figures Mary as superseding Eve in women's history, a move she makes with support of Genesis 2:15 (the sentence italicized above). Eve, the mother of mankind, brought sin into this world and Mary, the mother of God, brings our Salvation. While, without Mary, man might criticize woman as the downfall of mankind, men must now acknowledge her as the conduit of their salvation: Mary supersedes Eve's sin through her role as mother to Jesus Christ, the "seed" who will take down the "serpents head" in Genesis 2:15. Where Eve brought sin into the world, Mary brings salvation.

This was not a theologically novel idea, and texts abound throughout the period that speak of Mary as a "second" or "new" Eve. Henry Howard (The Earl of Northampton), for instance, describes man's fall thus: "the price [of Adam and Eve's sin] was banishment from blisse, til the blessed seede of another Woman and a seconde Eve, shoulde cruse and bruse the selfe same serpents heade" (Bjr).¹¹ Howard's text articulates the commonplace idea that just as Eve brought sin into the world, Mary would deliver the Christian from it through her birthing of Christ. Although Howard writes from a Protestant context, many more examples abound in Catholic treatises throughout the period, perhaps making it seem strange that Leigh would use this imagery in her anti-papist *Blessing*. Indeed, theologians such as Richard Fowns, chaplain to Henry, Prince of Wales, calls attention to the folly of Catholics who believe "*the new Eve restored all the kinde of women sleeing [sic] unto her, by keeping innocence, as the new Adam our Lord Jesus Christ hath recovered all mankinde*" (86; original emphasis).¹² Those who teach

this as doctrine should “blush for shame” for directing women to seek Mary, rather than Christ, for their salvation (86).

But it is not difficult to imagine why the “new Eve” reading of Mary would appeal to women in particular, as a typological understanding of Mary as the second Eve offers a reprieve from the more misogynistic attacks against them that are often grounded in Eve’s transgression.¹³ Leigh’s text largely agrees with Fowns regarding the dangers of Marian worship, and *The Mothers Blessing* cautions against those who “have made a God of the virgin *Marie*” when no biblical precedent for doing so exists (44; original emphasis). Leigh critiques the excess of this devotion, but notes that Mary is nonetheless worthy of adoration since she “hath taken away the reproch [sic] which of right belonged unto us, and by the seed of the woman we are al saved” (44). Through Mary, women are redeemed from Eve’s Original Sin. Like the second Adam, Mary is the second Eve who supersedes the earlier faults of womankind and absolves them of the “reproch” they often face at the hands of men.

Leigh suggests not only that Mary serve as the antitype of Eve but also fulfills the promise of the most notable women of the Old Testament.¹⁴ According to Leigh, “Some godly and reverend men of the Church have gathered this, that there were five women of great virtue in the time of the Lawe, the first letters of whose names doe make her whole name to shewe, that shee had all their vertues wholly combined in her, as namely; *Michal, Abigail, Rachel, Judith & Anna*” (41).¹⁵ Mary is the compilation of Old Testament female virtue. Within her very name are contained the echoes of other, notable Biblical women, which “seeing then, that by this one name, so many vertues are called to remembrance, I thinke it meete, that good names be given to all women, that they might call to minde the vertues of those women whose names they beare” (42-43). Mary typologically supersedes her biblical forbearers and contains their virtues within

each letter of her name, M (ichal)-A (bigail) –R (achel)-I (udeth)-A (nna). No one woman could carry the weight of such a title, but all woman should seek to be like Mary regardless of their name.

We might surmise, then, that Leigh is familiar with the logic of Biblical typology and crafts a “genealogy of women” similar to what Marie Loughlin witnesses in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (135). Women with biblical names are placed within a better position to “call to minde the vertues of those women” whose names they share and, perhaps, enact their good works within their own lives in a way that potentially places them in the chain of typological supersession. Mary serves as the New Testament fulfillment of the actions of all other women who came before her, beginning with Eve. Through shared names and the emulation of these women’s virtues, contemporary women might also place themselves in this typological chain.¹⁶

Overall, Leigh spends a surprising amount of time describing the proper behavior of women in a text ostensibly written for her three male children. Her continued emphasis on the importance of Mary as the best model for female behavior is also puzzling, especially when one considers Protestantism’s aversion to Marian devotion. In the same chapter on naming, for instance, Leigh argues that women should, above all, follow Mary and wish to be “chaste,” since “the greatest title that she [Mary] had, was, that shee was a blessed and pure Virgin” (37). This advice might at first appear out of step with Leigh’s anti-Catholicism; praise of Mary’s virginity potentially smacks of popery, especially as it could be construed as support for the rejection of marriage in favor of perpetual virginity. That being said, Leigh is careful to suggest that both virgins *and* wives can enact the chastity practiced by Mary, as she defines “chastity” not so much as merely sexual abstinence but as fidelity and obedience to a patriarchal figure—Christ, God,

father, and / or husband—that often manifests itself in sexual purity. Chasity, as emblemized by Mary’s status as “blessed Virgin,” was the “greatest title that she [Mary] had” and should therefore be a

great cause to move all women, whether they be maids or wives (both which estates she honoured) to live chastly, to whom for this cause God hath given a cold and temperate disposition, & bound them with these words; *Thy desire shall be subject to thy husband*. As if God in mercy to women should say; You of your selves shal have no desires, only they shall be subject to your husbands. (37-38; original emphasis)

Leigh’s convoluted rhetoric aligns with early modern understandings of chastity. For Leigh, Mary is an emblem of both maidenhood and appropriate wifely behavior which, as she describes it here, correlates with womanly submission to spiritual and patriarchal will for both virgins and wives.

Returning to her Marian acrostic, one can again witness the importance of chastity to godly female comportment in Leigh’s motherly advice. Leigh claims that these specific women create the acrostic because of their chastity, regardless of their status as maidens or wives. Michal, who makes up the first letter of M-A-R-I-A, for instance, “saved her husband *David* from the fury of *Saul*, although hee were her father and her King, not preferring her owne life before the safety of her husband” (42). Likewise, Abigail “is highly commendable for her wisdom: amiable in the fight of her husband” (42). And while Leigh does not highlight the marital statuses of Rachel, Judith, or Anna when describing their worthiness to serve as types of Mary, these names would all, as “good names” should, “call to minde the vertues of those women whose names they beare: but especially above all other morall Virtues, let women be perswaded by this discourse, to imbrace chastity, without which we are mere beasts, and no

women” (43). For Leigh, chastity is what distinguishes women from other, female creatures as it is superior to all other virtues. It marks their ability to count themselves members of humankind. Additionally, it also has the potential to place early modern women in the typological chain begun with Eve. If Mary’s virtue of chastity is what enables her to fulfill the promise of Eve (a woman who, counter to Mary, was famous for her disobedience to her spouse and God), then those women who also “embrace chastity” position themselves in this typological narrative whereby they become antitypes of Eve. If not chaste, a woman’s spiritual salvation and, perhaps her very humanity, is at risk.

Leigh’s rhetoric surrounding chastity and Mary’s relationship to it resonates with other popular treatises on female behavior, most notably that of Juan Luis Vives.¹⁷ Vives claims that chastity (which he also applies to both maids and wives) is “the principall virtue of a Woman, and countrepeyseth with all the rest: if she have that, no man wyll loke for any other” (51). It is “the queen of vertues in a woman” and all other virtues are contained within it (Vives 53). Chastity is the pinnacle of godly female behavior, and with it a woman is at her most praiseworthy. Even more resonant with Leigh, Vives writes that a “mayde” should learn her behavior from “heryng and redyng holy examples of virgins,” most notably Mary, “whose lyfe, nat only maydes have for an example to forme and fashen them selfe after, but also wyves and wydowes: for she hath be [sic] all thyng unto all folkes to provoke all and brynge them unto the example of her chastitie” (53). Mary, like early modern women, experienced all stages of the female life cycle and therefore can serve as a model for women regardless of what stage they are at in their lives. To the virgin she counsels how to remain “safe and holle,” to the wife she offers instruction in the “care for the pleasing of your husbands,” and for widows she provides “both frutefull consolation of the losse of your husbände, and counsaile of keypyng your children, and

example of leading the residue of your lyfe” (Vives 54). Leigh’s attention to Mary as a model for female comportment for maids and wives, then, finds precedent in none other than one of the most popular women’s conduct manuals of the period.

Leigh partially exposes her intent in elaborating on female behavior in Chapter twelve, which is devoted to instructing her children on how to choose a wife. A “godly wife,” Leigh claims, helps her husband “in godliness: for God sayd, *It is not good for man to bee alone, let him have a helper meet for him*” (49; original emphasis). If she is not godly, “the man is alone still” and is likely to be “drawne to sinne” through the influence of his sinful wife (Leigh 50). This notion that an unfit marriage fails to cure the loneliness it was intended to assuage will be crucial to Milton’s arguments for divorce, as I will discuss in the following chapter. While Milton attempts to offer a way out for ill-matched individuals, however, Leigh’s emphasis remains squarely on *preventing* bad matches before they occur. Leigh’s attention to the qualities of a Good Wife is intended to aid her children in preventing an ill-suited match.

Leigh warns her sons that “the world was drowned, because men married ungodly wives,” and that Solomon himself, the “wisest man that ever was” endangered himself by marrying idolatrous women” (50). She entreats her sons to take care and follow the edict of 1 John 2.15: “*Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world,*” applying it to their marital choices—“a little with a godly woman is better then great riches with the wicked” (51). To see her sons choose godly wives is a great blessing, she continues. This above all should be their priority in choosing a partner, and they cannot make this wise choice without first understanding what it is that makes a good woman. Her spiritual aptitude can be a boon to their own salvific hopes; her wickedness could lead to their downfall. Essentially, she entreats her sons to avoid choosing a woman who has failed to typologically ascend beyond Eve and her transgressions.

A godly wife, then, follows the example set forth by Mary and serves as man's "helper meet" by encouraging his spiritual edification. Indeed, Leigh appears to ascribe to the ideology of companionate marriage as she elaborates on what the marital relationship is supposed to look like. She argues that if her son

served God, he would obey God, and then hee would chuse a godly wife, and live lovingly and godlily with her, and not doe as some man, who taketh a woman to make her a companion and fellow, and after he hath her, he makes her a servant and a drudge. If she be thy wife, she is always too good to be thy servant, and worthy to be thy fellow.
(55)

To be a godly husband is to take seriously the edict that God created women to be a "helper meet" for man, a "companion and fellow" as Leigh argues, rather than a "servant and drudge." In short, men must love their wives to be godly individuals themselves, and treat them as partners rather than subjects.

So, while Leigh's description of marriage includes subjection to one's husband's will as is seen in her dedication to her sons, Leigh also argues, like her contemporaries, that husbands must treat their wives fairly and justly. For as Leigh is careful to remind them, *they* made their marital beds, and should therefore lie in them faithfully. According to her, "it is an ungodly and very foolish thing of a man to mistake his owne choise, especially since God hath given a man much choise among the godly" (53). These men, according to Leigh, exhibit "senseless simplicity" if they dislike their own choice. Demonstrating pity for women left in such marriages, she entreats her sons, "Doe not a woman that wrong, as to take her from her friends that love her, and after a while to begin to hate her...If thou canst not love her to the end, leave her to him that can" (55). Treating women thusly, Leigh continues, also carries risks for her

sons' relationship with their mother: "my sonne could not offend me in any thing, if hee served God, except he chose a wife that he could not love to the end" (55). Leigh ties her motherly pride for her sons to their just treatment of the women they take on as wives.

Like many Christian authors, Leigh does not extend the benefits of companionate marriage to complete gender equality. But also in keeping with her contemporaries, this does not prevent Leigh from arguing for a godly women's right to offer religious instruction to those around her. In her fifth chapter, for example, Leigh argues that one reason she chose to write and publish her work was to

encourage women...not to bee ashamed to shew their infirmities, but to give men the first and chiefe place: yet let us labour to come in the second; and because wee must needs confesse, that sin entred us into our posterity, let us shew how carefull we are to seeke to Christ to cast it out of us, and our posterity, and how fearefull we are that our sinne should sinke any of them to the lowest part of the earth; wherefore let us call upon them to follow Christ, who will carry them to the height of heaven. (16-17)

Women should not fear charges of impiety if they wish to speak and write on the subject of godly instruction, for although men belong in the "chiefe place," to "come in the second" women must show how they "labour" to repair the effects of the Fall. "Posterity," i.e. one's children, can only avoid the legacy of sin begotten by Eve and recapitulated in early modern women if women "seeke to Christ to cast it [sin] out of us." To exhort one's children to also "follow Christ" is hardly a marker of impiety or a reason for shame. In fact, it is precisely through the instruction of one's children that women can work to redeem themselves from Eve's transgressions.

It is not difficult to hear in Leigh's use of the word "labour" the suggestion of a parallel between childbirth and maternal spiritual instruction, a parallel that also finds its precedent in

Mary. As Victoria Brownlee observes in her reading of Lanyer and Leigh, “in giving birth to the Savior, Mary is found to eradicate Eve’s legacy but also to inaugurate a new, grace-filled dispensation that permanently alters the position of women. Because of Mary’s maternity, a spiritually enriched conception of motherhood is now divinely permissible for all women” (1316). Women may remain second to men, yet they nonetheless play a crucial role in delivering their “posterity” into eternal salvation through godly instruction.

Later in her text, Leigh again calls attention to women’s lesser status than men, but does so to advocate for greater patience from husbands when dealing with their wives. In Leigh’s discussion of a godly man’s duty to remain steadfast in his marital choice, she quotes First Peter 3.7, which refers to women famously as the “weaker vessel” (56). But she explains that “it is her imperfection that honoureth thee, and that it is thy perfection that maketh thee to beare with her” (56). Leigh uses the belief in women’s inferiority to justify her call to patience when a husband is dealing with his wife, thus supporting her argument that men enact a cruel “childishnesse” if they turn away from their chosen partner, even if she has many faults (57). God ordained man to unite with the weaker sex, and it is man’s ability to “beare with her” despite her infirmities that marks him as a good and faithful man of God. Although women are “weaker” than men, that weakness also provides an opportunity for men to demonstrate their Christian charity.

Leigh’s paradoxical presentation of unequal companionship aligns with early modern ideas of companionate marriage, but Leigh uses this belief in the importance of female chastity, grounded on Mary’s example, to authorize her own, literary voice and lend it typological significance. *The Mothers Blessing*’s prefatory material and early chapters address Leigh’s own obedience to her husband, an essential component of marital chastity, as the impetus for her writing. In her dedication to her sons she claims she *had* to venture into print since she “could

not chuse but seeke (according as I was duty bound) to fulfill his will in all things,” being instructed on his death bed “to see you well instructed and brought up in knowledge.” It is for this reason that she can later assert her lack of concern for the potential public censure of her publication. Although even her own children might “marvaile...why I doe not, according to the usuall custome of women, exhort you by word and admonitions, rather then by writing,” Leigh asserts, “neither care I what you or any shall thinke of mee, if among many words I may write but one sentence, which may make you labour for the spirituall food of the soule” (3-4, 5). This strategy resonates with Kathryn Schwarz’s argument that seemingly submissive female acts might also provide opportunities for female transgression. Leigh’s defiant act against the “usuall custome” is done paradoxically in the name of female chastity, an ostensibly conservative doctrine requiring feminine subjection. As a woman whose marital chastity enables her to provide her sons and readers with the “spirituall food of the soule,” Leigh’s performance of chastity, like Mary’s, fulfills the promise of the Old Law and delivers man through her spiritual “labour” out of sin.

Scholars have previously recognized Leigh’s use of these social roles in *The Mothers Blessing* to authorize her own writing. And, as is demonstrated by Victoria Brownlee, scholars are beginning to take into consideration the typological significance Leigh brings to her maternal role. That being said, scholars frequently fail to note that, at the time of her writing, Leigh was mother, wife, *and* widow—a woman who, theoretically, no longer has a husband to which she is bound nor to whom she can chastely obey. Widowhood was a common life stage for early modern women, and she was not even the only author of a mother’s legacy book to write as a widow (Elizabeth Clinton had been widowed in 1619).¹⁸ Despite this fact, Leigh is the only one to draw direct attention to her deceased partner within her text, acknowledging her widowhood

from the very outset of her dedication to her sons by calling attention to her husband's death. This seems an odd rhetorical maneuver, as the role of widow was a far more socially ambivalent one than wife. But by depicting her widowhood as a continuation of, rather than a break from, her role as dutiful wife, Leigh uses her widowed status to justify her own literary endeavor.

Widowhood was hardly a unique state in which a woman might find herself in early modern England. Dorothea Kehler estimates that widows made up roughly 15% of the English population at the time of Leigh's writing (2).¹⁹ In terms of social attitudes regarding widows, prior centuries had seen them valorized as godly exemplars of female piety (Kehler 2-3). Nevertheless, Kehler observes that "Early modern Europe was transitional in its conceptions of the widow's place," and widows were increasingly viewed with skepticism and derision (9). They were women who no longer lived under direct spousal supervision, and they often had financial independence depending on what was willed to them upon their husband's passing. Also, their perceived sexual experience left them open to charges of insatiable desire and excessive appetites. These facts made widows a potential threat to the social hierarchies of patriarchal England.²⁰ Furthermore, if marriage was ideally upheld as the pinnacle of typological supersession and a necessary act for Protestant women to gain access to the spiritual realm, to be widowed was to be placed precariously outside of that framework. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, debates about the proper comportment of widows and their place in early modern society abounded in the period. The next section will overview some of these debates to provide needed context for Leigh's widowhood and its import for readings of *The Mothers Blessing*.

III

Looking again to Vives, one can begin to get a sense of the prevailing attitudes towards widows in early modern England. Vives, like many of his contemporaries, explicitly opposes

remarriage and instead suggests that a widow should: “Dwell rather with her mother in lawe, or her husbandes alyounge and kyns foles, thane with her owne, both for the remembraunce of her husband, for whose sake hit may appere, that she loveth better his kyn and his blode, than her owne” (172). Rather than remarry or even return to her original kindred, a widow best serves her deceased husband by remaining with his family. Of course, there are strong patriarchal reasons for doing so, namely that through marriage she has been “translated into that kindred, unto the whiche she hath borne children, or at the least wyse shulde have done” (Vives 172). Remarriage threatens the financial and biological legacy of the deceased, providing ample reason for one to argue against the remarriage of widows. For Vives, a widow should live out her life in chastity, raising her husband’s children and remain in the status into which she was “translated” i.e. her marital state.²¹

As Vives’s call for the widow to live with her in-laws suggests, he does not wish widows to view their widowhood as an opportunity to seek freedom or self-governance. Although some may “be glad, that their husbandes be gone, as who were ryd out of yocke and bondage,” they would be wise to recall that “the shyppe is nat at liberte, that lacketh a governour, but rather destitute” (Vives 163). Like an unmanned ship, a widow is “tost at alaventures, as a shyp, lackynge a maister: and is carried without discession and consideration, as a childe whan his over seer is out of the waye” (Vives 163). Imminent peril faces the widow who attempts to exact autonomy through her new state, for she is like a child who is insufficient to stand alone against worldly assaults.

For Vives, then, it is neither proper for a widow to remarry, nor should she attempt to live autonomously. She should live beholden to the family into which she married, raising her husband’s children, and continuing to act with her husband’s governorship in mind. This is the

role of a “good wydowe,” as she is called by Vives, a woman who “ought to suppose, that her husbände is nat utterly deade, but lyveth, both with lyfe of his soule, which is the very lyfe, and beside with her remembraunce” (167). Because her husband’s soul lives, the widow should “handell so her house and householde, and so bring up her children, that her husbände may be glad, and thinke that he is happy to leave suche a wife behynde him. And let her nat behave her selfe so, that his soule have cause to be angry with her, and take vengeauce on her ungratiousnes” (Vives 168). Even after the husband’s death, then, Vives would have the Good Widow continue to act according to his will for the edification of his memory and, more terrifyingly, for the avoidance of his revenge. His corporeal form may be dead, but his soul—the most important part of his being—lives on. Lest she take the chance of being haunted by his vengeful spirit, the widow does well to keep him and his wishes in mind.

Barbara J. Todd has written on the implications of Vives’s advice, suggesting that he promotes what she calls the “virtuous widow”—a woman who remained a “perpetual wife” after her husband’s passing (67). Instead of taking on new social roles and responsibilities or remarrying into a new family, the virtuous widow continues to adhere to those qualities that distinguish a virtuous or good woman in the conduct literature of the period. The chaste, silent, obedient housewife became the chaste, silent, obedient widow, using her husband’s “remembraunce,” rather than his corporeal presence, to police her behavior. A Good Widow, like a Good Wife, should never forget that her prime social role is to dutifully support her husband’s spiritual endeavors, even after death.

Unlike the Catholic Vives, later Protestant writers openly endorsed the remarriage of widows. William Gouge, the noted seventeenth century Calvinist preacher, boldly declares:

The law doth not only permit a widow to marry again: but if her husband died before he had any children, it commanded the next kinsman that was living to marry her, that he might raise up seed to his brother deceased: which if he refused to doe, a penalty of ignominy was inflicted on him.

Here Gouge encourages widows, especially those who are widowed young, to remarry. The source for his advice above is Deuteronomy 25.5 where the law explicitly states: “If brethren dwel together, and one of them dye & have no childe, the wife of the dead shal not mary without: *that is*, unto a stranger, but his kinseman shal go in unto her, and take her to wife, and do the kinsmans office to her.” Gouge appears to read this passage as an example of the lengths to which the Jewish people were instructed to go to prevent a woman from losing her child-bearing potential. While he does not advocate for this practice amongst his readers, he suggests that the least early modern society can do is allow a woman to engage in wedlock with another man in the Christian community, especially as it helps ensure her and her offspring’s protection.

Vives and Gouge represent the conflicting viewpoints on widowhood and remarriage that existed in early modern England. The question of whether or not married individuals would be united in heaven is implicit in this debate. If so, remarriage raised the specter of polygamy. If not, remarriage would seem a harmless practice, and even a necessary one to keep women safely under coverture. Raime Targoff points specifically to the contrast between Vives’s and Gouge’s attitudes towards widowhood to suggest that their differences “capture one of the subtle but important changes wrought by Protestantism in relation to the status of marriage after death. Both faith traditions officially held that marriage was limited to this world, but Protestants tended to draw much stricter lines between earthly and heavenly ties” (32). According to some Reformation theologians, remarriage was not only allowed but encouraged.

One can look to the Protestant marriage ceremony as presented in *The Book of Common Prayer* for evidence of the doctrinal support for remarriage. There, the marrying individuals are asked to pledge fidelity only “till death us depart,” implying that the marriage bond ceases when one partner dies. Targoff suggests that while this phrase was originally intended as a prohibition against “abandonment and divorce,” after the Reformation it “was also used to reinforce the termination of marital vows after death. Far from encouraging the widow (or, less commonly, the widower) to maintain vows of fidelity to the deceased, the emphasis fell on cutting all affective ties with one’s deceased husband or wife, in order to encourage remarriage” (Targoff 30). Upon death, the marital bonds were loosed and the remaining spouse could wed again.

The 1611 funeral sermon for Mrs. Mary Swaine, preached by Lancelot Langhorne, provides an example of this attitude.²² Langhorne describes the deceased’s relationship with worldly possessions:

So this *Mary* had many outward blessings, which flesh and blood might have rejoiced in...She lived very comfortably with a loving and kind Husband; yet shee knew that once they must part. God blessed her with plenty in the world; but shee knew that riches are uncertaine...For our application let us imitate her happy choice, set our affections on things that are above, and not on things that are on earth, weane our selves from the love of these worldly vanities, which at last wee must loose or leave, and set ourselves to attaine this *good part, which shall never be taken from us*: To have Christ dwell in our hearts in this world, that wee may dwell with him in the world to come. (31-33; original emphasis)

Langhorne asserts that Mary lived a quite comfortable life, including her marriage to a “loving and kind Husband” and her privilege of having “plenty in the world.” By listing these two items

one after the other, the author links both husband and worldly goods together. They are both signs of God's favor, yet they are merely temporal and fleeting, as is the Christian's time on earth. They are "worldly vanities" from which his readers must "weane our selves" if they wish to achieve the joys of heaven. They may only join Christ in the next life if they "loose or leave" such possessions so as to "dwell with him in the world to come." According to Langhorne, a spouse is akin to a worldly possession. His readers can be thankful they had them, but "they must part" from them to enjoy Christ's presence in heaven. When his readers reach their heavenly dwelling, they shall replace their worldly community with a heavenly one. As the preacher writes: "where for *the Company of our dearest freinds whom wee love best, we shall enjoy the company of holy Angels, blessed Saints, even the presence of God, Where is fulnesse of joy & at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore*" (33; original emphasis). Those loved by his readers will be replaced with "holy angels, blessed saints" and the "presence of God," which shall bring more joy than ever imagined on earth. In the case of Mr. Swaine, it is clear that his wife has moved to a superior place, leaving him free to take another wife if he chooses.

Langhorne's sermon demonstrates the idea that spouses who enter the heavenly realm will have no more need of their former partners and, thus, the ones left on earth need not maintain their previous marital fidelity. Church of England clergyman John More argues for remarriage in a different vein, claiming instead that it affirms one's fidelity to Christ above the love for their earthly partner. More writes: "He that loves, father or mother, wife or children, &c. better then Christ, is not worthy of his presence. And therefore, though they lament the losse of my life, yet can they not redeeme it: for what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death" (E3r).²³ Remarriage becomes an act that helps prove one's love for God above all else, as it confirms that one does not love any earthly being more than Jesus Christ.

“R.B. Gent.” echoes this same sentiment. Considering the proper mourning behavior of a surviving Christian, the author asks: “Why should wee then *weepe* since they are received into the Throne of *Blisse*, and are made partakers of *Aeternitie*? ... Those that depart in the Faith of Christ, *They are sent before vs, not lost from vs: They shall receiue Immortalitie and be heires of Christs Kingdome*” (Ksv; original emphasis). Again, excessive sadness for the departed operates as a sign of a lack of faith in their final destination. Christians should not weep for those that are “received into the Throne of Blisse” but instead rejoice that they are “made partakers of *Aeternitie*.” One might show natural sadness at their loss, but the Christian is ultimately to rejoice that their loved one has taken his or her place in the heavenly realm.

If one was not sufficiently comforted by the idea of their loved ones finally taking a seat in the heavenly throng, there were those who suggested one might again reunite with friends and family in heaven. Above, “R.B. Gent.” describes death as merely a temporary separation before a later heavenly reunion: “*They are sent before us; not lost from us.*” Similarly, John More offers this comfort to his readers:

O my friends be quiet, for needes wee must departe: yet to meete againe wee are sure.

And in going from you (my fleshly friends) I goe to the Saintes of heaven, to the mounte *Sion*, and to the cittie of the living God, the celestiall Jerusalem, to the companie of innumerable Angels, to the assemblye and congregation of the first borne, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirites of just and perfect men. (E3v).

We leave our “fleshly friends” behind but will, in fact, “meete againe” if they happen to be “just and perfect men” worthy of also living out their days in the New Jerusalem of heaven. This is not dissimilar from Vives’ warning to Good Widows—the dead merely go before us, rather than leave us, forever. This provides even more reason a widow might wish to live in accordance with

her deceased spouse's wishes—he may be gone, but she might have to confront him in the afterlife and answer for her behavior.

“R.B. Gent” and John More are but two examples of theologians promoting the idea that individuals might again see their loved ones in heaven, but as Targoff illuminates, Protestant theologians used passages such as Matthew 22:24-18 to stress that even if one is united with their spouses in the afterlife, their relationship is no longer that of married partners. In this passage, the Sadducees present Christ with the story of a woman married to seven brothers consecutively after each one's passing to inquire as to whose wife she would then be “in the resurrection” (Matthew 22:24-28). To this, Christ replies: “In the resurrection they nether marrie wives, nor wives are bestowed in marriage, but are as the Angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). Christ's words led early modern individuals to believe that even if Christians were to see their loved ones in the afterlife, their relationship would be free of the temporal familial bonds that united men and women on earth.

Thomas Gataker echoes this sentiment in the conclusion of his marital treatise, *Marriage duties briefly [sic] couched together out of Colossians, 3.18,19*: “In a word to conclude, if *Christian men* are to *observe one another, that they may whet on either other to godliness and good works*: then much more should Christian man & wife so doe: that having lived together for a time as *copartners in grace* here, they may reigne together for ever as *co-heires in glory* hereafter” (48; original emphasis). According to Gataker, as the Protestant married couple works united toward the same goals of salvation so shall they reap the rewards together in the afterlife. But their status as “copartners” has been replaced with that of “co-heirs,” suggesting that although they potentially remain in each other's company, the nature of their relationship has changed. They are no longer necessarily “married” as that relationship is defined in the temporal

realm. Such arguments walked a fine but important line to allow for heavenly reunions but also uphold the theoretical possibility of remarriage without fears of polygamy.

The above examples demonstrate the lack of doctrinal clarity regarding the relationship between spouses after death. Once in heaven the two might be so preoccupied by heavenly worship that their temporal relations no longer matter. Or, since those relationships provided the means through which they ascended to heaven, they might continue to serve as support and comfort in the afterlife. A widow (especially a young one) might remarry, but then again doing so might threaten her status as a Good Widow whose only way of maintaining a semblance of chastity would be to continue to remain faithful to her deceased husband. And, if chastity is the means through which a woman might position herself in a typological lineage begun with Eve and fulfilled in Mary, then a threat to chastity might be viewed as a threat to a woman's spiritual worth. The multiple ways of perceiving a widow's relationship to her deceased spouse demonstrates the cultural ambiguity surrounding widowhood, particularly as it related to patriarchal authority and Christian salvation.

Thus far, I have discussed remarriage as if it were a choice available to all women who found themselves widowed, but often a woman had more to consider than her morality when making this choice. Widowhood presented the possibility of economic freedom for some, but it also threatened others due to its removal of a steady source of income and the requirement that widows be worldly enough to know how to litigate for their rights. Tim Stretton's investigation into the presence of widows in the records of the Court of Requests from the Tudor and Stuart period observes that many widowed women had to litigate to maintain their "rights of dower...jointure...and freebench or widow's estate" (199).²⁴ After their husband's deaths, these women "found themselves competing for these entitlements with their husbands' heirs,

especially if they were second or third wives and faced opposition from step-children” (199). Widows had rights to their husband’s finances, and many served as the “executors or administrators” of their former spouses’ estates (200). But as Stretton’s records show, widows found in court documents are often described as poor. And while “many phrases in widows’ pleadings border on the formulaic...the frequency with which individuals placed poverty at the core of their complaints or defences suggests that these descriptions were more than simply empty words” (Stretton 206). Many women, especially those without financial means or the legal knowledge / family support to advocate for their rights, had no other choice but to remarry if they wished to avoid destitution. As is often the case, the practical and the ideological come into conflict when assessing a widow’s behavior.

Early modern English culture, then, was hardly settled on what role widows could or should play in society. Widows were simultaneously encouraged to remain dutiful wives to their deceased spouses while also told that remarriage was an acceptable, and even desirable, course of action. Furthermore, both positions as presented in the conduct literature downplay or outright ignore the economic pressures women faced when making the decision whether or not to remarry. As an early modern widow, a woman would legally experience a reprieve from the legal status of coverture, but more often than not she was encouraged to either comport herself as if her husband were still living or marry another.

Remaining a wife despite one’s spouse’s death, then, ensured a woman that she could still find herself in the typological Christian narrative found in marriage and, more specifically, in her performance of marital chastity. She would not have to navigate the ambiguity surrounding remarriage and the specter of polygamy that followed. And as the next section will prove, Dorothy Leigh capitalizes on the figure of the Good Widow as proposed by Vives—the woman

who remains chaste despite her husband's temporal departure—to also authorize her public engagement via the printed word. That is to say, the performance of posthumous marital fidelity enables Leigh to engage in an activity that asserts her agency.

IV

Perhaps one of the reasons that scholars have paid so little attention to Leigh's references to her wifely status is because Leigh spends little time overtly dwelling on the relationship between her and her husband. Yet from the very title page of the text, *The Mothers Blessing* announces itself as emblematic of the interest both parents have in their children's spiritual well-being. As I note at the beginning of this chapter, the title page includes the following quote from Proverbs 1.8: "My sonne, heare the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the lawe of thy mother." While this passage does of course refer to the husband and wife in their parental terms, it also gestures toward the complete family unit which contains both husband and wife. They are inseparable from each other and both equally responsible for the upbringing of their children. So, while the text itself is signaled by the title as a blessing from a dying mother to her children, it already contains the presence of her marital other half and perpetuates the perception of Leigh as one part of a parental (and marital) whole.

Within the letter to her children, Leigh argues again for the partnership between herself and her husband, writing: "I know not how to perform this duty so well, as to leave you these few lines, which will shew you as well the great desire your Father had both of your spirituall and temporal good, as the care I had to fulfill his will in this." Leigh's text is inspired by the "great desire" of her husband—a desire that can only be expressed through her writing. It takes both parties to bring her work to light, just as it took both parents to bring their children to life. Importantly, Leigh chooses to describe her obedience to her husband by using the word "fulfill."

This is in fact her second use of the word in her dedication, as she first deploys this language when she articulates her impetus for writing: “I could not chuse but secke (according as I was by duty bound) to fulfill his will in all things.” I have already mentioned the ambiguity of Leigh’s reference to her husband’s “will” in this line; Leigh fashions herself as ‘duty bound’ to ensure that her husband’s wishes—both his desire to raise his children godly and that she would write a treatise showing them how this could be done—are fulfilled.

Leigh’s rhetoric resonates with Vives’s description of the Good Widow from *Instruction of a Christian Woman* as discussed above. Far from freeing her from patriarchal bonds, Leigh articulates her position as one still beholden to her earthly spouse, supposing, as Vives instructs, “that her husbände is nat utterly deade, but lyveth, both with lyfe of his soule, which is the very lyfe, and beside with her remembraunce” (167). Her actions—here, the choice to write *The Mothers Blessing* and see it published—are depicted as driven not by individual desires but by a continued sense of wifely responsibility. Her husband may be dead, but Dorothy Leigh conducts herself as a Good Widow, “duty bound” to continue fulfilling her promise to her deceased husband.

Recognizing Leigh’s belief that a Good Widow is a woman who continues the tenants of a Good Wife also helps make sense of the extensive ruminations in *The Mothers Blessing* on wifely behavior. For although Leigh does not explicitly talk of widows in her work, the very act of writing her work for her children and presenting them with advice on godly living in remembrance of her husband is itself a demonstration of how the Good Widow should behave. Again, considering Vives, one should recall how the humanist author suggested that Mary, Christ’s mother, provides a useful example for how maids, wives, *and* widows should comport themselves. Leigh follows suit in arguing for Mary as a spiritual guide, but does not mention her

exemplary role for widows. This omission, however, is mitigated by Leigh's own rhetoric surrounding her relationship to her deceased husband. She need not explicitly link her behavior to Mary, for it should be obvious that she seeks to follow the Virgin's "frutefull consolation of the losse of your husbände, and counsaile of keypyng your children, and example of leading the residue of your lyfe" (Vives 54). The Good Widow Leigh presents herself to be is but a continuation of the Good Wife she describes in her *Blessing*. She is a chaste woman, demure to her husband and driven by his piety, and her own, to provide Christian instruction for her children.

Contextualizing Leigh within discourses of early modern widowhood, then, illuminates the ways in which her text is informed by early modern ideals regarding the comportment of widows. I would argue further still, however, that Leigh's use of the word "fulfil" underscores the typological significance of remaining married to her deceased spouse, and thus further explains what benefits single womanhood might have over remarriage. As defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "fulfill" can mean "to carry out or bring to consummation (prophecy; promise, etc)." The prophetic resonances of the word can be seen in the Geneva Bible, for example, which describes the holy family's relocation to Nazareth as follows: "And [they] went and dwelt in a citie called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, which was, that hee shold be called a Nazarite" (Matthew 2:23). In this passage, the Geneva translators use the word "fulfill" with the connotation of prophecy and promise. They repeatedly deploy this usage throughout the book of Matthew and the entire New Testament as the disciples and their translators underscore Christ's supersession of the Laws of the Old Testament and the strategies a Christian can enact to fulfill God's individual will for each soul. The latter meaning carries through the following passage from Galatians 5:14: "For all the Law is fulfilled in one

worde, which is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self.” Not only does Christ fulfill the Old Law by serving as a sacrifice for our sins, but each individual can, through Christian love, fulfill God’s word.

Leigh deploys this meaning of the word three times during her dedication and once within the body of her larger work. As I have already discussed above, Leigh uses her dedication to her sons to justify her writing, arguing that she was “duty bound” to “fulfill his will in all things,” i.e. the desire shared by her and her deceased husband to make sure that their children “grow in godlinesse.” Fearing her own temporal demise, Leigh surmises that she can best enact her duty by writing down her advice. Leaving her children “these few lines...will shew you as well the great desire your father had both of your spirituall and temporal good, as the care I had to fulfill his will in this, knowing it was the last duty I should performe unto him.” Furthermore, she surmises that the act of writing only “something fulfilled” her husband’s request. Publication, or ensuring her blessing “were sent abroad to you” is the only way to “fulfill your fathers request.” Many copies must be made so that each of her children can benefit from her motherly advice.

In each of these instances, Leigh links the typologically resonant word “fulfill” with her “duty” as a wife and mother, here described as a mandate to write, and then publish, her maternal, spiritual advice. Doing so suggests that Leigh understands marriage as the means through which she typologically fulfills her spiritual destiny. She is “duty bound” by her chastity, the greatest female virtue, to remain copartner to her husband even after his death. And for Leigh, her chastity is linked to her act of publication; she can only “fulfill” her husband’s “will” through public literary engagement. This is a paradoxical assertion for Leigh to make since one of the central arguments against a woman’s appearance in print was that it threatened her modesty by making her accessible to any man indiscriminately. Leigh’s assertion that

publication instead provides her the means through which she can best demonstrate her marital chastity turns this stereotype on its head; not only can a woman remain chaste even as a published author, but the act of publication *itself* can, depending on the nature of the text, demonstrate her chastity.

Leigh's belief in the importance of public literary engagement for her performance of marital fidelity becomes even more apparent in the body of *The Mothers Blessing* and her diegetic use of the word "fulfill." During a section devoted to extolling the benefits of private prayer and acquaintance with God, Leigh tells her children that the grace and faith gained from daily communication with God "will worke in thee holinesse of life, and then shalt thou be able to fulfil Christ's saying, *Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorifie your father which is in heaven*" (104; original emphasis). Quoting Matthew 5:16, Leigh argues that Christians should engage in private devotion so that they are better equipped to fulfill Christ's desire that they publicly display their faith. Their "light," or faith, must "shine before men" if they wish to "glorifie your father which is in heaven." Leigh's sons, like Leigh herself, must make their faith publicly known. Of course, Leigh's citation of Matthew 5:16 also calls to mind her dedication, where she claims to write *The Mothers Blessing* from the desire that they "might meet your Father in heaven, where I am sure hee is, my selfe being a witsesse of his Faith in Christ." Leigh's later reference to Matthew 5:16 underscores the dual nature of her reference to her son's "Father in heaven," as this phrase links Leigh's belief in marital duty with a spiritual mandate. Her literary endeavor fulfills the will of both her heavenly Father and her sons' father.

Matthew 5:16 was a common Protestant exhortation for evangelism. For example, the popular preacher William Perkins cites Matthew 5:16 to suggest the importance of performing

‘good works’ so that a Christian might “come into Gods favour, and be saved” (*The Whole Treatise* 50). Perkins claims “good works” are first for “the honour and glory of God,” second, “the testification of our thankfulnes unto God, that hath redeemed us by Christ” and third, “to edifie our neighbour, and to further him in the way to life everlasting, Math. 5.16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, & glorifie your father which is in heaven*” (*The Whole Treatise* 71; original emphasis). Perkins is explicit here that a Christian’s neighbors (those influenced by their presence near them) are edified by their behavior and encouraged into righteousness which brings glory to God. To let one’s “light so shine before men” through one’s “good works” is an essential aspect of Christian behavior. For Leigh, maintaining the status of wife and continuing to enact her marital duties ensures that she may also do just that—fulfill God’s *and* her husband’s will by the public dissemination of God’s glory.

However, the biblical charge to shine one’s light out into the world poses a particular problem for Christian women of the early modern period. As Christians, they are to proclaim God’s grace to others and serve as an example that will inspire possible converts. As women, however, they are also to remain silent and submissive, edicts that could potentially suppress their desire to share the word of God. Erica Longfellow notes that “Christianity in this period placed such devout women in a bind. St. Peter asserted that women were ‘the weaker sex,’ and St. Paul declared that it was shameful for a woman to speak in church” (12). Even Dorothy Leigh, who clearly values female contributions to the religious community, acknowledged women’s status as “the weaker sex.” Early seventeenth-century theologians were adamant that a woman fulfilled her religious duties by submitting to her husband and larger patriarchal

structures. She was in charge with the religious instruction of her children, but open proselytizing was not her realm. “Nevertheless,” Longfellow continues,

The primary duty of any Christian, male or female, was to live a godly or Christlike life; in fact St Paul himself had written that in Christ there was no male or female. For many pious women, this model was difficult to reconcile with a command to be silent: was it possible to be a light to the world, as Christ had commanded, if one was not allowed to speak or write? (12)

This question no doubt would be a vexing one for any woman wishing to serve God in a socially impactful way, as Longfellow demonstrates in the writings of Aemilia Lanyer, Lady Anne Southwell, Anna Trapnel and Lucy Hutchinson (among others). A pious early modern woman might wish to share with the world the good news of God—an act that, as Perkins makes clear, is necessary if Christians are to express their thankfulness for the light God has shared with them. But coverture itself could potentially hinder a woman’s ability to demonstrate her faith to those around her.

Protestants did believe, however, that both men and women had the same responsibilities to Christ in terms of their salvation. For example, in the preface to his funeral sermon for Mrs. Rebekka Crisp (1620), Thomas Gataker writes specifically of the necessity of women to be thoughtfully engaged with their own salvation:

That Popish conceit sticketh still in the mindes of many; that knowledge and booke-learning is for great Clarks onely... Yet God telleth us that they must *all know him from the highest to the lowest*, whom he sheweth mercy vnto in the remission of their sinnes. And surely, if to know God in Christ be life eternall; then to be ignorant of him, cannot be, or bring but eternall destruction. Besides that Christianitie maketh no distinction of

Sex. The same common salvation is propounded to both Sexes: the same meanes of attayning it are likewise common to either. No salvation to man or woman but by Christ: no interest in Christ but by Faith, exacted therefore of either: and no Faith without knowledge, the maine ground-worke of Faith. (*Two Funeral Sermons*)

Gataker makes abundantly clear in his preface that both men *and* women benefit from the further acquisition of knowledge of the scriptures, as “Christianitie maketh no distinction of Sex.” For both men and women, salvation comes “by Christ” and “by Faith,” and one can know neither without “knowledge, the maine ground-worke of Faith.” Although it is unlikely that Gataker was arguing for broad equality in this text, his preface does suggest the value that Protestantism placed on a woman’s ability to educate herself as it pertained to “Faith.”

Leigh herself voices this opinion repeatedly in the body of *A Mothers Blessing*. In her eighth chapter, “The sixt cause is, to perswade them to teach their children,” Leigh begins by encouraging her sons “that all your children, be they Males or Females, may in their youth learne to read the Bible in their owne mother tongue; for I know it is a great help to true godliness” (24). She identifies Genesis 18:19 as scriptural authority for this edict, where it reads “*I know (sayth God) that Abraham will teach his children, and his childrens children to walke in thy commandments*” (25-26; original emphasis). What’s more, her sons must also ensure that anytime they are asked to serve as a “Witnesse to the baptizing” of someone’s child, they must first ask for the parent’s “faithfull word, that the child shall bee taught to read, so soone as it can conveniently learne, and that it shall so continue till it can read the Bible” (26). Leigh imparts upon her sons the importance of the performance of a godly life, both for one’s biological children and spiritual wards. And importantly, this performance is intimately tied with the ability to read.

Leigh further emphasizes the importance of literacy in her eleventh chapter, “Children to bee taught betimes, and brought up gently.” Although Leigh does not make explicit in this chapter that she speaks of both male and female children, the language she uses is nonetheless inclusive and clearly meant to apply to both sexes. She begins the chapter, “I am further also to entreate you, that all your Children may be taught to read, beginning at foure yeeres old or before, and let them learne till ten, in which time they are not able to do any good in the Commonwealth, but to learne how to serve God, their King & Country by reading” (47). Leigh justifies the instruction of both sexes by suggesting that there is little other benefit they (children) can offer to the polity during that time. Children between the ages of four and ten are best served (and can best serve) if they are taught to read. This also aids parents in preventing their children from falling victim to one of Leigh’s biggest concerns, “idleness” (48). Parents can prevent this sin if they “bring them up in the Schooles of learning, if you bee able, and they fit for it” (48). And even if their children will not be “Schollers, yet I hope they will be able by Gods grace to read the Bible, the lawe of God, and to bee brought to some good vocation or calling of life” (48). Leigh concludes this chapter with a quote from Proverbs 22:6: “Teach a childe in his youth the trade of his life, and he will not forget it, nor depart from it when hee is olde” (48). Even Leigh’s own act of writing might be viewed as demonstrative of one way in which idleness can be avoided. For Leigh, literacy remains essential to ensuring the godly instruction of both boys and girls, with the spiritual benefits outweighing any concerns one might have over the usefulness of some sort of education for all.

Leigh continues to advocate for cross-gender literacy in her fourteenth chapter, “How to deale with servants.” Here, Leigh recommends that her sons instruct their servants to read if they do not arrive under their care with that capacity, if only until they have the skill to read “the

tenne Commaundments of almightie God” (58-59). And if they can read, they should “practice by themselves, and...spend al their idle time in reading, that so they may come to better know the will of God written in his Word” (59). Leigh again underscores how the skill of reading can ward against the sin of idleness, ensuring that the servants of the house have a godly endeavor through which to occupy their time. Servants, like children both male and female, can best edify Christ and their master’s faithfulness to him when they hold the capacity to read.

Perhaps even more shocking, Leigh cleverly ascribes to herself the preacher’s role, subtly suggesting that reading *The Mothers Blessing* performs the same spiritual work as would listening to a public sermon. In her thirty-second chapter, “God accepts weake Prayers,” Leigh writes “methinks if I were a man and a preacher of Gods word, as (I hope) some of you shall be, and I pray God for Christ’s 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” (131-132). Leigh does not claim that she is a “man and a preacher,” or that her text serves the same role.

Nevertheless, the hypothetical “if I were” opens up an imaginative space wherein the reader might imagine Leigh’s own text, and her repeated offerings of spiritual advice, to the male-dominated realm of spiritually authorized public speech. In fact, her twenty-third chapter, “What need there is to speake much of Christ” prepares the way for establishing Leigh in a preacherly role, as she describes how Christ “sent preachers to call upon us, and put us in remembrance of these benefits” (92). For her, these “preachers” are writers like herself, who seek to “maketh the the [sic] way to Christ easie to those that desire to goe in it” (94). To Leigh, “Sermons, and reading good bookes” are “the only means to bring a man to praier, and praier is the only meanes to helpe us to the mercies of God in Christ” (98). The two (reading and listening to sermons) are intrinsically linked for Leigh, as the written word appears to offer the same sort of reflection as

the sermon. By presenting them as such, Leigh positions herself as a preacher—a public disseminator of God’s word—albeit one who delivers her message textually rather than verbally. Such a statement aligns with orthodox Protestant teaching on literacy that I outlined in my introduction; individuals are better equipped to live godly lives if they both hear and read His Word. But Leigh carves out an explicit space for women as disseminators of public spiritual instruction, describing the written word as a medium that contains the same spiritual benefits as listening to a (presumably male-delivered) sermon.

Importantly, then, there are many moments throughout the text where Leigh rejects the Pauline edict against female preaching, a move that can seem in conflict with her valuation of chastity and suggestion of wifely duty. But she justifies these potentially disobedient acts by claiming that they in fact enable her to fulfill her duties as a wife, mother, *and* widow, as both Christ and her husband hold Godly instruction as one of a wife and mother’s chief duties. Her performance of virtuous widowhood is directly linked with her writing and publication of *The Mothers Blessing*, a text that stands as a testament to her posthumous wifely fidelity and motherly care.

There is some early modern evidence that theologians could imagine sanctioning female speech if it was encouraged by a passion for spreading the word of God, and Leigh (as I argue above) seems to self-consciously capitalize on this discrepancy. For example, Philip Stubbe’s immensely popular *A Crystall Glasse, for Christian Women* (1592) which centers on the life of his deceased wife, Katherine Stubbes, includes statements of admiration for his subject’s outspoken religious zeal. Stubbes writes of how Katherine would challenge any “Papists, or Atheists” and “most mightily justifie the truth of God, against their blasphemous untruths, and convince them, yea, & confound them by the testimonies of the word of God” (A2r-A2v). The

text repeatedly points to Katherine's religious fervor, which could potentially be seen as a challenge to wifely obedience. That being said, Suzanne Trill rightly observes that Stubbes valorizes, rather than condemns, Katherine's speaking. But to do so, Stubbes presents Katherine's potentially impious speech as markers of her wifely subjection. Stubbes writes, "She obeyed the commandment of the Apostle, who biddeth women to bee silent, and to learne of their husbandes at home" (A2v). And even when she spoke with her husband on a matter in which they might not agree, "She would never contrarie him [her husband] in any thing, but by wise counsaile, and sage advice, with all humilitie, & submission, seeke to perswade him" (A3r). As Trill concludes: "Her capacity to defend her faith publicly, while it transgresses the ideal of female silence, is justifiable precisely because she is subject to her husband" (34). Furthermore, Stubbes' use of the word "counsaile" calls to mind early modern discourses surrounding a Good Wife's role as wise adviser. A woman could perform patriarchal submission and still speak publicly about her faith, so long as her public engagement was sanctioned by her spouse.

If Leigh represents herself as speaking publicly so as to fulfill her husband's wishes, she avoids the kinds of criticism a woman could face for licentious speech. This, coupled with the charge of Matthew 5:16, ensures that Leigh is perceived as a Good Widow. By presenting her publication as an act of chastity, Leigh evades typological insecurity by ensuring that she continue to perform her socially and spiritually prescribed role, thus securing her position within the typological chain of fulfillment and supersedure into which marital chastity places her. And in contrast to Stubbes, Leigh actively presents her own piety; she is not written of, but actively writes herself. *A Mothers Blessing* provides a mirror for female behavior as does Stubbes' text, but it does so from the perspective of a woman who asserts, through her own labor, that writing and publication are intrinsic to the performance of spousal fidelity.

Toward the end of her dedication, Leigh does entertain the possibility that the completion of her writing will signal the completion of her wifely duties. And it is also here that she uses the word “fulfil” for the final time in her dedication. She remarks, “But when I had written these things unto you, and had (as I thought) something fulfilled your Father’s request, yet I could not see to what purpose it should tend, unlesse it were sent abroad to you.” Both writing *and* publishing ensure for Leigh a secure place within a typological Christian framework. The publication of her text allows Leigh to “shew my selfe a loving Mother, and a dutiful Wife...” and therefore a dutiful Christian subject. Again, Leigh also gestures ambiguously to a “Father” figure who seems to be both her former spouse, and God himself. To truly fulfill her marital and spiritual duties, Leigh must write. She must leave this legacy if she wishes to perform her motherly and, perhaps more importantly, wifely fidelity, implicitly following the example of none other than Mary, the mother of God. Not only does she ensure that her voice will be left for future generations, but it is a voice that, Leigh hopes, will be perceived as unambiguously as that of “Mrs. DOROTHY LEIGH” (as her name appears on the title page). Despite her widowhood, Leigh can continue to perform the same social roles of wife and mother that she did before her husband’s passing. By infusing her dedication to her sons and her larger work with the rhetoric of typology, Leigh underscores how widowhood can still allow a woman to fulfill the spiritual and cultural promise expected of her sex—that of being the perfect, wedded wife.

Chapter 4—“So hand in hand they passed”: Hand-Holding and Monist Marriage in *Paradise Lost*

The previous chapter overviewed how the rhetoric of biblical typology enabled Dorothy Leigh to argue that a wife’s duty need not stop at her husband’s passing, and outlined the benefits for female authorship that this argument offers. Fifty-one years later, John Milton would also contend with the issue of marriage’s temporal limits. Unlike Leigh, however, Milton is concerned not with marriage’s continuation after death but its lawful dissolution beforehand. Milton, as I will discuss below, believed that marriage should be dissoluble prior to death if the marriage itself failed to follow the model exemplified by Adam and Eve after their creation. That model—companionate marriage—was recently also upheld by the United States Supreme Court as marriage’s ideal form. In the recent case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unlawful to deny same-sex couples the right to civil marriage. Importantly, Justice Anthony Kennedy spends much of the opinion of the court defining marriage primarily by its ability to provide comfort and companionship to consenting adults.¹ In one of his most eloquent passages, Kennedy claims that marriage responds to a “universal fear” of loneliness by offering “the hope of companionship and understanding and assurance that while both still live there will be someone to care for the other” (14). While Kennedy does briefly acknowledge marriage’s benefits to the children it sometimes produces, his case for same-sex marriage relies primarily on defining the institution through the tenets of companionate marriage—a marital model that emphasizes intellectual and spiritual compatibility over procreation.² According to Kennedy, marriage provides a particular kind of companionship that all adults, regardless of sexual orientation, have the right to experience.

To be sure, for many feminist and queer activists, the contemporary emphasis on legalizing same-sex marriage does little more than uphold current marriage norms at the expense

of other, alternative “sexual arrangements” (Butler 5).³ Still, others, including organizations invested in LGBTQ activism like the Human Rights Campaign, see *Obergefell v. Hodges* as an important step in the broadening of equal rights for all American citizens.⁴ With rhetoric that underscores marriage’s significance in American society, *Obergefell v. Hodges* demonstrates the ways in which the ideals of companionate marriage lend themselves to the approval of same-sex marriage—a move that, I would argue, finds an antecedent in Milton’s writings on marriage and divorce. Indeed, Thomas Luxon has previously argued explicitly for the relationship between Milton’s promotion of companionate marriage and twenty-first century acceptance of same-sex marital arrangements.⁵ Even within *Paradise Lost*, an epic poem recounting the foundation of Western heteronormativity, scholars such as Will Stockton argue that one can find “counterdiscourses of intimacy” that suggest “Adam might have been happier in Eden with Steve rather than Eve” and “imagines an Eve who, no inferior to Adam, also might have been happier with another woman, if not alone with herself” (Par. 16). For such scholars, Milton’s poetry, as well as his often conflicted “protoliberal” writings on marriage, speak to contemporary debates surrounding the rights of individuals to choose who they will and will not marry, and how one should define marriage in the first place.⁶

The following chapter contributes to this body of scholarship by offering a reading that considers the impact of Milton’s monism on his conception of marriage and the potential for equality within it. I am not the first to do so, as Stephen Dobranski has previously suggested that Milton’s penchant for depicting the pair holding hands throughout *Paradise Lost* is a specifically monist gesture, as it “joins Adam and Eve physically and spiritually” with each freely choosing the other (“Seizures” 284). Whereas Dobranski offers no further elaboration of this point, the following chapter considers the implications of Milton’s choice to depict Adam and Eve in

motion when they hold hands for his monist marriage ideal. In doing so, this chapter also traces a prehistory of companionate marriage ideology.

Milton's adherence to a monist materialist worldview has been widely accepted since Stephen Fallon published his extensive monograph on the subject, in which he outlines a compelling case for Milton's belief in monist materialism, or the idea that both matter and spirit are aspects of the same, original substance: in Fallon's words, "spirit is rarefied matter, and matter is dense spirit" (80).⁷ All creation has the opportunity to ascend up the material chain through adherence to God, but it is a process of incorporation as opposed to disintegration.⁸ Unlike the platonic model, in which the soul escapes the fleshly confines of the body, "Milton's spirit does not coexist with an alien matter; it contains matter" (Fallon 102).⁹ Matter cannot separate from spirit because spirit is matter, if only a more refined form.¹⁰ Much of Fallon's evidence of the presence of monism in *Paradise Lost* derives from his reading of Raphael's famous speech in Book 5, where the angel offers an account of the monist chain of ascent:

O Adam! One almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,
 Indued with various forms, various degrees
 Of Substance, and, in things that live, of life;
 But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds

Proportioned to each kind. (*PL* 5.475-86)¹¹

Within this framework, the platonic hierarchy between matter and spirit falls apart; neither is superior to the other, as spirit itself derives from “one first matter.” Man, angels, and God himself are substantive beings.

However, this is not to say that Milton’s metaphysics are altogether free from hierarchy. In fact, this passage maintains a hierarchy between body and spirit, as Phillip Donnelly has observed (“Matter”). Raphael’s speech depicts both body and spirit as material forms, with spirit or angelic matter “more refined, more spirituous, and pure” than human bodies. In equating matter with body, Donnelly argues, Fallon misses this important distinction—Milton’s monist materialism does allow for a hierarchy even within the seemingly egalitarian materialist schema (“Matter”). All living things may differ “but in degree; of kind the same,” however angelic form is superior to human given their relative proximity to the Almighty (*PL* 5.490). Importantly, however, this hierarchy does allow for movement since human bodies *can* “up to spirit work.” Milton’s monist materialism may not depict an equality of spirit and matter, yet it provides lesser beings the hope of spiritual ascent.

An awareness of Milton’s materialist metaphysics is key to understanding his monist marriage as it unfolds in *Paradise Lost*. In Protestant theology, husband and wife are united as “one flesh”—a single body—through marriage. Given Milton’s monist commitments, it is possible to read in the mystical unity of man and wife a monist materialist unity as well, where the couple, as one body, works towards higher spiritual ascent. Furthermore, as one body they are also one soul, since the author’s monist metaphysics dictate the inseparability of these two elements. As he writes in *De Doctrina*, “the whole man is the soul, and the soul the man: a body, in other words, or individual substance, animated, sensitive, and rational” (*CPW* 6.318). Because

they are “one flesh,” Adam and Eve are also both “soul,” a formulation that challenges the traditional gendered division between the physical and spiritual realm.¹² When Adam and Eve are mystically united as one “individual substance” in marriage, they help each other “up to spirit work.” Unlike the individual human body, however, the married couple *can* separate if they no longer serve as fit companions in spiritual progress. Monist marriage, then, arguably renders Adam and Eve materially and spiritually equal—one body and soul—as long as they serve as one another’s “mutual help” towards spiritual advancement.

The metaphorical conception of Adam and Eve as one soul, however, also paradoxically provides Milton with the grounds to argue for a gendered hierarchy in marriage, even as it offers a challenge to misogynistic, platonic dualism. Following Augustine’s concept of the soul as outlined in his *Confessions* and *The Trinity*, Milton posits that Adam and Eve, although united souls, are separate in their relative purpose—one for divine contemplation, the other directed towards the temporal realm.¹³ Milton’s monist idea of marriage, then, paradoxically views Adam and Eve as equal in their marital pursuit of spiritual advancement while *unequal* in their individual ability to comprehend the divine. Adam and Eve’s mutual, monist capacity for spiritual ascent does not eliminate the gendered hierarchy seen before (and further inscribed after) the Fall.

Indeed, there are typological reasons to secure this hierarchy as well. If Adam and Eve are presented as equals, this troubles the necessary submission of the Church to Christ. Christ, the “second Adam” (as he is referred to by Milton and many others), is the head of his “bride,” the Church, who obeys him in all things. Monist marriage may suggest that husband and wife are one substance and equally capable of spiritual ascent, but the need to maintain typological spiritual order further underscores the importance for Augustine’s concept of the soul in Milton’s

monist framework. Through it, Milton can maintain the tension between Adam and Eve as equals and Adam and Eve as a wedded pair adherent to a gender hierarchy. They are one soul, yes, but that soul nonetheless contains its own hierarchical order.

Like Dorothy Leigh, then, who also grapples with the potential spiritual problems that may arise when marriages end *before* death, Milton contends that only a monist marriage—that is, a marriage whereby both partners work together towards mutual spiritual advancement—reaches the definition of “marriage” as intended in the scriptures and enables the couple to fulfill the promise of Adam and Eve and become types of Christ and the Church. Unlike Leigh, however (who argues that men demonstrate their own foolishness if they dislike the match they have made) Milton contends that a marriage may be dissolved before death if the couple ceases to encourage each other’s spiritual progress. Such a marriage, Milton believes, is no marriage at all, and therefore each partner is free to find a new spouse with whom they may again attempt spiritual advancement.

As several scholars have noted, Milton’s attitudes toward marriage and monism can be traced to the author’s early writings on divorce and his theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana*.¹⁴ Therefore, this chapter begins with a brief overview of Milton’s definition of marriage and the place of bodies and souls within it as articulated in these texts. In language later used by Justice Kennedy as well, Milton rejects the notion that marriage is primarily for the creation of children and the appeasement of lust, advocating instead that it was instituted for man’s intellectual and spiritual comfort. Milton critiques the seventeenth-century practice of defining marriage through singular physical acts, specifically the hand-holding that occurs in the marriage ceremony as outlined in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Instead, Milton suggests that marriage should be defined as a union founded on a couple’s continued intellectual and spiritual

compatibility, a fact that impacts his understanding of marriage's typological implications. If ever the two cease to progress in love towards spiritual refinement, the marriage no longer exists as a type of Christ and the Church, and therefore the two can rightfully divorce.

My chapter then considers *Paradise Lost*'s depiction of hand-holding and its implications for Milton's argument for monist marriage. By showing the couple moving when holding hands, Milton suggests the inadequacy of contemporary marital norms and instead encourages a vision of marriage as a mutual process that requires repeated acts of recommitment to fulfill its divine purpose—spiritual advancement. Despite the promise of equality that stems from monist marriage's unity of body and soul, however, *Paradise Lost* continues to depict Adam and Eve in a hierarchical relationship. Readers, I argue, can account for Adam and Eve's paradoxically equal yet hierarchical relationship by considering Adam and Eve's depiction in Christian theology as a biblical type of the relationship between Christ and the Church. As the Church must submit to Christ, Eve must submit to Adam's will. To maintain this hierarchy while presenting Adam and Eve as the same substance, then, Milton adheres to the gendered division of the soul as presented by Saint Augustine in his own metaphysics; as "one soul" in marriage, Adam and Eve ideally work together in a hierarchy where the soul's intellect (Adam) governs its temporal counterpart (Eve).

My final section explores the implications of Milton's adaptation of Augustinian beliefs regarding his conception of monist marriage, arguing that Augustine provides Milton with a way to both advocate for Adam and Eve's spiritual equality while maintaining a gendered hierarchy compatible with seventeenth-century norms. Even so, the U.S. Supreme Court's recent use of companionate marriage ideology to argue for same-sex marriage demonstrates the extent to which companionate marriage can still challenge traditional marriage ideals. An awareness of the

impact of Milton's monism on his conception of marriage provides new insight into the place of Milton's work in the long struggle for marriage equality.¹⁵

I

Since the early twentieth century, scholars have expressed keen interest in Milton's divorce tracts, focusing particularly on the author's radical conclusion that marriage is *primarily* for "meet and happy conversation" rather than the procreation of children and appeasement of lust (*DDD, CPW* 2.246).¹⁶ Throughout the seventeenth-century, *The Book of Common Prayer* listed the purposes of marriage in the following order: "the procreation of children," "a remedie against sin, and to avoid fornication," and "for the mutuall society, helpe and comfort that the one ought to have for the other." According to Milton, ordering the intents of marriage thus made "the bed to be the highest of marriage," an act "as farre from the countenance of Scripture, as from the light of all clean philosophy, or civill nature" (*DDD, CPW* 2.269).¹⁷ Milton's arguments for divorce challenge this assumption.¹⁸ Through rigorous exegetical maneuvering, Milton asserts that marriage was ordained for "the apt and cheerfull conversation of man with woman, to comfort and refresh him against the evill of solitary life" (*DDD, CPW* 2.235).¹⁹ As Justice Kennedy would do centuries later, Milton defines marriage in companionate terms. Far more than appeasing lustful desires or propagating the species, a *true* marriage is one that promotes intellectual, as opposed to purely physical, intercourse.

Milton's challenge to the emphasis on procreation and sexual satiation found in *The Book of Common Prayer* derives from his interpretation of Genesis, where the marriage between Adam and Eve, he claims, exemplifies "what is perfectest" (*DDD, CPW* 2.320). Considering Genesis 2:18, for example ("Also the Lord God said, It is not good that the man shulde be him selfe alone: I wil make him an helpe mete for him"), Milton concludes, "a meet and happy

conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage; for we find here [that is, in Genesis 2:18] no expression so necessarily implying carnall knowledge, as this prevention of loneliness to the mind and spirit of man” (*DDD, CPW 2.246*). In the first instantiation of the wedding pact, God designed Eve not chiefly for procreation but as a cure for man’s intellectual and spiritual “loneliness,” a key factor in Milton’s definitions for a fit and godly marriage. Milton not only argues that the alleviation of loneliness brings about the creation of love, but also that, as Paul wrote to the Romans, “*love onely is the fulfilling of every Commandment*” (*DDD, CPW 2.258*, original emphasis).²⁰ The eradication of loneliness that occurs when two unite in wedded love leads directly to the fulfillment of God’s will. Carnal knowledge cannot save man from an otherwise lonely state; marriage, as defined in Genesis, meets its “end” or divine purpose only when two unite in “meet and happy conversation.”

Writing in *Tetrachordon*, Milton continues to present an alternative definition for marriage that relies on intellectual, rather than physical, compatibility, reading one of the most well-known and seemingly straight-forward passages from the creation story, Genesis 2:24: “*Therefore shall a man leav his father and his mother, and shall cleav unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh*” for evidence (*CPW 2.603*; original emphasis). Milton refers to this passage as “the great knot tier,” but continues that it “hath undon by tying, and by tangling, millions of guiltless consciences...having drawn men and wisest men by suttel allurements within the train of an unhappy matrimony, claps the dungeon gate upon them, as irrecoverable as the grave” (*CPW 2.603*). For although this passage suggests an inseparability once flesh is physically united, “it is not heer said absolutely without all reason he shall cleave to his wife...but he shall doe this upon the premises and considerations of that meet help and society before mention’d” (*CPW 2.603*). Unless his wife be a “fit help,” as Milton has elsewhere defined her, a man “is not bid to leave

the dear cohabitation of his father, mother, brothers and sisters, to link himself inseparably with the meer carcass of a Mariage” (*CPW* 2.603). In Adam’s wisdom, he clearly meant “that flesh and ribs are but of a weak and dead efficacy to keep Mariage united where there is no other fitness” (*CPW* 2.604). “Flesh” must therefore be a symbol for the broader category of fitness that Milton finds embedded in scripture.

Milton appeals to the typological implications of this passage as well when challenging the common reading that “flesh” refers to the carnal act. Connecting Genesis with Ephesians 5:30, Milton acknowledges that the uniting of flesh in marriage is thought to be the “nearest resemblance of our union with Christ” (*CPW* 2.606). And while the author wishes to “dispute not now whether matrimony bee a mystery or no; if it bee of Christ and his Church, certainly it is not meant of every ungodly and miswedded marriage, but then only mysterious, when it is a holy, happy, and peaceful match” (*CPW* 2.607). Here Milton asserts that marriage can prefigure Christ’s union with the believer if it meets certain criteria. Ungodly marriages such as those where one finds “no love, no goodness, no loyalty, but counterplotting, and secret wishing one another’s dissolution, this is to me the greatest mystery in the world, if such a marriage as this, can be the mystery of ought, unless it be the mystery of iniquity” (*CPW* 2.607). The mere participation between two individuals in the marriage ceremony hardly allows two individuals to become figures of “Christ and his Church.” Only a “fit and pious matrimony” can do that, and if it is not, “ther cannot hence be any hindrance of divorce to that wedlock wherin ther can be no good mystery” (*CPW* 2.607). According to Milton, then, it is essential that his contemporaries recognize their error in defining marriage only through physical acts, lest they unwillingly prevent themselves from engaging typologically in the broader narrative of sacred history.

Given Milton's insistence that intellectual and spiritual compatibility make a godly marriage, it should come as no surprise that he finds the marriage ceremony—a ritual that emphasizes the couple's physical unity—inadequate in its ability to signify a union's validity. In particular, Milton challenges the weight given to hand-holding as an emblem of marriage's indissolubility. *The Book of Common Prayer* directs the couple to join hands at various moments throughout the marriage rite. As the ceremony concludes, the couple is asked to:

joyne their right hands together, and say, Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put a sunder... Forasmuch as N. and N. have consented together in holy wedlocke, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a Ring, and by joyning of hands: I pronounce that they be man and wife together.

As depicted here, “N” and “N” become “man and wife” through the act of “joyning” hands; the pair's physical unity symbolically binds them within the married state. Even in the face of repeated reforms to the marriage ceremony throughout the 1640s and 1650s, the act of hand-holding remained key.²¹ For example, the “Directory for the publique worship of God” eliminated the exchange of rings and the taking of communion during the ceremony, yet still maintained the hand clasp.²² Again, when the “Act Touching Marriage” was passed in 1653 in an attempt to move marriage to the realm of civil jurisdiction (a move that Milton himself greatly approved), hand-holding persisted as an essential part of the contract.^{23 24} Milton directly critiques the presumed transformative power of the physical rites of marriage in the divorce tracts, lamenting that instead of attending to the intellectual and spiritual fitness of the betrothed as God intended, the couple enters the married state “once [they are] handed in the Church, and have tasted in any sort of the nuptial bed” (*DDD, CPW* 2.235). The author wishes to argue that

hand-holding, like the act of consummation that it foreshadows, is inadequate on its own to irreparably bind two individuals in holy matrimony.

The marriage ceremony's emphasis on the unity of flesh is not its only troubling aspect. Perhaps even more disturbing to Milton is the authority given to the ceremony to permanently yoke two unfit individuals in a loveless marriage (an oxymoron in Milton's marital definition). Seventeenth-century social practices ensure that two individuals will remain joined even if they "finde themselves never so mistak'n in their dispositions through any error, concealment, or misadventure, that through their different tempers, thoughts, and constitutions, they can neither be to one another a remedy against loneliness" (*DDD*, *CPW* 2.235-36). Because of this, Milton alters the definition of "consent" in marriage so that it cannot refer to "that singular act...which made the contract" (*Tetra*, *CPW* 2.612). Instead, by "consent" Milton means "a love fitly dispos'd to mutual help and comfort of life; this is that happy *Form* of marriage naturally arising from the very heart of divine institution in the Text" (*Tetra*, *CPW* 2.613, original emphasis). Although two may plight their troth during the marriage ceremony, their words fail to irreversibly bind the two together. The married couple must continue to provide "mutual help and comfort of life" if the marriage is to continue to exist.

Further in the passage the author elaborates on his definition of marriage and the importance of the *maintenance* of love for its continuation:

Unless ther be a love, and that love born of fitnes, how can it last? unless it last how can the best and sweetest purposes of marriage be attain'd...Conclude therefore by all the power of reason, that where this essence of marriage is not, there can bee no true mariage; and the parties either one of them, or both are free, and without fault rather by a nullity, then by a divorce may betake them to a second choys. (*Tetra*, *CPW* 2.613)

For Milton, consent in marriage is not a “singular act” undertaken irrevocably during the wedding ceremony. It is the love, “born of fitness” that makes a marriage. Only this can make a marriage “last” or continue in its validity. If the pair ever stop experiencing such love, the marriage itself no longer reflects its divine purpose and, therefore, ceases to exist. This love is the “form” and “essense” of marriage—that is, its defining characteristic—and therefore without it “there can bee no true marriage.” Milton asserts a marriage’s validity not on the completion of religious rites but the continued experience of love between a wedded pair.²⁵ Defining marriage through one singular event mistakes the bodily referents for the continued companionship that truly defines marriage.

Attempting to present a challenge to *The Book of Common Prayer*’s over-emphasis of the body’s role in marriage, Milton’s divorce tracts thus stress the institution’s intellectual, spiritual, and affective aspects above ritualized, physical acts. Such a rhetorical strategy has led some scholars to read a hierarchy of spirit over matter within these works, wherein the two categories remain separate and distinct.²⁶ However, as Stephen Fallon persuasively argues, Milton’s divorce tracts nonetheless “offer brief and incomplete indications of a more balanced view” of the relationship between body and soul (90).²⁷ Looking again to *Tetrachordon*, Milton argues that fallen man must engage in pleasurable activities, including sex, to counterbalance the strenuous work of scholarship (*CPW* 2.597). In terms that support a place for both the body and soul in marriage, Milton concludes the passage by claiming that without “a sociable minde as well as a conjunctive body,” man is “no less alone then before” (*Tetra. CPW* 2.598). This passage implies that a fit mind *and* body are essential in curing married individuals of the affliction of loneliness—neither alone are sufficient in this task. Such passages offer a glimpse of Milton’s

developing monist metaphysics and their centrality to the couples' participation in God's typological design.

Fallon argues that by the time Milton wrote his *De Doctrina Christiana* he had "worked his way to" an "unequivocal monism" (96). Other scholars have since usefully nuanced Fallon's claim that Milton's monism was "unequivocal" across all of Milton's texts, yet I continue to follow Fallon in arguing that *Paradise Lost* appears largely governed by the theology outlined in Milton's treatise, particularly as it relates to the relationship between body and soul.²⁸ As described at the outset of this chapter, Raphael claims all creation in *Paradise Lost* derives from "one first matter," which God then "indued with various forms." Those forms can consist of more refined or dense material concentrations. That being said, all creation, whether corporeal or incorporeal, are essentially *material* and thus have the capacity to "up to spirit work." Therefore, Milton can refer to man as "body" and angel as "spirit", as a means of delineating their relative position as more or less corporeal beings. For Milton, however, "body" does not merely refer to man's fleshly components. Body and soul are synonymous terms, both referring to "the same single human rational and sentient being differentiated out of matter" (Donnelly "Matter" 82-83). Milton articulates this principle in *De Doctrina* with the claim that "man himself, the whole man, I say, when finally created, is specifically referred to as a *living soul*. Hence the word *soul* is interpreted by the apostle, I Cor. Xv. 45, as meaning *animal*" (CPW 6.318). Body and soul are inseparable in Milton's metaphysics, as each term refers to "the whole man."

This claim carries implications for Milton's conception of marriage, particularly because of the Biblical assertion that man and woman become "one flesh" once married. Genesis 2:24 famously asserts: "Therefore shal man leave his father and his mother, and shal cleave to his wife, and they shalbe one flesh." Repeating this passage to clarify divorce law, Christ asks the

Pharisees in Matthew 19:4-5: “Have ye not read, that...a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twaine shalbe one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twaine, but one flesh. Let not man therefore put a sunder that, which God hathe coupled together.” If after reading this passage one continued to doubt its meaning, the Geneva Bible’s sixteenth-century editors offer the following marginal clarification: “they that afore were as two, shalbe now as one persone.” Man and wife become “one persone” in marriage, a fact that was also legally supported in early modern England by the practice of coverture. According to the Geneva Bible and conventional Protestant theology, marriage makes one metaphorical and legal entity out of two previously distinct bodies.

The Protestant marriage ceremony symbolized the indissoluble merging of body and soul through the act of hand-holding. Referring again to the passage above from *The Book of Common Prayer*, the priest asks the couple to “joyne their right hands together, and say, Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put a sunder.” The joining of hands directly symbolizes the couple’s becoming “one flesh.” If Milton contends that body and soul become synonyms for “the whole man” and inseparable from the other, then it is possible to conclude that in a monist marriage, married couples transformed into “one persone” become equally so. Adam seems to suggest as much in *Paradise Lost* when he tells Eve that they are now “one flesh, one heart, one soul” (*PL* 8.499). Throughout Milton’s epic, joined hands symbolize more than the unity of “flesh”—“heart” and “soul” also join in monist accord as the wedded couple metaphorically become one monist material being.

Milton’s belief in the typological import of this passage also begs the question: if “one flesh” for Milton means that the married couple are united body *and* soul, how might this alter an understanding of marriage as a type of Christ and the Church? Indeed, Milton’s monist beliefs

seem to strengthen the reverence one might have for the union of each Christian with Christ, as it suggests that the “bride” or Christian subject is transformed into one being with Christ. For, if body and soul are but different forms of the same material substance making up the “whole man,” and husband and wife are both body and soul of one married being, it follows that the mystical marriage of Christ with each believer (the antitype of secular marriage) might also be understood in similar terms. As Christ’s bride, the individual elevates with their bridegroom into “one flesh, one heart, one soul,” not merely yoked as a subordinate partner but intertwined with Christ as similar substance. Milton’s monist materialism seems to suggest that husband and wife, *as well as* each Christian and Christ, are united as one indissoluble being in secular and spiritual marriage—a being that, like the human body, cannot be separated.

But this is precisely what Milton wishes to argue against: the belief that marriage cannot be dissolved. To maintain the validity of divorce in his monist metaphysics, then, Milton must somehow argue that even though husband and wife become one person similar to body and soul, they *can* at times separate with God’s approval. It is through the notion of marriage as process, I argue, that Milton allows for the possibility of divorce in his concept of monist marriage. Milton writes in *De Doctrina*: “Marriage is, by definition, a union of the most intimate kind, but it is not indissoluble or indivisible. Some people argue that it is, on the grounds that in Matt. xix. 5 the words *those two will be one flesh* are added. But these words, rightly considered, do not mean that marriage is absolutely indissoluble, only that it should not be easily dissolved” (*CPW* 6.371). Here Milton begins to challenge the notion that “one flesh” alone equals “marriage” as it is currently defined, instead arguing that as “the form of marriage consists in the mutual goodwill, love, help and solace of husband and wife...when the form is dissolved it follows that the marriage must really be dissolved as well” (*CPW* 6.371). According to Milton, man and woman

become one flesh in marriage when their relationship meets its spiritual requirements as well. Since Milton defines marriage as an ongoing process of mutual love, he can argue that a marriage dissolves at the moment this love dissipates. Unlike the human who becomes an indissoluble substance at birth, man and woman only remain “one flesh” as long as they continue to serve as each other’s fit help.

Milton does admit that marriage, when “first made by God...could not be destroyed, even by death...but once marriage had been violated by the sin of one of the parties, necessity taught them that death must put an end to it, and reason told them that it must often come to an end, even before death” (*CPW* 6.377). In other words, only since the Fall has marriage been capable of dissolving before death. In what follows, I demonstrate how *Paradise Lost* dramatizes Milton’s corrective to the contemporary definition of marriage by repeatedly asserting that Adam and Eve, while joined in marriage, must continually work together to maintain their monist marriage as they strive for spiritual ascent as well as participate as types of Christ and his Church.

II

From the reader’s first introduction to Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, hand-holding operates as a powerful symbol of marital accord. In Book 4, for instance, the poet describes the couple as follows:

So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
 Of God or angel, for they thought no ill:
 So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
 That ever since in love’s embraces met,
 Adam the goodliest man of men since born

His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve. (*PL* 4.319-24)

Adam and Eve appear “hand in hand” as one might expect within paradise, particularly given the early modern association between joined hands and marriage. The lines “So passed they naked on” and “So hand in hand they passed” and their repeated use of the verb “pass,” however, fill the passage with a sense of temporal and physical progress as the couple moves from one moment to the next in physical, wedded unity.²⁹ As indivisible soul and body, husband and wife move together in mutual accord, able in their spiritual purity to withstand the sight of celestial beings. Adam and Eve join hands repeatedly (this moment being the first of many) to demonstrate the continuing nature of their love.

Slightly later in Book 4, Milton deploys similar language to describe the wedded pair’s movement towards their evening lodgings. Again moving “hand in hand,” the couple are now described as “talking” as “they passed / On to their blissful bower” (*PL* 4.689-90). The choice to depict the two conversing while moving through Eden demonstrates the poet’s commitment to defining marriage in companionate terms—godly marriage remains one founded on “meet and happy conversation” (*DDD*, *CPW* 2.246). But even more importantly for my argument, their colloquy takes place while the two move or “pass” hand-in-hand through Eden. Indeed, the word “pass” is frequently used in *Paradise Lost* to describe Adam and Eve’s movement through Eden, further implying their commitment to spiritual advancement. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “pass” can mean “to proceed, move forward” through a temporal space as well as “to go to one’s spiritual destination” (“pass”). Many early modern texts also deploy “pass” with this connotation, including the biblical annotations of the influential Giovanni Diodati who, in his *Pious Annotations* (1643), glosses the word “stranger” from Psalm 19 (“I am a stranger upon earth: hide not thy commandements from me”) thus: “the world is not my countrey, it is but only

a way to passe to heaven; which way, of my selfe, I know not, guide me therefore, as in a strange place, by thy Law, that I may not go astray” (150).³⁰ For Diodati, Christians must seek divine guidance to “passe” through this intermediary world to heaven, the ultimate destination of any pious soul. Milton’s depiction of Adam and Eve passing hand-in-hand through Eden captures a similar sense of spiritual progress, but with the addition that marriage in particular enables heavenly ascent. Together, Adam and Eve “pass” through the temporal realm, following God’s commandments in wedded fealty to one another. But once they separate (as the reader learns later), the two are then at risk of going “astray.” Progressing hand-in-hand through Eden, Adam and Eve symbolize the spiritual ascent made possible through monist marriage.

In keeping with the Protestant marriage ceremony, their united hands also foreshadow sexual unity: “into their inmost bower / Handed they went... / Straight side by side were laid, nor turned I ween / Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites / Mysterious of connubial love refused” (*PL* 4.738-43). Their intellectual and physical accord earlier in Book 4 foreshadows their willing acquiescence to the “rites / Mysterious of connubial love,” turning hand-in-hand to the even more equitable “side by side.” Like the Protestant marriage ceremony, Adam and Eve’s handedness looks forward to their sexual copulation (an act Milton defiantly praises as “pure” in the eyes of God) (*PL* 4.747). Importantly, however, the reader’s knowledge that this is *not* their first act of love-making (according to Adam’s account in Book 8) underscores the repetitive nature of their consent. Unlike the contemporary practice of defining marriage by a singular ritual, Milton’s monist marriage presents a union defined by forward advancement and marital re-commitment, not to mention continued connubial participation. When they move united, their love brings them to a place of reduced hierarchy as they lay “side by side” in their marital bed.³¹

Further entwined body and soul, their enjoyment of monist marriage enables each other's spiritual advancement.

By supplementing acts of hand-holding with a sense of movement, Milton demonstrates the error that his contemporaries enact when asserting marriage's indissolubility once the two join hands in the marriage ceremony. Daniel Shore's recent claims regarding Milton's iconoclasm hold true when considering the poet's evocation of the frequently hand-holding Adam and Eve; rather than abolish the marriage ceremony from his epic, Milton draws attention to it so that he may levy his critique ("Why Milton"). This rhetorical process, which Shore refers to as "epicrisis," allows Milton to "invest idols with the highest rhetorical and aesthetic appeal even as he subjects them to discrediting judgment" ("Why Milton" 27). Milton may not approve of the weight given to the marriage ceremony in defining the institution. But by invoking its most recognizable symbolic elements at strategic moments within *Paradise Lost*, he can draw attention to marriage's inadequacies and suggest an alternative view of it—specifically, one that emphasizes marriage as a companionate process as opposed to a single event after which there is no return.

In between the equitable scenes of hand-holding, however, the reader witnesses a forceful act of embrace that belies the potential for mutuality suggested by earlier instances. Eve describes how, upon first trying to return to her own watery visage rather than yoke herself with Adam, he pleads with her, "Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim / My other half," (*PL* 4.487-88). By using the word "claim," Adam asserts his possession of Eve and her status as his "other half" in a move that appears far from mutual. Soon after, Adam's "gentle hand / Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see / How beauty is excelled by manly grace / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (*PL* 4.488-91). Adam and Eve join hand in hand, but only after Adam

seizes Eve's hand—a paradoxically forceful gesture to begin a supposedly mutual relationship. Despite this, she seems to speak these words fondly, as the author describes her countenance as one of “meek surrender” (*PL* 4.494). *This* is their first joining of hands in Eden—their entrance into their married state. The language that permeates the passage highlights the monist nature of their relationship as they are described as two parts to one “soul,” each the other's “half.” Yet the passage's depiction of Eve's (willing) submission to Adam's “claim” suggests that for all its rhetoric of mutuality and equality, gender inequality remains a part of monist marriage.

Alistair Fowler's notes on the famously hierarchical passage “He for God only, she for God in him” (*PL* 4.299) suggest that while many critics recognize Eve as Adam's inferior, Milton might merely be formulating their relationship through the framework of Augustine's concept of the soul.³² This may indeed help explain Milton's ability to maintain a gendered hierarchy between two beings despite monism's challenge to dualism (although, as Fowler seems to ignore, it does little to excuse Milton's misogyny).³³ As Augustine outlines in his *Confessions*, the human soul has “one element which deliberates and aspires to domination, and another element which is submissive and obedient, so in the bodily realm woman is made for man. In mental power she has an equal capacity of rational intelligence, but by the sex of her body she is submissive to the masculine sex” (Augustine, *Confessions* 302). Described in patriarchal language, Augustine asserts that the soul has both active / masculine and feminine / submissive aspects. Both men and women have “equal capacity for rational intelligence.” That being said, by virtue of her body, woman serves a submissive role, with the masculine mind overseeing her actions.

Augustine elaborates on this relationship in *The Trinity* when explaining whether or not woman was also made in God's image. Expanding on 1 Corinthians 11:7 (“For a man ought not to

cover his head: forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man”), Augustine asserts that rather than describe female ungodliness, Paul only suggests that “because she differs from the man in the sex of her body that her bodily covering could suitably be used to symbolize that part of the reason which is diverted to the management of temporal things, signifying that the mind of man does not remain the image of God except in the part which adheres to the eternal ideas to contemplate or consult them” (*The Trinity* 329). Of course Augustine does argue that “females have this as well as males” and “their bodies” merely symbolize “the distribution of the one mind” (*The Trinity* 329). Yet Augustine nonetheless maintains that woman is to serve as man’s “assistant”—a role that places her further from the divine image (*The Trinity* 328). Gender hierarchy serves as the perfect metaphor for that submissive mental faculty “diverted to the management of temporal [i.e. less God-like] things.”

Even more relevant to a reading of *Paradise Lost* is Augustine’s likening of the mind’s slide into bodily temptation to man’s Original Sin. “Through that reason which has been delegated to administer temporal affairs” he warns, “he may slide too much into outer things... In such a case...the sight of eternal things is withdrawn from the head himself as he eats the forbidden fruit with his consort, so that the light of his eyes is no longer with him” (*The Trinity* 329-330). Augustine figures the soul’s two faculties as our first parents, with Eve, the temporal aspect of the soul, tempting Adam to an excess of bodily indulgence. To lose control over the feminine faculties of the soul is to risk losing what is God-like in man, for “just as a snake does not walk with open strides but wriggles along by the tiny little movements of its scales, so the careless glide little by little along the slippery path of failure, and beginning from a distorted appetite for being like God they end up by becoming like beasts” (Augustine, *The Trinity* 331).

The soul unchecked by its intellectual, God-like faculties risks dragging both down to carnal existence.

Before concluding this section of *The Trinity*, Augustine again reiterates that he means only to explain “why the apostle attributes the image of God to the man only and not to the woman as well” (332). Indeed, he claims more fairness than his predecessors in his approach to women since he chooses to align the “senses of the body” with the serpent and not Eve herself (*The Trinity* 333). Despite this modification of traditional gendered dualism, Augustine nonetheless sets a precedent for describing one individual soul through a gendered hierarchy.

As described above, Milton’s choice to present Adam and Eve as “one flesh, one heart, one soul” moving through Paradise suggests a monist relationship between the wedded pair that emphasizes their mutual capacity for spiritual ascent. However, I argue that Milton’s monism also enables him to divide Adam and Eve along the lines of Augustine’s gendered soul, whereas the female or temporally focused parts of the soul must be governed by the God-like portion to avoid beastly descent. An awareness of Augustine’s influence on Milton helps explain, if not excuse, Eve’s “meek submission” despite Milton’s monist materialism. As one body united in marriage, Adam and Eve repeatedly demonstrate their commitment to each other through joined hands. Yet while they unite as “one soul,” that soul nonetheless operates through patriarchal order. An awareness of Milton’s simultaneously equal *and* hierarchical monist marriage helps account for his seeming inconsistencies throughout the text regarding Adam and Eve’s relationship. In the final section, I will provide an overview of the limits Milton’s Augustinianism imposes on gender parity in *Paradise Lost*, while also suggesting ways in which his metaphysics nonetheless place *Paradise Lost* as part of the long struggle towards marriage equality.

III

Milton's adherence to the belief that Adam and Eve typologically figure the relationship between Christ and the Church, and his subsequent adaptation of Augustine's concept of the gendered soul to account for the continuation of a gender hierarchy even in a monist context, illuminates *Paradise Lost's* often paradoxically hierarchical depiction of Adam and Eve.

Infamously, Milton asserts Eden's unequal social organization in Book 4 when he describes the couple as "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; / For contemplation he and valour formed, / For softness she and sweet attractive grace, / He for God only, she for God in him" (*PL* 4.295-99). As I mention above, this passage provides the moment where Fowler suggests Milton may conceptualize Adam and Eve through the Augustinian belief in the gendered soul. Adam's status as "for God only" suggests his alignment with the God-like faculty of the soul, whereas Eve's mediated relationship to the divine suggests her further remove from the spiritual realm.³⁴

The typological imperative that Milton maintain a hierarchy between Adam and Eve may also account for the disparities in the pair's creation accounts vis-à-vis their spiritual aptitude. Eve describes in Book 4 how she began her life looking downward, apparently unable (or unwilling) to distinguish between reflection and truth. Upon waking for the first time, Eve wonders "where / And what I was, whence thither brought, and how," a curiosity that suggests her intellectual aptitude (*PL* 4.451-52). Yet instead of looking to heaven itself, she becomes mesmerized by a "liquid plain" that only mirrors the sky above (*PL* 4.455-59). Eve focuses her attention on the water (and, as is often discussed, her own image), failing to recognize unaided that her purpose lies elsewhere (*PL* 4.461-65). Without God's intervention, she admits, "there I had fixed / Mine eyes till now," yet even He cannot fully convince Eve of her spiritual destiny (*PL* 4.465-66). She finds Adam "Less winning soft, less amiably mild" than her own "watery

image” and only appears to stay when, as I recount above, Adam “seized” her hand (*PL* 4.461, 488).³⁵ Throughout this scene Eve demonstrates an innate propensity for the earthly plane, and a lack of spiritual comprehension. Her desire for higher knowledge (her curiosity regarding her creation) is thwarted by her inability to move beyond consideration of the temporal realm, the very danger warned against by Augustine when discussing the need for masculine regulation of the soul.

Eve’s inability to move beyond consideration of the temporal realm starkly contrasts Adam’s easy ascent in Book 8. Upon waking:

Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
 And gazed a while the ample sky, till raised
 By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,
 As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
 Stood on my feet. (*PL* 8.257-61)

Adam instinctively directs his attentions upward with “wondering eyes,” focusing his curiosity on heavenly contemplation. Unlike Eve, Adam quickly stands on his feet and physically elevates his body in a gesture that suggests superior spiritual fitness. Furthermore, Adam appears intuitively aware that he came “Not of myself” but by “some great maker...In goodness and in power pre-eminent” (*PL* 8.278-79). Both Adam and Eve ponder the source of their creation, yet it is only Adam who recognizes that a divine being (although still unknown) brought about his existence. Like Eve he wanders in search of an answer, asking the creatures around him, “How may I know him [God], how adore / From whom I have that thus I move and live” (*PL* 8.280-81). And, like Eve, Adam reclines on a “green...bank” as he considers his creation (*PL* 8.286). Whereas Eve’s own image fulfills her query, however, Adam’s “pensive” nature brings him to

dreams where God raises him above the earthly plain (*PL* 8.300-10). Upon waking, Adam engages with God's "Presence Divine"—able to, unlike his partner, directly confront God's image (*PL* 4.467). Eve, without Adam, lacks access to spiritual matters, while from Adam's creation he contemplates what Augustine calls "eternal ideas" (*The Trinity* 329).

While these creation accounts suggest Adam and Eve differ in their relationship to the divine, *Paradise Lost* nonetheless also suggests an equal intellectual and spiritual capacity—a necessary condition enabling them to foster love and alleviate each other's loneliness in marriage. Like his divorce tracts (and Kennedy's recent court opinion), Milton's epic suggests that solitude hinders man's potential and reduces his ability to appreciate God's creation. For as Adam laments to God, "In solitude / What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or all enjoying, what contentment find?" (*PL* 8.364-66).³⁶ To eradicate his "solitude," however, such a partner must, importantly, be an equal, for "Among unequals what society / Can sort" (*PL* 8.383-86). Adam observes that God "in thyself art perfect" yet man's deficiency requires that he seek a partner "fit to participate / All rational delight, wherein the brute / Cannot be human consort; they rejoice / Each with their kind" (*PL* 8.415; 390-92). The partner Adam describes must be one of his own "kind," a word that echoes the materialist language from Raphael's speech in Book 5. Beasts are not human, for their matter lacks the "rational" superiority of man. While God needs no such company, man, less spiritually refined, requires "conversation with his like to help, / Or solace his defects" (*PL* 8.418-19). God agrees with Adam's plea, claiming he shall bring to him "Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire" (*PL* 8.450-51). This all indicates that Eve, when created, should be "fit" in rational capacity, an "other self" to aid Adam in curing the "solitude" that hinders his enjoyment of paradise and spiritual ascent. As the same "degree" and "kind" of matter, Eve should have the same capacity for "rational"

thought as her co-partner, a fact that suggests an intellectual and spiritual equality, though an equality frequently undermined by the text's hierarchical language.

In fact, the text explicitly claims Eve's intellectual fitness early in Book 8, but asserts that she *prefers* to direct her attention elsewhere. During the lengthy discussion between Adam and Raphael that spans Books 5 through 8, Eve sits outside of the conversation, at one point physically removing herself from their vicinity to tend her garden. Rather than describe her removal in terms of intellectual inferiority, the narrator is quick to clarify: "Yet went she not, as not with such discourse / Delighted, or not capable her ear / Of what was high...Her husband the relater she preferred / Before the angel, and of him to ask / Chose rather" (*PL* 8.48-54). In keeping with their equal spiritual aptitude, both Adam and Eve are capable of comprehending "high" matters. Like the ideal Augustinian soul, however, Eve chooses to pursue heavenly knowledge under Adam's guidance rather than receive it directly from its divine source. The poet tellingly reflects on this scene as an example of ideal marriage: "Oh when meet now / Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined" (*PL* 8.857-58). Adam and Eve's mutuality, then, is predicated on their intellectual equality as well as respect for Adam's superior ability to communicate with the divine.

The love created from such an arrangement is, according to *Paradise Lost*, what can raise Adam and Eve to a higher level of spiritual existence. For as Raphael articulates, love, "is the scale / By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend, / Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause / Among the beasts no mate for thee was found" (*PL* 8.589-94).³⁷ Their wedded love moves Adam and Eve up the monist materialist chain. It is the means through which they can, as one body, achieve spiritual ascendance and gain access to the divine. Importantly, however, Raphael cautions Adam to "love" only "What higher in her society thou findest / Attractive, human,

rational” (*PL* 8.587, 586-87). For Adam admits that, at times, “All higher knowledge in her presence falls / Degraded...Authority and reason on her wait, / As one intended first, not after made / Occasionally” (*PL* 8.551-56). Adam voices the struggle of the spiritual soul to temper its temporal desires. Adam was given a claim to Eve in Paradise, yet “passion”—specifically the sense of “touch”—threatens to subvert the order that makes their mutual, spiritual progress possible (*PL* 8.530). When Raphael expresses concern over Adam’s potential uxoriousness, however, Adam assures the angel that he merely meant to express his delight in “those graceful acts...that daily flow / From all her words and actions, mixed with love / And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned / Union of mind, or in us both one soul” (*PL* 8.600-04). Once more, the reader receives a definition of marriage that emphasizes the necessity of Eve’s willing subjection for their ideal union. Their ability to remain one united soul in marriage relies on Eve’s “sweet compliance” to Adam’s will. Indeed, Adam’s ability to love Eve and not be “foiled” by beastly passions underscores his higher spiritual aptitude (*PL* 8.608). It is this love, he reiterates, that “Leads up to heaven, is both the way and guide” (*PL* 8.613). The love that “leads” them towards spiritual ascent, then, is a love maintained through Adam’s governance over temporal desires. To remain one united soul in marriage, Adam must maintain his dominion over Eve.

An awareness of Adam’s role as the soul’s intellect marks Eve’s suggestion to “divide [their] labour” as profoundly misguided (*PL* 9.214). Adam at first praises Eve for considering “How we might best fulfil the work which here / God hath assigned us,” but claims it is best completed together, precisely because what their unity creates—the “looks and smiles” that “are of love the food”—cannot be achieved apart (*PL* 9.239-40). Adam reasons that through their “joint hands” they can “keep” Eden from “wilderness with ease” (*PL* 9.244-45). Here, “joint hands” becomes a synecdoche for monist marriage and the need to remain faithful to their soul’s

hierarchical order. Doing so renders the “malicious foe...Hopeless” as he cannot “circumvent us joined” (*PL* 9.253, 259). At this moment Adam and Eve are presented with an opportunity to recommit themselves to monist marital unity and Augustinian order. Yet despite Adam’s pleas, Eve, in an abundance of will, “from her husband’s hand her hand / Soft she withdrew,” beginning a process of disintegration destined to lead to their spiritual digression (*PL* 9.385-86).

For monist marriage to continue, Adam and Eve must remain indivisible, working together in “mutual help.” Yet Eve’s choice to remove herself from Adam’s companionship and aid slides them both towards further corporeality, as is evidenced by the language of Satan’s seduction. In Book 9 Satan presents Eve with an alternative path to spiritual ascendance—one reliant on material indulgence. He describes how he resolved to climb the tree of knowledge and partake of “those fair apples” tantalizing above: “About the mossy trunk I wound me soon, / For high from ground the branches would require / Thy utmost reach or Adam’s,” when upon reaching the fruit “to pluck and eat my fill / I spared not” (*PL* 9.585, 589-91, 595-96). Undaunted by the height of the climb, Satan physically rises above his limits; his perverse ascendance ironically presents the “ready” way to spiritual denigration as he elevates himself only corporeally (*PL* 9.710-12). Eve chooses to partake of “This intellectual food,” mistaking Satan’s material ascent for spiritual advancement. In a terrifying moment of inversion, she uses her “rash” hand to reach for the forbidden fruit—a hand that so recently held tight to her husband’s in a symbol of wedded love (*PL* 9.768, 780-82). Her hand continues to remain occupied as she returns to Adam, now holding “A bough of fairest fruit” (*PL* 9.851). Adam fails to recognize the significance of the “bough” Eve carries, unaware, at first, that what he perceives as “fairest fruit” is in fact the “fruit forbidden”; the fruit of the tree of knowledge that threatens their monist unity

as Eve becomes further removed from God and Adam through her corporeal indulgence (*PL* 9.904).

The echoes of Augustine in this scene are unmistakable if one recalls the earlier quoted passage from *The Trinity*. Like Augustine's temporal soul, which "beginning from a distorted appetite for being like God" ends up "becoming like beasts" (*The Trinity* 331), Eve returns to Adam and encourages him to join her in "growing up to godhead" by eating the fruit (*PL* 9.877). She erroneously fears she shall leave him behind, now spiritually superior by virtue of her newfound knowledge. To remain united, she claims, Adam must "also taste, that equal lot / May join us, equal joy, as equal love / Lest thou not tasting, different degree / Disjoin us" (*PL* 9.881-85). Eve, in language that recalls Raphael's speech from Book 5, believes she has threatened their marriage by becoming a "different degree" of spiritual substance. Adam, as the more godlike part of their partnership, should see Eve's error for what it is—a "distorted appetite for being like God" (Augustine, *The Trinity* 331). Instead, Adam assumes he must remain with Eve despite her disobedience. We know from Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana* that as soon as Eve sinned, "reason told them" that marriage "must often come to an end, even before death" (*CPW* 6.377). Adam fails to come to this conclusion, and instead asserts, "Our state cannot be severed, we are one, / One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself" (*PL* 9.958-59) Adam's inability to "Against his better knowledge" resist "female charm" demonstrates a fundamental failure of Adam's supposed ability to govern the passions (*PL* 9.998-99). Adam's acquiescence to his wife's material digression ushers them both into the realm of fallen marriage.

Typologically, Dennis Danielson observes that this passage also underscores the alternative options for action presented to Adam if he would only recognize his status as the first iteration of what would be fulfilled by Christ. For as "first Adam," Adam does not need to

descend with Eve into sin. Like Christ, he could save her through a harrowing act of self-sacrifice. But Adam instead makes the mistake of Milton's contemporaries by assuming wrongly that the marital bond is indivisible *because* of its typological associations—one does not wish to exclude themselves from the typological narrative enabled by marriage and, therefore, remains married for the sake of these associations. Of course, for Milton the point is that a marriage that no longer offers companionship and mutual help is no marriage at all, and in fact further distances the individual from participating as a type of Christ's relationship with the Church. By succumbing to Eve's temptation, Adam actually threatens their typological status.

Adam and Eve's next joining of hands solidifies their beastly descent into carnal indulgence. After Adam eats the fruit, he "seized" Eve's hand "and to a shady bank" leads her to their first fallen sexual encounter (*PL* 9.1037). Their sexual act serves as the "seal" for their "mutual guilt"—their "connubial love" now devolved to "carnal desire" (*PL* 9.1043, 1013). Their entrance into sin threatens their monist marriage, for it removes the essential form of marriage: "mutual goodwill, love, help and solace of husband and wife" (*CPW* 6.371). In striving to maintain their mutual advancement towards "heavenly love," they have now "sunk in carnal pleasure," sealing their fate with the sexual act (*PL* 9.1035). Eve has dragged their united soul to carnal depths and threatened its very existence.

Eve's actions, and Adam's failure to curb them, lead to their spiritual descent. Because of Eve's indiscretion, God declares that she "to thy husband's will / Thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule" (*PL* 10.195-96). Whereas before Eve "yielded" to Adam, choosing to be led by his "manly grace / And wisdom," she now finds herself subject to Adam's "rule," succumbing to his "will" and forfeiting the right to exact her own.³⁸ On the other hand, because Adam "hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife," he receives what Fowler calls the "curse of agriculture" (*PL*

10.203-08n). Adam's punishment for submitting to the will of his temporally-minded counterpart is to spend his life toiling in dirt until "thou return unto the ground" (*PL* 10.206). Here God emphasizes not Adam's status as divine image, but his corporeal creation from "dust," from earth (*PL* 10.208). *Paradise Lost* depicts Adam and Eve's Fall as a spiritual and material descent as they move down the materialist chain, Adam closer to the ground from which he was created, and Eve ruled, regardless of her will, by Adam's superior reason.

Yet marriage retains a shadow of its former promise of ascent: to move forward, united in love, Adam and Eve must now *choose* to rejoin each other. Following an invective speech against her and her transgressions, Eve falls at Adam's feet and pleads for his forgiveness, begging him to "witness heaven / What love sincere, and reverence in my heart / I bear thee, and unweeting have offended" (*PL* 10.914-16).³⁹ She positions herself as a "suppliant," physically lowering herself in Adam's presence in a gesture that reinforces her further association with the temporal realm. "I beg," she continues, "and clasp thy knees; bereave me not... While yet we live... Between us two let there be peace, both joining, / As joined in injuries, one enmity / Against a foe by doom express assigned us / That cruel serpent" (*PL* 10:918, 923-27). At this moment, they no longer join hands in a gesture of marital unity—Eve now appears at Adam's feet, begging for another chance to unite in wedded amity. Still, by using the present participle *join-ing*, Eve suggests the possibility of a return to monist marriage. For even as they falter, their marriage, as spiritual aspiration, may continue if they renew their vow to love. To recall the words from *Tetrachordon*: "Unless ther be a love, and that love born of fitness, how can it [marriage] last? Unless it last, how can the best and sweetest purposes of marriage be attain'd?" (*Tetra. CPW* 2.613). Now fallen, Adam and Eve must choose to continue to love one another; in *Paradise Lost*, that means choosing to join hands in forward motion.

As the final scene of *Paradise Lost* demonstrates, this is exactly what they do. Expelled from paradise, the reader witnesses the following scene:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
 The World was all before them, where to choose
 Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
 They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
 Through *Eden* took their solitary way. (*PL* 12.645-49)

Echoing the lines from Book 4, Adam and Eve again move “hand in hand” through space and time. Each line reinforces a sense of mutual accord as Milton repeats “their” “they” and “them” throughout, again recalling the seamless unity between them highlighted in their first description. They walk in unison with providence as “their” guide, side by side. Even their footing is the same, as “with wandering steps and slow” they move beyond Eden’s gates. Such a description suggests that Adam and Eve are again one “body” through their marital recommitment. By characterizing their “way” as “solitary,” however, the poet insinuates that in their new fallen ontology it might be more difficult to stave off the “evil of solitary life” that marriage ideally should resolve (*DDD*, *CPW* 2.235). In solitude Adam cannot experience complete Edenic bliss and ascend to “heavenly love” (*PL* 8.592). Yet it is “*their* solitary way,” an indication that even if the two are unable to completely recover what was lost—i.e. the love once shared between two equally refined beings—they can nonetheless work towards spiritual ascent through wedded love.

As noted above, this is the moment where Adam and Eve most resemble Milton’s seventeenth-century readers who, like their “first parents,” must labor in their fallen condition to achieve the monist marriage promised to those who work together in mutual love and care. Like

Adam and Eve in these final lines, Milton's fallen readers cannot easily shed the solitude of human existence and join in the love necessary to move "up to spirit work." By presenting Adam and Eve hand-in-hand, Milton suggests a way forward for his readers. They too can ascend towards "heavenly love" if they find "fit help" for spiritual progress. Seventeenth-century husbands and wives can regain, and even transcend, Adam and Eve's proximity to God, but only if they understand marriage as an ongoing process of recommitment, as opposed to a static act. Adam and Eve's rejoined hands emblemize Milton's very definition of marriage—two *continuing* in love, born out of their commitment to "mutual help and comfort of life."

Milton's Augustinian characterization of Adam and Eve's monist marriage undermines its potential challenge to Platonism's gendered hierarchy—they appear equal in their capacity for spiritual ascent, yet the threat posed by the feminine portion of their partnership casts gender subordination as an essential component of marriage. Nonetheless, I would suggest that Milton's repeated depiction of "the form of marriage" as the maintenance of "mutual goodwill, love, help and solace of husband and wife"—that is, companionate marriage—makes it possible for the modern reader to find in *Paradise Lost* an antecedent for contemporary arguments for marriage equality (370). This becomes even more apparent when one considers the original Latin of the above phrase. John Carey's translation of *De Doctrina* notes that Milton's original Latin reads "Forma coniugii in mutual coniugum benevolentia, amore, auxilio, solatio consistit." But the word "coniuggi," which Carey translates into the singular words "husband and wife," may be more aptly translated as "marriage-partners" according to Hale and Cullington's new Oxford translation (383). Of course, Milton no doubt envisioned "coniuggi" to stand for husband (male) and wife (female). Still, his choice to use this phrase enables an interpretation of marriage where

two, regardless of sex, may become “coniuggi” as long as they commit themselves to the “mutual goodwill, love, help and solace” of each other.

Eve is Adam’s “other self,” that which he joins to create “one flesh, one heart, one soul” in monist marital unity (*PL* 8.499). But Eve’s distinction as Adam’s fit partner hardly dictates that all future marriages adhere to the same sexual binary. Even when considering Augustine’s concept of the soul as a metaphor for monist marriage, the notion of temperamental complementarity (and the continuation of such) seems far more important than actual biology. In fact, for all of Milton’s own investments in maintaining a gendered marital hierarchy, his consistent emphasis on the need for spiritual and intellectual compatibility above all else aligns *Paradise Lost* more with Justice Kennedy than the Apostle Paul. To recall the words of Judith Butler: “the critique of gender norms...must be guided by the question of what maximizes the possibilities for a livable life” (8). With their emphasis on mutual help and comfort as the defining characteristics of marriage, *Paradise Lost*, the divorce tracts, and *De Doctrina* participate in the long and continuing struggle to define and create the conditions for “livable life.” As in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, so many centuries later, they assert the right to choose a fit partner with whom one can navigate the human condition. Modern readers can take Milton’s theories to their logical conclusion—that two joined for the purpose of mutual help and comfort become “coniuggi” regardless of sexual orientation. Adam may prefer Eve, but his sons and her daughters (and those in between) may find in Milton’s monist marriage an argument for marriage equality not dreamt of in Milton’s philosophy.

I should clarify that this is not to argue for a linear or teleological link between early modern marriage ideologies and those to be found in the present day. To do so would be to flatten the complexities of marriage as it is experienced in both time periods, and to foreclose

other productive modes of reading. Yet, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, I side with Coppélia Kahn in asserting that historicizing gender and sexuality—here the ideology of companionate marriage—need not argue “teleologically that Renaissance sexual identities or constructions of sexuality are precursors of later ones” (56). I do not claim that Milton’s earlier beliefs in companionate marriage have led us to a superior future moment where we are seeing the fruition of the poet’s earlier ideas. Instead, I contend that recognizing in Milton the antecedents of contemporary discourses surrounding marriage equality productively illuminates the benefits of and limits to using companionate marriage ideology to argue for progressive social change in the past *and* present. For both seventeenth-century and twenty first-century individuals, companionate marriage is a complex ideology with multivariate implications for gender and sexuality, as I hope this chapter has demonstrated.

Conclusion

I shall end this dissertation with a return to the debate over “unhistoricism.” As I outlined in my introduction, early modern scholars such as Madhavi Menon and Jonathan Goldberg have asserted that traditional forms of historicism limit the possibilities of queer historicism through their teleological focus. Menon and Goldberg assert that thus far most forms of historiography approach the past with the assumption that it reveals how modern sexualities came to be. Such an approach to history is limiting, they argue, in that it forecloses the recognition of sexualities that are unlike our own, thus reinforcing normative identity categories rather than enabling a broader understanding of how such categories are troubled, challenged, evaded and, basically, queered. History, and, more specifically, historical narratives that rely on a teleological understanding of history, cannot help but limit the queer potential of any reading that deploys them.

This assumption has been usefully challenged by both queer and feminist scholars alike, most notably Valerie Traub and Coppélia Kahn, who both resist the assumption that an understanding of time as linear or chronological necessarily upholds heteronormativity. Both scholars assert that it is often the investigation of how such historical narratives have constructed present norms that enables compelling challenges to their persistence. So yes, while one should question the assumed telos of certain narratives, one should not assume that *all* forms of traditional historicism operate in service of a teleological understanding of time, or that even all such narratives only operate in service of reinforcing normative social and sexual categories.

My dissertation concerns the study of history at two levels: 1) it explores the implications of biblical typology—an inherently teleological historical narrative—on early modern perceptions of the female life cycle; and 2) it considers the possibility that such an investigation might provide contemporary scholars with new insights into the continued presence of certain

social norms and, potentially, how to challenge them. Yes, this argument does assume a chronological relationship between the ways in which early modern English individuals understood marriage and gender and how such categories are defined and understood in twenty-first century Western thought. But I contend that it is precisely this observation that enables one to denaturalize persistent social norms. So, while I agree with Menon and Goldberg's assertion that teleological historical narratives *can* be limiting to a project intent on challenging "the notion of a determinate and knowable identity, past and present," an investigation of those narratives can also illuminate *why* such narratives persist and how best to resist them (Menon and Goldberg 1609). It is with this assertion in mind that I contend that an investigation of the relationship between biblical typology and its influence on early modern literary depictions of the early modern life cycle can illuminate for current scholars the ways in which gender norms were upheld and called into question, and how we might use this research to inform present-day critiques of gender and marriage in the West.

"Wifely Figures: Gender, Marriage, and Biblical Typology in Early Modern England" argues that marriage in sixteenth and seventeenth-century English literature and culture was a central site through which social norms were upheld *and* social critique was carried out, and that the hermeneutic of biblical typology as it was understood in relation to the early modern female life cycle informed these debates. Biblical typology provided early modern authors—here Thomas Middleton and Thomas Decker, Aemilia Lanyer, Dorothy Leigh, and John Milton—with a rhetoric through which to argue for marriage's inadequacies, particularly in terms of gender equality. The texts under consideration even underscore the ways in which marriage, when understood typologically, provided imaginative spaces to envision queer possibilities external to early modern England's heteronormative marriage ideal. Chapter 1 explored how Moll

Cutpurse's continued refusal to marry and remain a maid, coupled with her resistance to narrative closure, suggests alternative futures for women *and* men that lay outside of marriage's confines. Chapter 2 argued that Lanyer's portrayal of her text as the perfect Bridegroom—Christ—provocatively provides her patrons and female readers biblical justification to challenge their temporal spouses. Chapter 3 showed how even Dorothy Leigh, who repeatedly affirms her fidelity to her husband, uses that same fidelity to justify her own entrance into the literary marketplace even as a widow. And Chapter 4 contended that biblical typology opens up the possibility in *Paradise Lost* for a reading of marriage as potentially defined not through the sex of its participants but through their intellectual and spiritual compatibility.

But of course, for all the ways in which these texts challenge contemporary ideals regarding gender and sexuality, they still largely uphold heteronormative marriage ideals in some form or another. Moll Cutpurse still enables and supports Mary and Sebastian's largely normative marriage. Lanyer merely presents Christ as a different groom to her "brides." Leigh, perhaps the most conservative of all of the authors, emphasizes marriage's central importance to enable her literary agency rather than, say, critiquing the social norms that necessitate such rhetorical posturing. And *Paradise Lost*'s adherence to a belief in the typological link between Adam and Eve and Christ and the Church encourages the author to seek justification for the paradoxically equal yet hierarchically ordered wedded pair. These texts at once demonstrate the benefits and limits of attempting to enact social change through already existing social and spiritual institutions.

In this way, the critiques of marriage offered by these texts are far more progressive than they are radical. They do open imaginative spaces where one might think beyond marriage, but they largely continue to affirm marriage's centrality to a woman's social and spiritual future.

This is due in part, I argue, to the extent to which marriage was figured in early modern England as a key mechanism for placing the individual into the sacred narrative of biblical history.

Marriage positioned Christians as the fulfillment of Adam and Eve as well as a type of Christ's relationship to the Church. Therefore, resisting marriage entirely, either to a temporal or spiritual being, might very well exclude the believer from this narrative and, implicitly, God's favor and a desired place in the afterlife. Furthermore, the early modern reliance on the life cycle as a model for conceptualizing human history also ensured that women in particular would be defined largely by their position as either maids, wives, or widows—social roles that hinged directly on their marital status. Therefore, *changes* to the institution, rather than its eradication, appear more frequently than the suggestion of an entirely alternative social system.

And it is for this reason that contemporary scholars seeking to think beyond the influence of the maid, wife, widow triad in early modern literature and culture might find typological readings of marriage less than useful. Indeed, typology's teleological thrust largely upholds patriarchal norms when applied to marriage, for it assumes that a woman fulfills her social and spiritual role by advancing beyond maidenhood and becoming a wife. It is this concern that has led many scholars of early modern English literature, particularly those invested in queer theory, to dismiss teleological temporal modes like typology as the assumption remains that they can do little beyond upholding restrictive social norms. But I hope this dissertation has demonstrated the value of considering the influence of biblical typology on conceptions of marriage and the female life cycle. Namely, I contend that the investigation of these ideologies allows scholars to more fully appreciate their normative effects *but also* various means of resistance against those norms in early modern English literature. Yes, one must not ignore the limiting effects that a temporal mode like typology can place on conceptions of gender and time. Yet to historicize

these terms and study their limits does not necessarily reinforce their logic. As I hope my dissertation has shown, typology was applied to early modern understandings of marriage with a variety of outcomes, some that uphold social norms and others that expose their shortcomings.

The 2016 U.S. presidential election made readily apparent that these norms continue to persist in ways that have global consequences. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman to head a major party ticket in the United States, lost her bid to be President to her opponent, Republican candidate Donald J. Trump, a known misogynist whose criticisms (and those of his supporters) of Clinton frequently make use of sexist rhetoric (in the third Presidential debate, for example, he referred to candidate Clinton as a “nasty woman”—a phrase that would later be co-opted by the feminist opposition to then candidate Trump). But accusations of sexism and misogyny towards Clinton were not only directed at her by the Republican candidate, as Democratic primary candidate Bernie Sanders and his followers (or “Bernie-bros” as they were pejoratively called), also engaged in similar rhetoric. During the primaries, the election, and post-election coverage, questions regarding the impact of misogyny on Clinton’s campaign loomed large.

Months after the election, journalists and historians continue to be divided on the role that misogyny played in Hillary Clinton’s loss. On November 16, 2016, Nancy L. Cohen wrote in *The Washington Post* that “Clinton did not lose because of sexism, and future female candidates for president are unlikely to, either.”¹ Cohen, an historian, affirms that Clinton undoubtedly was “subjected to sexist attacks” and that “politics is a gendered arena.” But, among other things, Cohen points to Clinton’s winning of the popular vote, as well as the fact that “53% of white women favored Trump,” as indices that sexism was not the largest factor in Clinton’s loss.² But Clinton herself even attributes her loss partially to the presence of misogyny, as she was to tell Nicholas Kristof in an interview published in *The New York Times* on April 8, 2017: “Certainly

misogyny played a role' in her loss, she said. 'That just has to be admitted.'" For this justification, Kristof notes that Clinton points to "the abundant social science research that when men are ambitious and successful, they may be perceived as more likable. In contrast, for women in traditionally male fields, it's a trade-off: The more successful and ambitious a woman is, the less likable she becomes (that's also true of how women perceive women)." For Clinton, her loss will always in part be due to the "unconscious bias" (to use Kristof's words) against "ambitious and successful" women.

Clinton's loss—an election upset that shocked many in the United States and abroad—must also be read in the context of increasing public discussions in America about persistent gender inequality. In the years preceding Clinton's presidential run, the U.S. saw an amplified push nationwide to restrict abortion access, the limiting of women's access to reproductive healthcare via repeated calls to defund Planned Parenthood, the continued existence of the gender pay gap and lack of federally-mandated paid parental leave, revelations from the Bureau of Justice Statistics that "one in five female undergraduates have experienced some kind of sexual assault while in college," and increased acts of violence against transgender individuals, with the most vulnerable group being transgender women of color (Jake New, *Inside Higher Ed*).³ I am not a political scientist and hardly have the training to confidently argue that yes, Clinton lost the 2016 Presidential election because of misogyny. What I can argue with some confidence, however, is that as I sit here writing in 2017, it is undeniable that the United States still largely operates under misogynistic ideologies that negatively affect the quality of women's lives.

Furthermore, I would argue that women continue to be read primarily through their performance of patriarchal social roles. Throughout Clinton's campaign, for instance, the

candidate's performance as a *wife* was used to call into question her fitness for office. A video clip from the 2008 Democratic Presidential primary showing Michelle Obama supposedly stating of Clinton, "If you can't run your own house, you can't run the White House" was widely circulated by conservative news outlets both as proof that Obama's support for Clinton during the 2016 election was disingenuous, and to give voice to the notion that Bill Clinton's infidelity while President indicated Clinton failed at managing domestic affairs and, therefore, was unfit to serve as the nation's Commander in Chief.⁴ Even Kellyanne Conway, then candidate Trump's campaign manager, retweeted the 2007 video footage with the caption "Among my favorite clips. Ever." Essentially, Clinton's perceived inability to adhere to contemporary definitions of the Good Wife, which continue to include the management of domestic affairs, was seen by some on the Right as a marker of her inability to be taken seriously as a candidate for President of the United States of America.

Another example of how women continue to be defined by their patriarchal social roles is the tendency for men to argue against sexual assault on the grounds that such attacks should be prevented because the women affected are someone's daughters, wives, or mothers (as opposed to, say, justifying their right to bodily autonomy because they are simply fellow human beings). Since *The New York Times* published an article outlining decades of sexual assault allegations against influential Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein in October of this year, renowned actors like Matt Damon, for instance, have critiqued such behavior on these grounds. In an interview for *Deadline.com*, Damon stated that while he did not engage in or condone sexual harassment before becoming a parent, now that he is "the father of four daughters, this is the kind of sexual predation that keeps me up at night. This is the great fear for all of us. You have a daughter, you know..." (Fleming Jr). Similarly, Matt Damon's long-time collaborator Ben

Affleck wrote on Facebook that “We need to do better at protecting our sisters, friends, co-workers and daughters.” Many have taken to Twitter and the blogosphere to denounce these types of comments, but the fact that they persist is indicative of the way in which patriarchy continues to perpetuate the idea that women are valued primarily for their familial roles as they relate to the men around them, rather than as human beings.

My writing of this dissertation is bookended by my own participation in the life cycle events of marriage and motherhood. In 2007, I married my husband and was the first of my close friends to enter the institution. I was certain I wanted to marry, but I also was not sure what the relationship was between marriage and my own subjectivity, particularly as it related to questions of agency. It was partially the ambivalence I felt about my own marriage that led me to write this project. The summer before I completed my dissertation, I gave birth to my daughter. The experience of pregnancy and impending motherhood had, like my marriage, raised new questions for me personally, and ones which I thought might prove fascinating to consider in the context of early modern literature. Namely: when did motherhood begin? Was it at conception, the “quickenings,” or at another time, and what are the typological implications of motherhood as a stage in the human life cycle? Much scholarship has been done on the place of mothers in early modern English literature, but I wondered if there might be something to a project that questioned the temporal limits of motherhood, perhaps only focusing on depictions of pregnancy and pregnant women.

Four weeks to the day after my daughter was born, however, I also experienced a sudden and tragic loss; my father died in an accident. While celebrating the beginning of new life and the wonderful and terrifying responsibilities that come with it, I said goodbye to one of the most cherished people in my life. A new stage in the life cycle—death—unfolded before my eyes.

Sadly for my father, the cycle was hardly complete at the time of his death, killed well before he had reached his “second childishness.” Early modern views of the cycle and its ideal milestones as outlined by Jacques in *As You Like It* fall short of describing my father’s life. My dissertation spends a great deal of time considering the impact of the concept of the human life cycle on those who fail to conform to its suppositions about women and marriage, but my recent experience with death has led me to ponder the effect of this concept on those who meet “untimely” deaths. The very phrase assumes that death should happen at a particular point in one’s life, and that to do so beforehand places one in an ambivalent relationship to time. Jonathan Gil Harris has previously considered the untimely in the material objects discussed in Shakespeare, but I now wonder if investigating the figuration of people and characters who die prematurely might be worth some scholarly attention. Indeed, what was a “premature” or “untimely” death in early modern England? What were the life events that had to have yet happened for such terms to be applied? Was this the same or different for men and women, and how did these attitudes shape the literary projects of the period? Did the time and nature of one’s death carry any gendered significance beyond the perceived gender of the deceased?

Both pregnancy and untimely death hold ambivalent positions in conceptions of the human life cycle, and I am not sure which, if not both, I might pursue in coming years. But what is certain to me is that the idea of the human life cycle remains a powerful cultural fiction with varying implications for differently gendered bodies, and continuing to explore its impact through a feminist historiography informed by queer theory only enables a critique of its more pervasive normative implications. Furthermore, the continued consideration of temporal modes like typology, even when they seem to operate with conservative ends, can also (as I hope this project has shown) yield readings that can helpfully explain, rather than reassert, their persistent

force. What's more, when considering their uses in their own historical moments, such narratives might be seen as offering challenges to other restrictive ideologies, even if only occasionally.

The author of *Ecclesiastes* may have written that "To all things there is an appointed time," and the time is right for scholars to continue exploring questions of gender and temporality in early modern English literature.

Notes

1. Kahn does an insightful reading of a number of essays present in Menon's edited collection *Shakespeareer* (2011) that calls attention to how even its contributors, specifically the essays of Steven Bruhm and Matt Bell, continue to deploy traditional historiography when making their arguments (52-54).

2. See Bartolovich for a compelling argument regarding the importance of unifying concepts (here "woman") in forming collectives for the purpose of political change ("First").

3. My understanding of the early modern life cycle largely relies on David Cressy's study, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (1997). However, there are of course many other studies that consider this temporal formulation. See, for example, Sears, P.J.P. Goldberg, Deborah Youngs, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks.

4. On the emphasis of "order" in early modern England, see *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, edited by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (1985).

5. The engraver is Pieter Nolpe of Amsterdam (a talented engraver whose other works include an engraved rendition of Reuben's *Adoration of the Magi*) and was sold in England at the shop of John Overton, a seller noted for "publishing widely saleable prints and buying up and republishing successful plates" (*ODNB*).

6. Patricia Crawford notes that at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, "there were an estimated 1,600 nuns living in various orders" (*Women and Religion* 22).

7. For a comprehensive study of convent culture in England after the Reformation, see Walker.

8. See Linda Woodbridge and Patricia Fumerton.

9. See Naomi Tadmor for an overview of the early modern politics of biblical translation, particularly as they relate to the representation of marriage and the relationship between Adam and Eve. For a study on the continued legacy of marital violence despite the companionate model, see Frances E. Dolan (*Marriage*).

10. The term “companionate marriage” was popularized by Lawrence Stone’s *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977). Stone saw the rise of this ideal throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, yet scholars now see its nascence as early as the early sixteenth century. This ideal also falls under different names, being referred to by Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford as “the ideal of wedded comradeship” (*Women* 135).

11. Edmund Tilney’s marriage manual, *Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Dueties in Mariage, Called the Flowers of Friendship* (originally printed in 1568) also suggests that an ideal wife is “not to commaund the man but to be alwaies obedient: so ought he not to suffer himself to be commanded of his wife” (E2r). Both Tilney and Smith represent a great many voices who insisted that a Good Wife must be both partner and subordinate to their loving spouse.

12. Obviously, there was abundant support for the patriarchal oppression of women from sources beyond the Christian Bible. Authors need only read Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* (as many did), for example, to see examples of classical misogyny at work. But the Bible was the source that carried the most weight, given its spiritual implications.

13. Suzanne Hull also outlines numerous texts fixated on the proper behavior of English wives.

14. I leave the phrase “Good Wife” in quotes here as I am quoting directly from Ezell’s discussion on the subject. Since the idea of the Good Wife was also a generally understood archetype, I drop the quotations once my discussion of Ezell’s definition has ended.

15. While Vives’s treatise was wildly popular, there were other texts on the topic of female comportment that offered less domestically-minded advice for women. For instance, Constance Jordan has argued that Thomas Elyot’s *Defence of Good Women* (1540) offered a more civically-minded counterpoint to Vives’s *Instruction*, encouraging a “model of femininity more aggressively political” (201).

16. Wabuda notes that it went through at least “nine print runs in English from the end of the 1520s until 1592” (116).

17. This is not to suggest that women were not engaging in these ways before the Reformation. One need only look to Julian of Norwich or Margery Kemp for examples of women who spoke publicly on matters of theology, and did so on the authority of faith. An increase in literacy rates for women, changing attitudes regarding marriage and the roles of wives, and the Protestant doctrine of *sola fides* (faith alone), however, did encourage the foundation of female literary communities and broaden the number of individuals who might claim divine inspiration for their speech.

18. On this topic, see *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, edited by Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie, especially the chapters by Narveson and Schildt.

19. See Lewalski (*Writing Women*), Crawford (*Women and Religion*), Longfellow, Miller, Narveson, Molekamp (*Women*), and McQuade.

20. This aligns with Donald Dickson’s later taxonomy of the potential applications of typological thought in early modern literature and culture. Dickson observes that “In addition to

the familiar *Christological* types (which do depend on a simple type and antitype relationship),” writes Dickson, “*sacramental* types—through which the individual’s salvation history is told in imitation of Christ—and *eschatological* types—through which the ultimate glorification of Christ, man, and the universe is foreshadowed and fulfilled” became part of Protestant Reformation exegesis (254; original emphasis). Sacramental types enabled individual “participation in the fulfillment, typologically, of promises made possible through Christ” while eschatological types described “the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise in the New Jerusalem—to which even New Testament antitypes were merely shadows” (Dickson 265).

21. This is from the Edward May translation (1580).

22. See Arthur Golding’s translation of *The sermons of M. John Calvin, upon the Epistle of S. Paule too [sic] the Ephesians* (1577).

1. Unlike the cross-dressing heroines of Shakespeare’s plays who are but fictions of female subversion performed exclusively by boys and men, Moll Cutpurse represents a real, historical female figure who used gender ambiguity to challenge a host of societal norms. For an examination of the implications of cross-dressing plots and theatrical transvestitism, see Callaghan (*Shakespeare*).

2. On the valences of Moll’s girlhood, see Higginbotham. For information regarding Mary Frith’s biography, see Ungerer.

3. All citations for *The Roaring Girl* are from the Norton Critical Edition, edited by Jennifer Panek (2011).

4. In addition to Howard’s book, one might also look to Gibbons, Leggat, and Paster for significant studies on the city comedy genre.

5. Howard points to two types of city comedies—historical (best typified by a play like Dekker’s *Shoemaker’s Holiday*) and satirical. For a useful essay on *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* and its relationship to the historical record, see Bartolovich (“Mythos of Labor”).

6. As Richard McCabe describes it: “On I June I599 the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, and the Bishop of London, Richard Bancroft, issued to the master and wardens of the Stationers’ Company a ban prohibiting the further publication of certain works, and providing for the destruction of such copies as already existed” (1). While scholars before McCabe claimed that the ban sought to suppress pornography, McCabe convincingly demonstrates that the ban specifically targeted verse satires.

7. See Paster for a description of the early modern theater’s indebtedness to New Comedy.

8. See Paster.

9. On Gouge and his popularity as the minister for St. Ann Blackfriars, see Brett Usher’s *ODNB* entry “Gouge, William (1575-1653).”

10. On the emergence of the ideology of romantic love in early modern England, see Callaghan, Helms, and Singh (*The Weyward Sisters*).

11. On the shift throughout the early modern period from the overtly violent public policing of female speech to more subtle and internalized forms, see Boose.

12. See Welshans.

13. *The True Description of a Child with Ruffes* (1566) and *Strange newes out of Kent of a monstrous and misshapen child* (1609) are but two examples. For an excellent overview of the multitudes of portentous birth texts in Reformation England, see J. Crawford.

14. See, for example, *A True Reporte of Three Straunge and Wonderful Accidents* (1603).

15. Dekker was no stranger to the explicit merging of both genres. In 1609, for example, he published a satirical almanac titled *The Raven's Almanack*. Eleven years later he published an apocalyptic dream, titled unoriginally *Dekker His Dream*, which concludes with the claim that men on earth are still far worse than the devils he saw in hell.

16. On the particular prophecies offered by these figures, see Hug.

17. See Thomas, Curry, Smith, Dobin, Thornton, and J. Crawford.

18. Napier's text would see three editions printed in 1593, 1594, and again in 1611.

19. It also appears in italics in the 1611 printed version, further distinguishing it from the rest of the play text. The Norton Critical edition does not italicize the song, and thus I have not done so.

20. For an excellent study on Jews and Jewishness in Early Modern England, see Shoulson.

21. I am very thankful to Amanda Eubanks-Winker for providing this insight.

22. Robert Wilson, for example, wrote two early plays, *The Pedlar's Prophecy* and *The Cobbler's Prophecy* in which characters deliver brief, lyrical prognostications. Again, one finds a "prophecy" in the anonymous 1607 *The tragedie of Caesar and Pompey or Caesars Revenge* which was, according to its title page, "Privately acted by the students of Trinity Colledge in Oxforde."

23. *Arte of English Poesy* (ln 80n)

24. One can find this meter used by the witch Hecate in Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (as early as 1609), and by an "Italian Zany" who lulls a friar into magical sleep in Dekker's *If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil is In It* (1611) (I3v-I4r).

Chapter 2

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1. For scholarship of this kind, see McGrath, Lewalski (“Imagining Female Community”), and Mueller.
 2. See Coiro, Schnell, Feng Ng, and Coles.
 3. John Garrison recently offered a counter-argument to the usefulness of typology as the lens through which to read *Salve Deus*, arguing instead that “Lanyer grants a radical gift to her patrons: the ability to imagine themselves present during the time, or possessing the complete power, of biblical women” (“Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*” 300). For Garrison, Lanyer’s lack of pronouns and / or ambiguous pronoun usage allows the reader to literally become the women of the text—to imagine themselves present at the time of Christ’s crucifixion and embody their actions; something that typology’s emphasis on future fulfillment does not allow. I take issue with Garrison’s understanding of typology, however, as it anachronistically downplays the significance of offering spiritual ascendance over worldly gain.
 4. All citations from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* are from Susanne Woods’s edition of Lanyer’s poem, *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1993), although the original is consulted at times (which I make clear through future notes).
 5. See Woods (*Lanyer: A Renaissance*).
 6. See Richard T. Spence’s entry on Anne Clifford for the *ODNB*.
 7. See Rosalind K. Marshall’s entry for the *ODNB*.
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. Woods (*The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer*).
 10. The semicolon appears in the original printing of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611).

11. This distinction is worth making as scholars have also pointed out the ways in which the Bible theologically also encourages men to envision themselves as Christ's bride, and the queer implications of doing so. See, for example, Loughlin (*Queer Theology*) and Rambuss.

12. See Wall for more on the relationship between the Petrarchan blazon and the Canticles.

13. Audrey E. Tinkham also calls attention to the blazon, claiming that while it positions Christ as a feminized object, it also celebrates "the purity and truth of his/her speech, which stands in marked contrast to the notoriously venomous, unchaste female tongues cataloged by numerous early modern writers of the period" (71). By presenting Christ in this manner, Tinkham argues, "Lanyer establishes explicitly that women have the power both to speak the truth and to inspire others to do so" (72).

14. It is important to note that the presentation of Christ through the blazon tradition also effeminizes him, in effect placing Lanyer's dedicatees in a position of power as they become the desiring subjects and Christ the passive object of their desires. Perhaps even more impactful for a text arguing for the spiritual superiority of women, this queers the largely heteronormative relationship Lanyer offers to her dedicatees by suggesting a marital bond with Christ that also, in some ways, appears to be between two individuals of a similar, if not the same, sex. Depictions of Christ as effeminate were commonplace throughout medieval England, and became only slightly less so throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But the tradition remained and, in the hands of Lanyer's poetic vision, seems to be, at least in part, one of the reasons that Christ might be a superior marital partner for Lanyer and her dedicatees than their temporal spouses.

15. The lack of concern for her earthly marital relationship in that place of “eternall rest” is in line with Calvinist doctrine, which, as Raime Targoff observes, held that there was no need for marriage in the afterlife as the Christian’s chief comfort at that time will be the eternal union with, and edification of, Christ.

16. The note in the Geneva Bible for verse 30 makes the relationship between this passage and the act of communion explicit: “This our conjunction with Christ must be considered as Christ is the housband, and we the wife, which are not onely joined to him by nature, but also by the *communion* of substance, through the holie Gost and by faith, the seale and testimonie thereof is the Supper of the Lord.”

17. Most famously, Thomas Aquinas argued for marriage’s sacramental status in *Summa Theologiae*.

18. For a discussion of Lanyer’s “scoptic metaphors” as they relate to her Eucharistic presentation of the text, see Mascetti.

19. Such an argument challenges that of Robert Filmer who famously argues in *Patriarcha* (published in 1680 but likely written in the 1630s) that Adam’s authority over the world proves that God views monarchy as the supreme form of government, and that subjects are beholden to the monarch’s will. See Glenn Burgess’s entry on Sir Robert Filmer in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

20. See Calvin (*Divers sermons*), Abbot, and Boys.

21. This note does not appear in either the Bishops or King James Bibles, yet it is very likely that the Bible Lanyer was most familiar with was the Geneva.

22. For the history of representations of Pilate’s wife and her depiction in *Salve Deus*, see Campbell, Powell, and Blessing.

23. See Beilin.

24. On the erotics of female relationships in “The Description of Cooke-ham,” see Greenstadt.

Chapter 3

1. For a definition of the “Mother’s Legacy” genre, I prefer the one provided by Jennifer Heller: the Mother’s Legacy is “a genre that offers religious advice from a dying mother to her children as its primary purpose” (603).

2. A short list of works engaged with Leigh’s work includes that by Sizemore, Poole, Craig, Snook, especially chapter 2 (*Women, Reading*) and Snook (“Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing*), Gray, and Combs.

3. Little is known about the historical life of Leigh, and even less of her husband, Ralph. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Leigh was “the daughter of William Kempe of Finchingfield, Essex” and was married to Ralph Leigh “a gentleman of Cheshire who served under the earl of Essex at Cadiz.” They had three sons, George, John and William, the last of which “became rector at Groton in Suffolk” (*ODNB*). What is certain is that while Leigh came from a well-established household, her husband was of little note and no record remains of him beyond his involvement with the Earl of Essex.

4. Margaret Ezell observes that it was conventional for women (and male) writers to argue in the prefatory material of their texts that their appearance in print was not driven by “worldly concerns” (87). Even if such language was conventional, it is worth noting the specific ramifications of Leigh’s use of widowhood when articulating her text’s purpose. For more on women writers and rhetorical conventions, see Ezell, Bennett, and Coles.

5. *The Mothers Blessing* (1634), STC 1507.3. This edition is known as the Harmsworth Copy, per the Folger Catalog.

6. This was a decided shift from medieval thinking on mothers which presented fathers as responsible for their children's education. See Travitsky ("The New Mother").

7. *Early English Books Online* shows that Cleaver's text saw no less than seven editions between 1598 and 1630.

8. Many excellent pieces of scholarship have been released in the past twenty years on these texts, some considering mothers' legacies as a distinct genre (as I list in the first note—above), and each text individually. For some notable examples, see Matchinske, Dowd (*Women's Work*), Mazzola, and Ferguson.

9. Citing the findings of Roger Schofield, Marsha Urban claims that "9.3 per 1,000 or less than 1 percent of mothers died in childbirth in Elizabethan England" (12). For perspective, Urban notes that "childbirth mortality" for women in the United States in 2000 was "less than one-tenth of a percent" (12).

10. This is not to say that Leigh was the first woman whose widowhood impacted her literary endeavors. Perhaps most notably, Christine de Pizan, who was widowed at the age of twenty-five and left to take care of her three children, her mother, and her niece, famously partook of a literary career as a means through which to financially support herself and her dependents (Malcomson 16). Although de Pizan's work wasn't necessarily well known outside of English courtly circles, she nonetheless stands as an important figure in the history of women's writing and self-representation. On the circulation of de Pizan's work in early modern England, see Malcomson in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, edited by Cristina Malcomson and Mihoko Suzuki (2002).

11. In her *ODNB* entry on the Earl, Pauline Croft notes how *A Defense Against the Poyson of Supposed Propheesies*, which was dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary, was intended as a "further attempt to attract the patronage of leading privy councillors." The text as a whole "emphasized his own religious orthodoxy while apparently aiming at the magico-philosophical circles of Richard Harvey and John Dee" (*ODNB*).

12. For Fowns's biography, see Gordon Goodwin and *rev.* Scott Mandelbrote's entry in the *ODNB*.

13. In Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (ca. 1405), the author uses the typological relationship between Eve and Mary to argue for mankind's indebtedness to women (24). Brownlee remarks how Rachel Speght, in her famous response to Joseph Swetnam, also relies on this passage to underscore women's absolution from Eve's transgressions (1305).

14. The practice of reading Mary as the antitype of Old Testament women was not original to Leigh, as it had medieval precedent. For a brief overview of medieval attitudes towards Mary, see Hackett.

15. Michal and Abigail were wives of King David, discussed in the book of *Samuel*; Rachel is Jacob's favorite wife, discussed in *Genesis*; Judith is the central figure of the Apocryphal *Book of Judith* and is known for her bravery and valor as she decapitated Holofernes, an enemy of Israel; Anna is a New Testament prophetess mentioned in the book of Luke.

16. Leigh presents her insistence on the importance of naming children after virtuous biblical figures as a direct critique of Catholicism which, unlike Protestantism, offers things like

“a painted piece of Paper, or a carved stone” for reflection and veneration, rather than textual engagement (45). For a brief overview of Protestant naming practices, see Wilson.

17. The editors of the 2002 edition of *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* (University of Illinois Press) note that the text “appeared in more than forty editions” in a variety of languages between its original writing in 1523 and 1600 (xv).

18. See Betty Travitsky’s *ODNB* entry, ““Clinton, Elizabeth, countess of Lincoln (1574?–1630?)” (2007).

19. Speaking of the commonality of widowhood, Kehler writes: “Widowhood was common and anticipated, wife typically being younger than their husbands and more resistant to disease; in the 1603 plague visitation, for every woman who died, so did at least two men” (29).

20. In addition to Kehler’s *Shakespeare’s Widows*, see also Cavallo and Warner’s edited collection *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (1999), Capp, and Froide.

21. Vives does reluctantly admit that, as Paul suggests, “if they can nat suffer, let them marie. For it is better to marie than to bourne” (177). Yet he still maintains that if possible, it is best for a woman to “continue in holy wydowhed” (177).

22. Langhorne’s text, *Mary Sitting at Christs Feet* (1611) was reprinted three more times between its initial publication and 1630, suggesting it enjoyed some popularity in the early seventeenth century.

23. More, who was also known as “the Apostle of Norwich” according to his *ODNB* entry, was one of two preachers at St. Andrew the Apostle in Norwich, where he was well known and respected (Blatchley “More, John”).

24. Stretton offers the following definitions for these legal states: dower referred to “a life interest in one-third of a husband’s freehold lands,” jointure to “a life interest in land, or a money

equivalent in the form of an annuity, pre-arranged at the time of marriage,” and freebench “or widow’s estate” reference the “customary rights to between one-third and the whole of the interests a husband held by customary tenure, for life or for widowhood” (199).

Chapter 4

1. Key cases include the legalization of interracial unions in *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U. S. 1, 12 (1967), the right of fathers “behind on child support” to marry in *Zablocki v. Redhail*, 434 U. S. 374, 384 (1978), and the right of prison inmates to marry in *Turner v. Safley*, 482 U. S. 78, 95 (1987) (Kennedy 11).

2. Chief Justice John Roberts’s dissenting opinion demonstrates the continued centrality of concerns over procreation and child-rearing for arguments against marriage equality when he defines marriage as an institution designed to ensure that “children are conceived by a mother and father [i.e. man and woman] committed to raising them in the stable conditions of a lifelong relationship” (5).

3. See Butler, Bornstein, Halberstam, and Kimport for but a few examples of works critical of the LGBTQ movement’s emphasis on marriage equality and its tendency to re-inscribe heteronormative social relations. For an overview of gay marriage debates specifically within the LGBTQ community, see the essay collection *The Marrying Kind?: Debating Same-Sex Marriage within the Lesbian and Gay Movement* (2013).

4. The Human Rights Campaign lists marriage equality as one of their organization’s chief victories in the fight for LGBTQ equality (HRC Website, 2016).

5. As Thomas Luxon states in his influential *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship* (2005): “Simply put, if marriage is a friendship, and marriage displaces friendship as the defining relationship of human society, then it only makes sense that friends will want to

marry each other” (xi). For further discussion of the influence of classical friendship on the definition of marriage in Milton’s works, see Chaplin. For further readings that offer queer accounts of the works of John Milton, see Bredbeck, Summers, Rumrich, Boehrer, Garrison (*Friendship*), and the essays found in the special edition of *Early Modern Culture* on “Queer Milton.”

6. For a discussion of the relationship between Milton’s concept of marriage and his protoliberalism, see LaBreche.

7. While my own understanding of Milton’s monism comes largely from Fallon’s influential *Milton Among the Philosophers* (1991), one might also look to Kerrigan, Rogers (*Matter*), Hart, Donnelly (*Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*), Hequembourg, and Hampton. For a challenge to the presence of monist materialism in Milton’s work, see Sugimura.

8. Phillip Donnelly’s entry in *The Milton Encyclopedia* also provides this concise definition for monism: “The belief that reality consists of a single substance...*Paradise Lost* presents most clearly Milton’s view that reality consists of a single, gratuitous, suprasensible, and conditional ‘matter’ that comes from God” (245-246). Many modern scholars, including Fallon, have attributed the origins of seventeenth-century England’s interest in monist materialism to the atomist philosophies of Epicurius by way of Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* (15). For a more thorough account of the influence of Lucretius on Milton, see Hardie, as well as *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, edited by David Norbrook, Stephen Harrison and Philip Hardie (2015).

9. See Fallon, pg. 103-105.

10. Fallon acknowledges that “Milton...does distinguish between spirit and body (*CP* 6:318). But neither the incorporeality of the soul nor the actual separability of body and soul follows from the lawfulness of distinguishing between them” (100).

11. All citations of *Paradise Lost* are from the Longman 2nd Edition, edited by Alastair Fowler (2007).

12. As John Rogers observes, “the monist’s insistence on the spiritualization of matter worked inevitably to elevate the discursive category of femaleness, traditionally mired in matter, that dualism had helped keep in check” (15). Luxon, on the other hand, argues that while this may theoretically be so, Milton’s insistence that “a body that does not improve ‘by tract of time’ into ‘all spirit’ is a body of sin” undermines monism’s ability to redeem the body from its subordination to spirit (131). As I argue, what monism does allow is the lessening of the hierarchy between Adam and Eve, even if body remains a lesser substance than spirit.

13. See Donnelly (*Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*) for one reading on the possible influence of Augustine’s allegorical interpretation of Adam and Eve on Milton’s own depiction of them and the gender hierarchy in *Paradise Lost*. See Fiore for the first attempt at a comprehensive account of Augustine’s influence on Milton’s theology. Also see Haskin and Shore for but two additional works that illuminate Milton’s relationship with Augustine.

14. According to Arthur Barker, for example, “*The Doctrine* and *Tetrachordon* present as if were a preliminary sketch of the philosophical and theological background of his epic” (98).

15. It is worth noting that Milton’s monist marriage, while challenging the hierarchy between the sexes, does little to address Milton’s privileging of Protestant Christianity above other religions.

16. Catherine Gimelli Martin suggests that Milton's radical views, while in line with the development of a Protestant attitude toward marriage, were still far more radical than conventional Puritan doctrine: "Puritans in particular (who did not pioneer completely new forms of companionate marriage, as earlier believed) made only minor alterations in the common Calvinist belief that the prime purpose of marriage was to propagate the church and the family" (238).

17. Milton would again echo this claim in *De Doctrina Christiana* where he writes: "everyone admits that marriage may be dissolved if the prime end and form of marriage is violated; and most people say that this is the reason why Christ permitted divorce only on grounds of adultery. But the prime end and form of marriage is not the bed, but conjugal love and mutual assistance in life: nearly everyone admits that this is so. For the prime end and form of marriage can only be what is mentioned in the original institution, and mention is there made of pleasant companionship (a thing which ceases to exist if someone is left by himself), and of the mutual assistance of a married couple (a thing which only thrives where there is love)" (CPW 6.380-81).

18. As observed by Ernest Sirluck, divorce was possible in seventeenth-century England only for "adultery and cruelty," although "Nullification, however, was possible for any cause which, being in existence before the marriage, interfered with its validity as defined by the canon law (e.g. consanguinity, impotence, precontract, etc.)." (CPW 2.145). For a succinct summary of the history of debates surrounding divorce in England, see Suzuki's chapter in *Milton in Context*.

19. All citations of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, *Tetrachordon* and *On Christian Doctrine* are from *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* (1959). Although this essay will not discuss the variations between Milton's first and second editions of *The Doctrine*

and *Discipline of Divorce*, one may look to Kranidas for a compelling argument regarding the variations between the two, particularly as they relate to representations of women.

20. Here Milton quotes Romans 13:1. On the relationship between love and loneliness, Milton also wrote in *Tetrachordon* that “*Love* was the Son of *Loneliness*, begot in Paradise by that sociable & helpfull aptitude which God implanted between man and woman toward each other” (*DDD*, *CPW* 2.252, original emphasis). See Romans 13:1 for the passage on which Milton’s

21. See Suzuki (“Marriage and Divorce”) for a brief overview of marital reform in the early seventeenth century. For a more extended study on marriage and divorce, see Phillips.

22. Refer to pages 62-63 of “A Directory of Publique Worship” (1644) for a description of the ceremony.

23. From *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church*: “As for marriages that ministers should meddle with them, as not sanctifi’d or legitimat without their celebration, I find no ground in scripture either of precept or example.... Our divines denie it to be a sacrament; yet retained the celebration, till prudently a late parliament recovered the civil liberty of marriage from thir encroachment, and transferd the ratifying and registering thereof from the canonical shop to the proper cognisance of civil magistrates” (*CPW* 7.299-300).

24. Refer to page 40 of the Act for a description of the ceremony.

25. Here one finds echoes of Aristotle’s hylomorphism, by which all creation consists of matter (the raw material from which it was derived), and form (the essence that constitutes its particularity). See Aristotle’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, as well as *De Anima* for its particular usage when discussing bodies and souls.

26. John Halkett concluded as much, arguing that Milton's divorce tracts are "plainly founded on the dualities of soul and body, essence and accident, 'spirit' and 'letter'" (97).

27. According to Fallon, Milton's emphasis on the spiritual compatibility of husband and wife serves as a "teaching method" by which Milton challenges the excessive elevation of either component (92).

28. See Walker ("Milton's Dualistic Theory") and Trubowitz.

29. For a useful essay on movement and the "trope of walking" in *Paradise Lost*, see Post.

30. Giovanni Diodati (also referred to as Jean or John) was the uncle of Milton's dear friend Charles Diodati and a prominent Calvinist scholar (Cambell *ODNB*). Milton may have even lodged with Giovanni while in Geneva in the 1630s. On this point, see Shawcross and Campbell; Corns.

31. For a persuasive argument on the arbitrariness of Eden's gender hierarchy and its implications for the Fall, see Rogers ("Transported Touch").

32. While it might seem surprising that Puritans like Milton and his contemporaries would rely on Augustine for their theology, Peter Fiore has usefully overviewed why Puritan divines continued to cite him in their writing despite his associations with Catholicism. Augustine's writing, argues Fiore, provided Puritans with support for the Protestant emphasis on direct textual engagement. Rather than demonstrating support for Catholic teachings, "In using Augustine faithfully for the theory of the 'pure' word in Scripture," Fiore argues, "they [Puritan theologians] depart from the doctrine of the medieval church" (11). Writing specifically of Milton, Fiore observes how sections of Milton's *Commonplace Book* demonstrate a familiarity

with *De Civitate Dei*, that his own prose tracts feature at least forty-five references to Augustine, and that *On Christian Doctrine* cites “Augustine’s definition of Original Sin” (3).

33. Since the 1980s (and earlier), many works have addressed the gender relations of *Paradise Lost* and the divorce tracts. See Willis, Turner, Wittreich, Nyquist, Belsey, Martin’s edited collection *Milton and Gender*, and Miller for but a few notable examples of scholarship that has addressed the gender relations of *Paradise Lost* and the divorce tracts.

34. As Lara Dodds recently argued, much of Eve’s subordinate status relies on the occasional nature of her creation and Milton’s continued belief that a woman who is not a wife is “nothing” (52).

35. See Dobranski (“Seizures”) for another account of the implications of Milton’s use of “seize” both before and after the Fall.

36. This sentiment is evident also in *Tetrachordon*, where Milton argues: “loneliness is the first thing which Gods eye nam’d not good: whether it be a thing, or the want of something, I labour not” (CPW 2.595).

37. This passage also echoes 1 Corinthians 13, particularly verses 8-10: “Love doeth never fall away, tho[u]gh that prophecying be abolished, or the to[n]gues cease, or knowledge vanish away. For we know in parte, and we prophecie in parte. But when that which is perfite, is come, then that which is in parte, shalbe abolished.” Love transcends temporal human constraints, providing access to “that which is perfite.”

38. This new relationship echoes the marital hierarchy delineated by Milton in *De Doctrina Christiana*: “Marriage ... consisted in the mutual love, delight, help and society of husband and wife, though with the husband having greater authority...The husband’s authority became still greater after the fall” (CPW 6.355).

39. Echoing the rhetoric of the “anti-feminist” Joseph Swetnam, Adam refers to Eve here as “all but a rib / Crookèd by nature” (10.884-85). For a reading of the influence of the *Querelle des Femmes* on *Paradise Lost*, see Miller, particularly Chapter 1.

Conclusion

1. Cohen, “Sexism did not cost Hillary Clinton the election: And it probably won’t prevent another woman from eventually winning the presidency, either” (*The Washington Post*, 2016).

2. This particular claim is quite troubling, as it assumes sexism is only something that can afflict men—an absolutely ludicrous claim.

3. Research from the Guttmacher Institute claims that 27% of all abortion restrictions since *Roe v. Wade* were enacted between 2010-2016 (“Last Five Years Account for More Than One-quarter of All Abortion Restrictions Enacted Since Roe”). On the persistence of the gender pay gap, see the AAUW’s *The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap: Fall 2017 Edition* (2017). According to the Pew Research Center, the United States is the only country out of forty-one other nations that does not offer any form of paid parental leave (www.pewresearch.org). On violence against transgender individuals, and particular transgender women of color, see the Human Rights Campaign’s “Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2017” (www.hrc.org).

4. According to Louis Jacobson of Politifact, Michelle Obama’s comments came from an address she gave on August 12, 2007 to the “Women for Obama South Side Community Kickoff gathering at the Grand Ballroom, a historic venue in the Obamas’ hometown of Chicago.” While the comments may appear to be a jab at then Senator Clinton, politifact.com notes that “Michelle Obama made a similar comment on the stump during a visit to Atlantic, Iowa” where she clearly

appears to speak in reference to her and Barack's management of their own household, including making time for their children. Their assessment? "It's possible to see her words as a veiled shot at the Clinton's marriage. It's also possible that she was simply expressing pride in how her own family had arranged its affairs to make sure their young children weren't left out."

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Youngs, Deborah. *The Life-Cycle in Western Europe, 1300-1500*. Manchester UP, 2006.

Vita

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EDUCATION

- ABD in English, Syracuse University. PhD anticipated December 2017
- BA with Honors in English, *magna cum laude*, George Mason University, May 2007

DISSERTATION

“Wifely Figures: Marriage, Gender and Biblical Typology in Early Modern England” participates in current scholarly debates regarding gender, sexuality, and time by attending to the hermeneutic of biblical typology and its influence on gender representation in early modern English literature. Doing so illuminates the ways typology both supported heteronormative and misogynistic viewpoints *and* provided a means through which to challenge such ideologies. Texts considered include Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mother’s Blessing* (1616), Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* (1611), and John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667). My adviser is Crystal Bartolovich, and my committee members are Dympna Callaghan and Stephanie Shirilan.

PUBLICATIONS

- “‘So hand in hand they passed’: Hand-Holding and Monist Marriage in *Paradise Lost*.” *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*. Vol. 18 No.1, 2018.
- “‘This Sounds Like Doomsday’: Moll Cutpurse and Sideways Growth in *The Roaring Girl*.” *Queering Childhood in Early Modern Drama*. Eds. Jennifer Higginbotham and Mark Johnston. Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- **Shakespeare Association of America Graduate Student Travel Award** (2016)
A competitive award offering financial support to attend the 2016 meeting of the SAA in New Orleans, LA
- **Syracuse University Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship** (2015-2016) One of two competitive fellowships offered to graduate students in the Humanities at Syracuse
- **James Elson Teaching Award** (2015)
A competitive award offered annually to the graduate student in English who submits the best teaching portfolio and evidence of effective teaching
- **Syracuse University Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award** (2015)
A competitive award offered annually by the SU Graduate School to a small number of excellent student instructors nominated by their departments

- **Folger Institute Grant-in-Aid** (2013-2014)
For travel and accommodations to attend year-long dissertation seminar titled “Researching the Archives,” led by Peter Stallybrass and Karen Kupperman
- **Folger Institute Grant-in-Aid** (Summer 2011)
For travel and accommodations to attend the seminar “The Making of Paradise Lost” led by Thomas Corns
- **Syracuse University English Department Tuition and Aid** (Summer 2010)
For participation in the Cornell School of Criticism and Theory seminar with Saba Mahmood
- **Syracuse University English Department Summer Fellowship** (Summer 2009/10)

PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

- Seminar Participant in “Queer Theology in Shakespeare Studies” at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in Atlanta, GA (April 2017)
- Seminar participant in “Queering Childhood” at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in New Orleans, LA (March 2016)
- “‘Where no shadow stays thy coming’: Typology and the Female Life Cycle in Book IV of Paradise Lost.” The Conference on John Milton (October 2015)
- Seminar participant in “Women’s Alliances” at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia (April 2015)
- “‘This Sounds like Doomsday’: Single Womanhood and the End(s) of Marriage in Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl*.” Participant on and organizer of panel titled, “Memory, Temporality, and Revisiting the Past in Early Modern English Culture.” Northeast Modern Language Association Conference in Toronto, Canada (May 2015)
- “Managing the Classroom.” Syracuse University English Department Teaching Assistant Orientation. Syracuse, NY (August 2014)
- “Unruly Instruction: Pedagogy, Feminism, and the Unruly Woman.” Participant in panel titled, “Embodied Pedagogies? Bodily Bridges and Barriers in the Classroom.” Syracuse University Future Professoriate Program Annual Conference, Hamilton, NY (May 2014)
- “Wife After Death: Widowhood, Typology and the Female Life Cycle in Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mother’s Blessing*.” Syracuse English Department Colloquium, Syracuse, NY (May 2014)
- “Marital Transformation and Authorial Representation in the Works of Mary Cary and Margaret Cavendish.” North East Modern Language Association Conference in Harrisburg, PA (April 2014)
- “I Want to Hold Your Hand: Monism and Marriage in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.” Sixteenth Century Society and Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio (October 2012)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE Courses Designed and Taught Independently at Syracuse University (2010-Present)

- ETS 426: Topics in Literature, Culture, and Social Change; “Love and Marriage in Shakespeare’s England”
- ETS 444: Topics in Theoretical Modes of Inquiry; “Early Modern English Feminism(s)”
- ETS 440: Theorizing History and Culture; “Time in Early Modern England”
- ETS 113: Survey of British Literature through 1789
- ETS 192: Gender and Literary Texts; “Marriage in Early Modern England”
- ETS 145: Reading Popular Culture

Courses Co-Taught at Syracuse University (Spring 2014)

- ETS 420: Cultural Production and Reception; “Shakespeare: Love and Service”
- ETS 121: Introduction to Shakespeare

Courses for which I Served as a Teaching Assistant at Syracuse University (2008/10; 2016)

- ETS 151: Interpretation of Poetry
- ETS 145: Reading Popular Culture
- ETS 154: Interpretation of Film
- ETS 121: Introduction to Shakespeare

SERVICE

- University Senator, Syracuse University Senate (2012/2013)
- Teaching Mentor, Syracuse University Graduate School (Summer 2012)
- President, Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization (2011/12)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Modern Language Association
- The Renaissance Society of America
- Shakespeare Association of America
- National Women’s Studies Association

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