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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

"VIRTUE'S FRIENDS": THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WOMEN'S WRITING

By

Allison Johnson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2010

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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"VIRTUE'S FRIENDS": THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WOMEN'S WRITING

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JOHNSON, ALLISON <u>"Virtue's Friends": The Politics of Friendship</u> in Early Modern English Women's Writing

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This project explores the ways in which early modern English women writers engaged with and challenged the rhetoric of ideal male friendship in order to claim social and political significance for their own participation in friendship practices. Most humanist representations of friendship, drawing on classical texts such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *De Amicitia*, defined friendship as the bond between two virtuous men. This bond held public and political significance, for the rhetoric of ideal male friendship in Renaissance England offered a way of envisioning the ties that held society together. As Alan Bray suggests in *The Friend*, "The principal difference between the friendship of the modern world and the friendship [of traditional society] is that . . . friendship was significant in a public sphere" (2). Women were often ignored by or explicitly excluded from classical and humanist representations of ideal friendship, but they nevertheless argued for their own ability to engage in friendships of virtue.

The classical tradition of ideal male friendship repeatedly emphasizes the importance of equality and similarity in the establishment of virtuous friendship; in the oft-quoted words of Cicero, the friend is an *alter idem*, or another self (188). This privileging of likeness presented difficulties for any early modern writer—male or female—who wished to depict or establish a friendship across difference, but this difficulty was compounded for the woman writer. Legal and cultural precepts dictated her inferiority to men, and humanist discourses of male friendship such as Michel de

Montaigne's "Of Friendship" questioned her ability to fulfill the type of active, political virtue associated with ideal male friendship. This dissertation demonstrates how women writers claimed this political virtue and rewrote the exclusionary discourse of ideal male friendship to create a new vision of friendship based not on similarity in class or gender but on the equal virtue of the participants.

Isabella Whitney, Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, and Katherine Philips explore through the lens of friendship issues such as women's role in the literary marketplace, the politics of patronage, and the importance of women's counsel in marriage and the state. These writers argue that virtue is a stronger connecting force than gender or class and, in doing so, offer a significant revision of a rhetoric that often sought to exclude them. In her poetry, Isabella Whitney fashions herself as a virtuous counselor to both men and women and, by depicting herself as a vital member of a textual community of friends and kin, offsets the dangers posed by her single state, her decision to print her verse, and her removal from domestic service. Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum challenges the discourse of ideal male friendship by presenting an ambiguously gendered Christ as an ideal friend. Using the language of religious devotion, patronage, and friendship, Lanyer attempts to establish female friendships across social divides. Elizabeth Cary's closet drama, The Tragedy of Mariam, and her history, Edward II, explore the relationship between friendship and political counsel. Revealing the underlying misogyny of many representations of male friendship, Cary suggests that honest counsel may form a more secure basis for virtuous friendship between men and women. Finally, Katherine Philips's homoerotic friendship verse claims social and political significance for female friendships, and her letters to male friends illustrate the ways in which a

female poet could negotiate friendships with men in order to further her career. I do not claim that the friendships across difference that these women writers sought to establish coincided with the classical and early modern ideal of friendship (if, indeed, such an ideal could even exist), were unproblematic, or were ultimately successful; rather, my purpose is to demonstrate how women writers recognized and employed the equalizing potential of the tradition of ideal friendship in their depictions of friendship. By reworking a discourse that normally excluded them, women argued for their own inclusion in the friendship practices that formed an integral part of social and political participation in early modern England. for Matt

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Introduction: The Tradition of Ideal Friendship

By the time William Shakespeare declared in his 42nd sonnet, "But here's the joy; my friend and I are one," the ubiquity of the trope of the male friend as a second self was readily available for satire. Here, Shakespeare invokes this trope only to undermine it: the speaker, having learned that his young friend and his mistress have betrayed him, attempts to console himself with the ideal of the male friend as an alter idem, or another self: "Thou love'st her because thou know'st I love her." Unable to sustain this tenuous logic, the speaker follows his assertion of oneness with his friend with the exclamation, "Sweet flattery!" We are supposed to recognize that the ideal of the friend as a second self is just that, flattery. The speaker and his friend are certainly not "one" in this case, and the second-self logic of male friendship offers a poor consolation in the face of sexual betrayal. Shakespeare's satire of the ideal of the friend as a second self indicates the popularity of this trope in Renaissance England: Cicero's De Amicitia was a foundational text in humanist education, and his description of the male friend as an *alter idem* was enthusiastically translated, adopted, and reworked by early modern writers on friendship. This description gained such a hold on the popular imagination in part because, as Laurie Shannon argues, it offered an ideological template for nascent ideas of equality within a decidedly hierarchical society (22).¹ Indeed, even as Shakespeare satirizes this ideal, he acknowledges its power and appeal when his speaker willingly deludes himself with the consoling thought that he and his friend are the same. His

¹ Shannon writes, "Insofar as friendship arrived from classical models as a fully consensual image of participation, it offered Renaissance readers a world in which there are, so to speak, *two sovereigns*. As a sharp counterpoint to the terms understood to hold within the hierarchical relations of monarchical society, friendship tropes comprise the era's most poetically powerful imagining of parity within a social form that is consensual" (7). I extend Shannon's analysis by discussing the ways in which women writers participated in this political discourse.

sonnet sequence also contains poems that depict male friendship much less ironically: Sonnet 116, for instance, celebrates male friendship as "the marriage of true minds," and at the end of Sonnet 29, the speaker tells his friend, "For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings / That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

Shakespeare's sonnets demonstrate the multivalent and complex nature of friendship in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. For one, his satire of the second-self imagery of male friendship discourse shows how writers actively challenged and reworked this tradition. It is one of the purposes of this dissertation to demonstrate the ways in which women writers especially revised this tradition to claim social and political significance for their own friendships. Secondly, the last line of Sonnet 29, in which the speaker claims to prefer his befriended state to kingship, points toward the political significance held by the tradition of male friendship. As Shannon argues, the volitional nature of friendship, as well as its privileging of equality and free speech, offers a distinct mode of political participation (7). In this dissertation, I demonstrate how women adapted the rhetoric of ideal male friendship in order to participate in this political discourse. Yet, Sonnet 29 may also be read as a bid for patronage. The speaker highlights his social and financial "outcast state" and wishes himself "like to one more rich in hope, / Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd." In the early modern period, the word "friend" also meant patron and supporter; thus, the poet's remembrance of his patron's "sweet love" at once celebrates male friendship in highly affective terms and reminds the patron of friendship's obligations.² The converging discourses of

² This affective language also points toward the homoerotic nature of male friendship discourse. While male friendship held ample space for same-sex desire, the erotic nature of the language of male friendship posed difficulties for the woman writer (for whom to engage in erotic discourse was to endanger her chaste reputation). The women I discuss in this dissertation approach the eroticism of the tradition of male

friendship and patronage indicate that the rhetoric of perfect equality in friendship was seldom realized in practice. Yet, friendship discourse's emphasis on equality could enable a writer to claim a type of equality and parity *though* friendship.

As Shakespeare's sonnet to his friend and patron indicates, friendship slides easily into other forms of affiliation. The repeated attempts of writers to define friendship against other forms of social, financial, familial, and erotic connection only illustrate the difficulty of differentiating it from these other relationships. Yet, friendship's overlap with other forms of connection could also enable a writer to evoke the equality of friendship within a hierarchical relationship such as that between patron and artist, husband and wife, or sovereign and subject. If friendship did not actually create equality in such relationships, it did offer a way of imagining equality across difference. This dissertation will demonstrate the ways in which women writers appeal to the equality of friendship to carve a space in which they can speak as equals—and, moreover, claim for their speech the political validity accorded the speech of the male friend in the tradition of the friend as political counselor. The tradition of ideal male friendship's focus on freedom of speech and equality provides a potentially empowering frame of reference even for those whom this tradition would seemingly exclude.

And those the tradition of ideal male friendship most frequently and emphatically excluded were women. According to Lorna Hutson, the nature and meaning of friendship itself underwent a shift in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She writes, "the code of 'faithful friendship' which pre-dated the advent of humanism in England . . . was, essentially, a system of credit articulated through the exchange of gifts and services"

friendship in different ways: Isabella Whitney assiduously distances herself from erotic roles, while Katherine Philips adapts the erotic language of male friendship to apply it to her descriptions of female friendship.

(The Usurer's Daughter 3). Most women would have had a difficult time participating actively in such friendships, for they often were treated as the objects of exchange used to create and secure alliances among men. In male-dominated societies such as medieval and early modern England, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has demonstrated, women often functioned as "exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men" (26). Increased attention to classical texts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries altered the dominant discourse of friendship even though older forms of friendship based on gift-exchange and kinship relations by no means disappeared. Early modern humanists, influenced by classical texts such as Cicero's De Amicitia and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, based their definitions of friendship less on the exchange of gifts and services and more on abstract qualities such as virtue and equality. However, even as the rhetoric of ideal friendship changed, in at least one aspect it stayed the same: it remained strongly gendered, and it rarely acknowledged women's friendships. It is the purpose of this dissertation to demonstrate how women writers created a place for themselves within this often misogynistic discourse.

Both the challenges and the opportunities facing the early modern woman who wished to participate in friendship, particularly friendship involving difference, become evident when we look at what was arguably the most influential source for Renaissance conceptions of friendship: Cicero's *De Amicitia*. *De Amicitia* is grounded in loss: Cicero's speaker Laelius describes perfect friendship in the context of mourning his recently deceased friend, Scipio Africanus. We will see this elegiac note echoed in Michel de Montaigne's "Of Friendship," which Montaigne wrote in response to the death of his friend, Etienne de La Boétie, and in Aemilia Lanyer's "The Description of Cookeham," which locates female friendship in an idyllic but unrecoverable past. This repeated association of friendship with loss and death may indicate an awareness of the unattainable nature of perfect friendship: it holds remarkable power as an ideal—as we will see, Cicero's *De Amicitia* gave early modern writers a vocabulary and a framework by which they organized their own experiences and philosophies of friendship—but also as an ideal, it is terribly difficult to sustain in the face of real-world pressures (as Shakespeare's satire of Cicero's trope of the friend as a second self indicates). The women writers I discuss, who were engaging in a tradition that did not acknowledge them, especially test Cicero's ideal against their own experiences of friendship. Elizabeth Cary, for instance, removes lyric celebrations of male friendship from their static contexts and places them in a dramatic structure, thus revealing the misogyny underlying the tradition of ideal male friendship and demonstrating the fallacy of trying to achieve radical similarity with a friend. And while Cicero's description of the friend as an *alter* idem held opportunities for women writers-Katherine Philips, for example, presents herself and her female friends as political examples of unity to a state fractured by the English civil wars—the women I discuss in this dissertation also offer alternative models of friendship that do involve difference.

The likeness between friends that Cicero details in *De Amicitia* is in gender and class—Laelius and Scipio are both Roman generals and statesmen—as well as in virtue, which Cicero defines in terms of civic duty. Cicero repeatedly emphasizes the similarity of his ideal friends: the "real friend," he asserts, "is, as it were, another self," and just as we love ourselves, we seek another like ourselves to love: "man . . . both loves himself

and uses his reason to seek out another whose soul he may so mingle with his own as almost to make one out of two!" (82). This formulation of the friend as another self became a common trope in the friendship discourse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas Churchyard claims that, in friendship, "two seuerall bodies shall meete in one minde" (5); Thomas Elyot declares that "a frende is proprely named of Philosophers the other I" (164); and Michel de Montaigne states of La Boétie, "If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feele it cannot be expressed, but by answering; Because it was he, because it was myselfe" (92). Elyot even extends this likeness to physical resemblance, asserting that the classical friends Titus and Gysippus had such "similitude in all the partes of [their bodies]" that even their own parents could not tell them apart (139). These depictions of radical similarity between male friends did, as Shannon claims, provide a way of envisioning equality within the hierarchical society of Renaissance England, but they would also seemingly rule out friendships that do involve significant difference (22). It is this difficulty the women writers I discuss in this dissertation take on when they portray virtuous friendships that bridge differences in gender and class.

One reason friendship discourse celebrates sameness so forcefully is because dissimilitude in gender, status, or personal virtue could disrupt the tenuous equality that *amicitia* posits between friends. If one friend is inferior to the other, his participation in an unequal friendship cannot escape the appearance of avarice. Cicero condemns friendships founded on weakness or personal gain and, tellingly, associates such friendships with women:

there are others, I am told, who, with even less of human feeling, maintain . . . that

friendships must be sought for the sake of the defense and aid they give and not out of goodwill and affection; therefore, that those least endowed with firmness of character and strength of body have the greatest longing for friendship; and

The volitional nature of ideal friendship therefore demands not only similarity between friends but also self-sufficiency on each friend's part; a man's independence shows that he enters the bonds of friendship electively. As Cicero asserts, "To the extent that a man relies on himself and is so fortified by virtue and wisdom that he is dependent on no one and considers all his possessions to be within himself, in that degree is he most conspicuous for seeking out and cherishing friendships" (142-143).

consequently, that helpless women, more than men, seek its shelter. (157)

Independence is also important in ideal friendship because friendship carries the potential to transform into a very demanding relationship. While friends do not (ideally) enter into friendship in the expectation of material benefit, they are expected to share their goods and help each other in need. Montaigne asserts that everything is "by effect common betweene [friends]; wills, thoughts, judgements, goods, wives, children, honour, and life" (93-94). This list begins with the shared emotional and intellectual benefits— wills, thoughts, and judgments—of ideal friendship, then claims that material goods should be shared between friends, and then, somewhat surprisingly, suggests that wives and children may be sacrificed to this sacred bond as well. Here, Montaigne clearly illustrates women's role in the early modern discourse of ideal male friendship. Most women in early modern England (with the notable exception of some widows) were legally answerable to their fathers, husbands, or other male relatives and therefore could not, at least theoretically, claim the independence that the rhetoric of *amicitia* demands.

In Montaigne's formulation, women are not the independent practitioners of friendship, but rather its raw materials.

Even the classical tradition's emphasis on virtue is highly gendered. The virtue that Cicero insists upon in *De Amicitia* is a specifically civic virtue. Laelius praises Scipio's service to the Republic, noting "how dear he was to the State" (121), and he explains that their friendship was based on a combination of personal affection and public duty: "I feel as if my life has been happy because it was spent with Scipio, with whom I shared my public and private cares; lived under the same roof at home; served in the same campaigns abroad, and enjoyed that wherein lies the whole essence of friendshipthe most complete agreement in policy, in pursuits, and in opinions" (125). Later, he uses the story of a man who commits treason for his friend's sake as an example of friendship's perversion; *amicitia* helps build the state, not tear it down.³ Early modern writers also connected male friendship to public duty and civic virtue. Churchyard, for instance, declares that the "first braunch" of friendship is "the affectionat loue that al men in generall ought to beare to their countrie" (3). As the masculine noun indicates, this type of active, civic, and public virtue was normally associated with men. The word "virtue" itself is, of course, formed from the Latin vir, or man, and while it carried today's meaning of personal worth and moral goodness, in Cicero's time and in the early modern period it also meant strength, "the possession or display of manly powers; manliness" (OED s.v.). Yet, the word itself is feminine, which points toward its

³ Laelius narrates, "Gaius Blossius of Cumae . . . came to me to plead for leniency, because I was present as adviser to the consuls, Laenas and Rupilius, and offered, as a reason for my pardoning him, the fact that his esteem for Tiberius Gracchus was so great he thought it was his duty to do anything that Tiberius requested him to do" (149). Laelius does not accept this excuse because "it is no justification whatever of your sin to have sinned in behalf of a friend; for, since his belief in your virtue induced the friendship, it is hard for that friendship to remain if you have forsaken virtue" (149).

adapability for women writers. Cicero asserts that friendships based on virtue form the foundations of society: "if you should take the bond of goodwill out of the universe no house or city could stand, nor would even the tillage of the fields abide" (135).

It is this political function of friendship that would seem to exclude women, given that they could not participate in most official avenues of political service. As the *Lawes* Resolution of Women's Rights states, "Women have no voyce in Parliament, They make no Lawes, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to bee married and their desires as subject to their husband" (6). But Cicero's male friends express their virtue not only in their roles as soldiers and statesmen but also as counselors. Cicero claims that counsel is one of the most important duties of the friend: "in friendship let the influence of friends who are wise counselors be paramount, and let that influence be employed in advising, not only with frankness, but, if the occasion demands, even with sternness, and let the advice be followed when given" (157). Early modern writers on friendship also privileged the frank counsel of the friend. Francis Bacon, for example, declares that "The greatest trust between man and man is the trust of giving counsel" (379). This focus on counsel gave women an entrée into the political function of ideal friendship, for while they could not sit on privy counsels, they could offer counsel to their husbands, family members, friends, and, perhaps most importantly, their readers. The women writers I discuss in this dissertation all present themselves as virtuous counselors speaking in the privileged mode of friendship, thus asserting their own ability to enact the political virtue that Cicero celebrates in his ideal male friends.

While Cicero's description of virtuous male friendship had a foundational influence on Renaissance conceptions of friendship, it was not the only classical text that early modern thinkers on friendship considered authoritative. Aristotle's Nicomachean *Ethics* also greatly informed humanist theories of friendship (indeed, as invested as Montaigne's "Of Friendship" is in Cicero's description of the friend as another self, it is Aristotle he quotes most frequently). Like Cicero, Aristotle accords friendship a political function and views it as the basis of society: "Friendship also seems to be the bond that holds communities together, and lawgivers seem to attach more importance to it than to justice; because concord seems to be something like friendship" (258-259). Also like Cicero, he asserts that virtue is the root of perfect friendship, writing, "Only the friendship of those who are good, and similar in their goodness, is perfect" (263). However, Aristotle's definition of goodness focuses less on civic and military virtue and more on adherence to a moderate code of conduct, or the mean: "virtue is a purposive disposition, lying in a mean that is relative to us and determined by a rational principle, and by that which a prudent man would use to determine it. It is a mean between two kinds of vice, one of excess and the other of deficiency" (101-102). The particular virtuous "means" Aristotle goes on to discuss include temperance, liberality, patience, truthfulness, wittiness, friendliness, and modesty. These are virtues that women as well as men may possess—indeed, in early modern England, the virtues of patience and modesty were particularly associated with women-and while Aristotle assumes the male gender of his perfect friends when he claims, "it is between good men that both love and friendship are chiefly found and in the highest form," his more inclusive definition of

moral goodness offers significantly more room for women's participation in virtuous friendship than Cicero's emphatically masculine conception of virtue (263-264).

Aristotle also recognizes friendships that are less than ideal. The highest form of friendship, he argues, is friendship between "good men" who are "friends for their own sakes," but he also acknowledges lesser friendships, those based on utility and pleasure and those involving inequality (265). In his discussion of marriage, for instance, Aristotle provides a classical precedent for the inclusion of women in friendship and suggests that women are capable of the type of moral goodness he describes: "it is thought that both utility and pleasure have a place in conjugal love. But it may be based also on goodness, supposing the partners to be of good character" (280-281). While Aristotle still defines marriage as a friendship of inequality in which the husband will always be the superior party, he argues that a type of equality may be realized within such unequal friendships as long as the unequal party feels more affection toward his or her superior:

In all these friendships between persons of different standing the affection must be proportionate: i.e. the better person must be loved more than he loves, and so must the more useful, and each of the others similarly. For when the affection is proportionate to merit the result is a kind of equality, which of course is considered characteristic of friendship." (270)

While a system of friendship in which a woman must interiorize and compensate for her own inferiority may seem like a poor model for a woman writer to adopt, Aristotle's recognition of affective connections that are not ideal but nevertheless valid opens up a space for the discussion of difference in friendship.

The women writers whose texts I study in this dissertation, like male writers on friendship, believe that virtue is indispensable to friendship. Elizabeth Cary and Katherine Philips both assert that women are capable of practicing the type of civic virtue that Cicero associates with ideal friendship, and both insist that this public virtue can be the basis for friendship across difference. Even those women writers who focus on more traditionally feminine virtues, such as chastity and religious devotion, use these virtues to argue for their own inclusion in socially and politically significant friendship practices. Isabella Whitney, for instance, establishes her virtue as a moral counselor by distancing herself from sexual and marital roles and by depicting herself as a member of a friendly group of friends and kin. Her chaste stance—outside of both love and marriage—creates a type of equality with her male friends. Aemilia Lanyer attempts to establish ties of friendship between women based on their shared religious virtue, but she also uses religion to question the hierarchical class structure that places her "friends" above her. These women writers all suggest that virtue is a stronger connecting force than either similarity in class or gender. They insist not only that women are capable of exercising virtue but also that they can participate in honorable, productive, and respectful (indeed, in their own way, ideal) friendships with others who share that virtue. Virtue, then, could both create friendships across difference and minimize that difference in a way that enabled women's participation in socially and politically significant friendship practices.

In Chapter One, I discuss Isabella Whitney, who frames her collection of poetry, *A Sweet Nosegay, or Pleasant Posy*, with an epistolary dialogue composed of letters to and from male friends, relatives, and fellow writers. Whitney's printed correspondence with male writers places her firmly within a dynamic literary community, a position that lends authority to her role as a female poet. In this chapter, I argue that Whitney is able to describe her textual relationships with these male writers in terms of equality and friendship by distancing herself from the domestic and sexual roles to which early modern women were usually relegated. By characterizing herself as a chastely virtuous woman who is no longer a servant, refuses to be a lover, and is not yet a wife and mother, Whitney primarily defines herself as a friend and moral counselor, roles that bolster her authority as a writer and enable her literary career.

Throughout her poetry, Whitney characterizes marriage as a significant threat to her status as a writer, imagining that it would curtail her independence and inhibit, if not prevent altogether, her writing. Yet, to openly reject marriage and domesticity would be to make herself vulnerable to charges of immorality. As Theodora Jankowski has pointed out, English culture "saw virginity as a temporary premarital condition necessary for ensuring a woman a future as wife and mother," but women who prolonged this temporary condition indefinitely were viewed as transgressive because they removed themselves from the patriarchal economy of marriage and reproduction (3). I will show how Whitney attempts to neutralize this threat by insisting that she is a good woman who writes only because she is not *yet* a wife and mother. Indeed, throughout most of her poetry, she presents herself as a virtuous but unfortunate woman who has unwillingly left domestic life and would gladly return if only she could. She thus inhabits an independent position because, as she claims, she has no choice. However, it is exactly this independence, which she couches in terms of misfortune and loneliness, that gives her the freedom to write.

If Whitney's virtuously chaste stance justifies her removal from domestic and marital roles, it also gives her the freedom to engage in friendships with male writers. Most of her published letters to and from male relatives and friends take the form of complaints; Whitney writes to a friend "bewaylynge her mishappes," and the friend responds by claiming his misfortunes to be even worse or by offering advice and condolences (D5v). By asserting her right to proffer advice as well as receive it, she is actually fulfilling the counsel-giving function of ideal male friendship. Whitney also places her letters with male writers in the context of kinship: alongside her correspondence with male friends, she includes letters to her siblings and cousins. I suggest that kinship relations gave women the opportunity to form bonds with men that were recognized as socially respectable. By placing her communications with men in the context of kinship, by emphasizing her own role as a dispenser of virtuous advice, and by distancing herself from the sexual and marital roles that threatened her reputation and independence, Whitney establishes a place for herself in a community of what she calls "friendly minds" (B6).

I discuss Aemilia Lanyer's collection of religious verse, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, in my second chapter. Lanyer's verse demonstrates the considerable overlap between the traditional languages of patronage and friendship. In the dedications that precede her narrative of Christ's crucifixion, the middle-class Lanyer asks her aristocratic dedicatees to use their greater influence to support and protect the work of a virtuous female poet, but she also asks them to move away from the social realm, in which she is marginalized by both her gender and social position, toward the religious realm, in which she may address these socially superior women as an equal. By depicting virtuous connections between women who mirror each other in their religious piety, Lanyer suggests that female friendship based on religious virtue has the potential to bridge class differences.

In the text of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, Lanyer depicts Christ as the perfect friend, one who in life condescends to friendship with those beneath him and in death extends friendship to all of humanity. Lanyer's Christ is an exemplary model of friendship for both her dedicatees and the readers of her published work. Just as he offers friendship and understanding to those below him, she suggests, so too should they accept and support her endeavors. This portrait of Christ also rewrites classical conceptions of the ideal male friend, for Lanyer celebrates not an exclusive bond between two male friends but the inclusive love that Christ offers to all people. Lanyer's feminized Christ also overturns the gender dynamics of classical male friendship since her Christ, characterized by his gentleness, silence, and forgiveness, differs markedly from the emphatically masculine ideal male friend envisioned by the classical tradition.

Finally, by highlighting the class paradoxes represented by the figure of Christ, a low-born sovereign, Lanyer exposes such class distinctions as false. She asserts that although the world unfairly bestows "Titles of honour" on the highly born, "Poore virtues friends" such as herself will be "better graced" in heaven, thus contrasting the religious realm—in which honor and rank are bestowed according to virtue—to the social realm, in which social class is based on heredity (42). In her dedications to her main patrons, Margaret and Anne Clifford, Lanyer employs the liberty of friendship to make her most trenchant criticisms of the class system that places these "friends" above her. In "The Description of Cooke-ham," Lanyer complains against a personified Fortune who "casts us downe into so lowe a frame: / Where our great friends we cannot dayly see, / So great a diffrence is there in degree" (134). Lanyer attempts to create a community of women who are linked through religious virtue instead of social class, but she also reveals an intense and abiding awareness of the social distance between herself and her "great friends." Lanyer's depiction of virtuous friendships between women of disparate rank thus challenges the dominant friendship paradigm even as her awareness of the difficulty of establishing lasting friendship across such class differences speaks to its enduring strength.

In my third chapter, I address Elizabeth Cary's closet drama, The Tragedy of Mariam, and her later history, History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II. In The Tragedy of Mariam, Cary demonstrates that idealized male friendships are often articulated through the rhetoric of misogyny. By exposing the fault lines of male friendship, Cary opens the way for a more inclusive vision of friendship based on the participants' shared resistance to tyranny. In this chapter, I argue that Cary demonstrates the rhetoric of ideal male friendship's underlying misogyny through the character of the loyal Constabarus, who in many ways embodies the characteristics of the perfect male friend. A primarily positive character, Constabarus dies for the sake of his male friends and extols the virtues of amicitia, but he also voices the most virulently misogynistic opinions in the play. I suggest that Cary juxtaposes Constabarus' complaints against women with his praise of male friendship to demonstrate that the rhetoric of ideal male friendship is dependent on another type of rhetoric—that of misogyny. Through the character of Constabarus, Cary demonstrates that friendship can inspire noble actions and counter tyranny, but she also shows that the rhetoric of male friendship defines men as

virtuous, constant, and faithful at the cost of maligning women as immoral, inconstant, and faithless.

Cary further challenges the rhetoric of male friendship by portraying a positive friendship between a man and a woman. Mariam and her husband's counselor, Sohemus, fulfill many of the principles of ideal friendship even as their relationship challenges that ideal. Mariam's husband, Herod, cannot conceive of friendship between a man and a woman and therefore reads her relationship with Sohemus as adulterous. This friendship between a man and a woman is essentially illegible since the discourse of ideal male friendship does not acknowledge friendships involving difference. Yet, Cary suggests that Mariam and Sohemus are similar in what truly matters—their willingness to speak the truth and resist Herod's tyranny. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary indicates that verbal resistance to tyranny is a virtue to which both men and women can aspire, and in the relationship between Mariam and Sohemus, she provides us with an example of a friendship based not on factors over which these characters have no control—namely, their gender and station—but on their shared resistance to tyranny.

In *Edward II*, Cary identifies another problem with the radical similarity implied by the trope of the friend as a second self, cautioning that the boundaries between the self and the friend may become dangerously confused if the friend does, in fact, become an *alter idem*. Cary's Edward II attempts to create the equality endorsed by the tradition of ideal male friendship by sharing power with his favorites, but in the process he surrenders his sovereignty. Kings, Cary argues, cannot engage in the benefits of friendship enjoyed by the common man without betraying the public trust that has been placed in them. By failing to differentiate flattery from the honest speech of the true friend and by surrendering his sovereign prerogative to inferiors, Edward devolves into a tyrant, and his wife Isabel ultimately overthrows him by forming the type of strategic political alliances that he shuns in his search for intimate friendship. Both men and women, Cary indicates, may resist tyranny by forming friendly connections across difference.

In my final chapter, I discuss Katherine Philips's poems and correspondence. Best known for her poems of passionate attachment to other women, Philips deploys the Ciceronian trope of the friend as the second self to describe her relationship with her beloved female friends, thus holding up virtuous unity between women as an alternative to the unrest created by the English civil wars. She situates these poems of love for other women in a recognizable and celebrated tradition by employing the ardent language of canonical male friendship texts, but at the same time, her assertion that women can fulfill the classical virtue of *amicitia* constitutes a direct revision of that tradition: the homoeroticism of her verse represents a woman's intervention in the rhetoric of eroticized male friendship. By applying the language of male *amicitia* to descriptions of female friendship, Philips loads female friendship with all of the political significance carried by the classical tradition.

Philips's large circle of friends also included men, and while her friendships with men did not involve the intimacy or eroticism of her female friendships, they were important to her self-conception as a writer and political commentator. Unlike her poems on female friendship, Philips's poems and letters to male friends emphasize virtuous friendship within difference. Dispensing with the Ciceronian trope of similarity and instead focusing on common literary pursuits, she emphasizes intellectual rather than emotional connections and describes her relationships with her male friends in terms that acknowledge—and can support—difference. The best evidence of the ways in which Philips negotiated her friendships with male allies to promote her own career appears in her letters to her friend Sir Charles Cotterell. In these letters, we see not only the important role that male friends, with their access to the still overwhelmingly masculine world of letters, played in promoting Philips's work but also an example of a woman writer engaging in the politics of male-female friendship to craft an authorial identity of her own.

I end with an epilogue on Margaret Cavendish, who also took advantage of the political environment of the English civil wars and the Restoration to take on roleswriter, natural philosopher, counselor, and "heroic"-that were not traditionally associated with women. Cavendish, who claims that "it is our Minds that make Friendship" (The World's Olio X4v), formed such a friendship of the mind with her brother-in-law, Sir Charles Cavendish. That both Cavendish and Isabella Whitney, writing a century earlier and from a very different social position, depicted positive friendships with male relatives demonstrates the enduring association of friendship and kinship. Cavendish also refers to her husband as her friend, and in this epilogue, I briefly discuss the intersections of friendship and marriage. Like the other women I discuss in this dissertation, Cavendish saw the potential for friendship within marriage, but she also recognized that the imbalance of authority between husband and wife created a barrier to perfect friendship. I also discuss the intellectual friendships that Cavendish formed with men outside of her family circle. These friendships with men gained Cavendish recognition from such all-male institutions as the Royal Society, demonstrating that she,

like Katherine Philips, cannily negotiated her friendships with men to promote her own career as a writer and thinker.

As this example demonstrates, the stakes for women's participation in friendship were high: as a relationship that overlapped with and encompassed other forms of affiliation, friendship offered to early modern thinkers a way of thinking about the ties that held society together. Women's assertion of their own ability to participate in this tradition was, therefore, also a claim for a type of social and political enfranchisement. The ways in which these women writers creatively engaged with and revised this tradition suggests that women played a more active role in early modern friendship practices than dominant male-authored texts on friendship would at first indicate. The women writers I discuss in this dissertation understood that the discourse of male friendship, a discourse from which they were often explicitly excluded, nevertheless held valuable opportunities for them. If it insisted on perfect equality between friends, it could also, at least textually, create a space in which a writer could claim a type of equality across hierarchical gender and class divides. If it refused to recognize difference between friends, it could also provide a means for bridging difference. And if it excluded women, it also provided them with a vocabulary and set of tropes that they could adapt for their own purposes.

Chapter One Friendly Minds: Marriage, Love, and Friendship in the Poetry of Isabella Whitney

A friendly mind, accoumpt it for the neerest of thy kyn: When al shal fayle, it sticks to thee, what ever chaunce hath byn. —Isabella Whitney, "The 42nd Flower" (B6)

Isabella Whitney begins her collection of poetry, A Sweet Nosgay, or Pleasant Posy: contayning a hundred and ten phylosophicall flowers, by evoking personal failure, sickness, and isolation, as many critical studies have observed.⁴ Whitney's misfortunes—the loss of her position as a domestic maidservant, her poor health, and her loneliness—lead her to read Hugh Plat's *Floures of Philosophie*, which in turn inspires her to versify and organize his adages. Her hardships thus authorize her poetic project. Yet, while it is certainly true that Whitney strategically employs the tropes of illness and disenfranchisement within her poetry, she also mitigates this isolation with representations of friendship. In fact, Whitney alludes to her friends and family throughout the *Nosgay*, and she both begins and ends her collection of poetry with depictions of friendship. She does ultimately make her way to Plat's Plot "all sole alone," but only after speaking to a friend; moreover, she concludes the adages of the *Nosgay* with an epistolary dialogue composed of letters to and from relatives, friends, and fellow writers, thus framing her collection of poetry with depictions not of total isolation but rather of connection and friendship (A6). Whitney uses these portrayals of friendship to shore up her self-representation as a virtuous woman writer: her poetic exchanges with

⁴ Lynette McGrath claims that the *Nosgay* "opens and closes with the speaker essentially isolated from those possibly 'spightful' inner circles of London marked by privileged class and financial security," and Laurie Ellinghausen argues that Whitney's "writing is predicated on her isolation from service, family, and textual communities" (McGrath 144, Ellinghausen 1). I am suggesting that Whitney mitigates this isolation with her depictions of friendship and her inclusion of letters to and from friends and kin.

male writers demonstrate her ability to participate actively in the masculine world of literary production, while her correspondence with her siblings and other family members illustrates her enduring connection to a supportive family circle, even as she moves beyond the confines of the domestic sphere.

Of course, moving beyond that sphere to claim a public position as an author was no easy feat for an early modern woman who was expected to confine herself and her speech to the home and family. Therefore, even as Whitney highlights her family connections, she distances herself from love and marriage, both of which would pose a threat to her independence (or, in the case of love, her chastity and reputation) and effectively place her back in the home. However, her status as a single woman and her decision to publish her poetry could also damage her reputation: as Patricia Phillippy has demonstrated, single urban women were often associated with "loose living" (446); and, as Ann Rosalind Jones claims, the association of "female eloquence with promiscuity" made publication a fraught enterprise for any early modern woman, but especially a woman who did not enjoy the protection of an authorizing husband or aristocratic status (1). I would suggest that Whitney defuses these threats by emphasizing her own chastity and virtue and by fashioning herself as an active and equal member of a caring community of friends and kin. Friendship, including friendships among siblings and other family members, allows Whitney to depict virtuous relationships with others that unlike the traditional marital and domestic roles to which early modern women were usually relegated—are based on equality. Adopting the trope of the friend as counselor and equal, Whitney dispenses advice to her friends, relatives, and readers, thus

illustrating that, while this single woman writer may inhabit a public role, she is protected both by her own morality and by a virtuous support system of family and friends.

The contemporary discourse of friendship that would have been available to Whitney celebrated absolute equality between friends: Cicero's oft-quoted formulation of the friend as "a second self," for example, demonstrates the appeal that the equalizing potential of friendship held for early modern humanists (108).⁵ Therefore, when Whitney distances herself from love and marriage and instead describes her relationships with others in terms of friendship, she replaces these hierarchical relationships with one that is predicated on the equality of its participants. However, equality and similarity are not the same thing, even though early modern writers on friendship equated the two more often than not. For example, Thomas Elyot, in his retelling of the story of an ideal pair of male friends, Titus and Gysippus, uses the extraordinary physical resemblance between his protagonists-which is so pronounced that, as children, their parents placed different colored laces around their necks to tell them apart—to symbolize the emotional connection between them. In Titus' words, "For where as god of nature, lyke as he hath given to us similitude in all the partes of our body, so had he conjoyned our willes, studies, and appetites to gether in one, so that between two men was never lyke concorde and love" (139). By contrast, the friendships that Whitney depicts in the Nosgay involve significant difference, particularly that which, along with class, served as one of the primary markers of dissimilarity in the early modern period: gender. Many of Whitney's

⁵ In *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts*, Laurie Shannon analyzes sixteenth- and seventeenth-century translations of Cicero and argues that "the remarkable energy of the likeness topos in Renaissance friendship derives from its virtue as a way of envisioning a secular enfranchisement of a preliberal sort for the 'private' subject" (22).

correspondents are male writers, but while she shares their literary vocation, her gender precludes the type of radical similarity between friends that Elyot's story celebrates.

Whitney's intervention in friendship discourse thus challenges many of its conventions. Her insistence on her right, as a woman writer, to participate in equal and respectful literary friendships with male writers re-envisions the philosophy of equality and sameness that characterizes most male-authored depictions of ideal friendship; equality, in the Nosgay, is not synonymous with similarity. Such a revisionary move is typical of Whitney's work: she acknowledges literary tradition and demonstrates her humanist credentials by referring to classical and contemporary authors, but she also reworks the traditions in which she engages. In her verse, Whitney re-imagines the Ovidian love complaint, the moral adage, the familiar letter, the Petrarchan blazon, and the Juvenalian satire. Allegorizing this revisionary relationship to literary tradition in the introductory "The Auctor to the Reader," Whitney begins by painting a scene of idleness: it is "Harvest tyme," but she is "Harvestlesse, / and servicelesse also" (A5v). This lack of productive work gives her the leisure "some study to apply," but her reading materials fail to please (A5v). Attempting the Scriptures first, she eventually sets them aside for want of "a Devine: / For to resolve mee in such doubts, / as past this head of mine" (A6v). Whitney, the first woman in England to publish a volume of secular verse, thus signals her move away from the type of devotional meditation that was considered more proper for a woman's pen. She then turns to history but soon grows frustrated with the "follyes" of mankind, which, she adds in a foreshadowing of the social satire that is to come, "I see doth not decrease, / in this our present time" (A5v). Finally, Whitney sets aside her reading—"I straight wart wery of those Bookes, / and many other more, / As

Virgill, Ovid, Mantuan"—and walks outside to "refresh my mased muse" (A5v). Biblical and classical texts, the foundations of a humanist education, do not inspire her muse but rather lead to dissatisfaction, frustration, and, ultimately, rejection.

Whitney's disappointment in her course of study does not stem from an inability to understand what she has read. Phillippy points out that Whitney "acknowledges only her limitations in doctrinal interpretation, a shortcoming that could affect male as well as female laity" (459), and Elaine Beilin suggests that this story evokes "the experience of the educated woman, filled with the frustration or despair of isolated, undirected study that has no immediate application in the world" (253). Extending these readings, I propose that this allegory also illustrates Whitney's-and, by implication, the female poet's—complex relationship to literary tradition. When Whitney informs her readers that she feels dismayed by the wickedness of history and claims to have grown "wery" of reading classical male authors, she is also advertising the fact that she has read authoritative humanist texts and, moreover, feels confident enough to pass judgment on what she has read (A5v). Referring to Virgil and Ovid, even if only to criticize them, reinforces her authority as an educated and informed woman writer. Moreover, by expressing her dissatisfaction with literary tradition, Whitney indicates that her poetry represents an intervention in and a rewriting of that tradition. This strategic manipulation of tradition serves multiple purposes: at times, it supports Whitney's self-representation as a chaste moral voice, and at others, it exposes and challenges the gender bias inherent in many of the traditions in which she engages.

Whitney's "Single Lyfe": Love and Marriage

One way in which Whitney revises literary tradition is by approaching the tradition of ideal male friendship from the female friend's point of view. She repeatedly draws upon the rhetoric of equality and the image of the friendly counselor found in classical and early modern writings on friendship, but her insistence on her right to participate in friendships that cross gender lines also constitutes a significant challenge to that tradition. Yet, Whitney's rewriting of this tradition and her claims of friendship with male writers are not entirely unproblematic. An anonymous poem published in AGorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions, "Lamentation upon the death of William Gruffith," which R.J. Fehrenbach and Randall Martin have speculated may have been authored by Whitney, illustrates the cultural barriers that a friendship between an unmarried and unrelated man and woman might face.⁶ In this poem, the female speaker compares herself and her deceased friend, William Gruffith, to the ideal male friends Damon and Pythias, but she also contrasts the freedom that male friends enjoy with her own, more restricted, situation: "Eche man doth mone when faythfull friends bee dead . . . But I, a Mayde, am forst to use my head / To wayle my freend" (7-9).⁷ The speaker's grief is forced into the outlet of verse, since she, a "Mayde," cannot mourn her friend openly.⁸ When she tries to wear black as an expression of her grief, "hurtfull eyes doo

⁶ The case for Whitney's authorship is inconclusive. The *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* was published by Richard Jones, who was also Whitney's publisher, and her 1567 "Copy of a Letter" was paired with a companion poem by a "W.G.," who may or may not have been William Gruffith (Martin 2). The poem's theme of male-female friendship does echo Whitney's concerns in the *Nosgay*, but even if we set the question of authorship aside, the poem itself offers an interesting example of the difficulties that friendship between a man and woman could face.

⁷ This line might contain a pun on "maidenhead," rendering ambiguous the type of friendship described in this poem. Even as she emphasizes her own personal chastity and virtue, Whitney is not afraid to include bawdy humor in her poetry, as I discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

⁸ Of course, the existence of this poem somewhat contradicts the speaker's claim that she is not allowed to openly voice her grief. However, at the end of the poem, she declines to offer her name for fear of public

bid mee cast way / In open show this carefull blacke attire" (19-22). Widows and relatives, not female friends, wear black, so "hurtfull eyes" interpret the speaker's gesture of mourning for Gruffith as the sign of a sexual relationship since, after all, one meaning of the word "friend" was lover (Martin 7, *OED* s.v.). To avoid such misinterpretations of her depictions of friendship with men in the *Nosgay*, Whitney reworks the literary traditions in which she engages. While participating in such traditions as the love complaint and Petrarchan lyric, Whitney approaches them from the viewpoint of the chastely moral female poet who condemns sexual folly rather than engages in it. Such a stance allows her to portray virtuous friendships with male writers and participate in the tradition of love poetry without damaging the virtuous persona that she constructs throughout her work.

Of course, if Whitney is careful to shun the erotic nature of Ovidian and Petrarchan verse, she is equally careful to distance herself from the role that typical early modern women were expected to fulfill: that of the wife. By casting herself as a friend rather than a lover or wife, Whitney attempts to place herself on an equal plane with her male correspondents (and, perhaps, her readers). While the emerging ideal of companionate marriage, inflected by the Protestant belief that men and women are spiritual equals before God, did envision a type of friendship within marriage, English law still gave husbands significant authority over their wives, and early modern conduct books repeatedly characterized the good wife as chaste, silent, and obedient.⁹ Indeed,

censure: "Some busie brayne perhaps will aske my name . . . That I dare not, for feare of flying fame" (127-129).

⁹ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford point out that the wife "was the archetype of the good woman in post-Reformation Protestant England. Preachers explained that the biblical texts defined the ideal state for a woman as marriage and motherhood, under the governance of a husband. Contemporary moralists elaborated her virtues endlessly: she kept at home, her hands were never idle, she 'never goeth forth but her

Whitney's brother Geoffrey, the author of *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586), echoes such advice in his emblem representing "the vertues of a wife," which he dedicates to his sister, Mary Colley (Figure 1). The woman in the illustration covers her mouth with her finger and stands on a tortoise shell, and the verse below the emblem reads, "Her finger, staies her tonge to runne at large, / The modest looks, doe shewe her honest life . . . The Tortyse warnes, at home to spend her daies" (93). Whitney's married sister, at least as Geoffrey represents her in this emblem, was expected to lead a life of modest—and silent—domesticity.



Figure 1. Geoffrey Whitney, *Vxoriae virtutes*. *To my Sister, M.D. Colley,* from *A Choice of Emblemes*. London: Francis Rafelengius, 1586. (93)

house was on her back,' and reared her children in piety and obedience" (67). For a summary of the legal authority a husband held over his wife, see Mendelson and Crawford (37-43).

According to such prescriptive literature, the virtues of a wife were, in fact, almost diametrically opposed to those of a friend. The ideal wife was silent and obedient, but the ideal friend was an active and vocal counselor. Francis Bacon calls "faithful counsel from a friend" the second fruit of friendship and emphasizes the importance of a friend's objective advice: "the light that a man receive they counsel from another, is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment" (393, 394). ¹⁰ Bacon's first fruit of friendship, the "communicating of a man's self to his friend," also defines friendship's benefits as primarily vocal. Cicero's De Amicitia stresses the active nature of the friend's counsel, advising, "let zeal be ever present, but hesitation absent; dare to give true advice with all frankness" (157). Early modern conduct manuals did recognize a wife's limited right to offer counsel to her husband: Robert Cleaver and John Dod's A Godly Forme of Household Government, for example, claims, "This is allowable, that she may in modest sort shew her minde, and a wise husband will not disdaine to hear her advise, and follow it also, if it bee good" (88), but the active and freely-offered form of advisory speech that Cicero prescribes is a far cry from the model of modestly voiced counsel (or silent submissiveness) most conduct books urged upon women. The vocal duty of the friend corresponds to that of the moral writer, for both dispense honest and virtuous counsel. It is not surprising, then, that a woman writer whose poetry largely consists of moral advice would choose to claim the active and vocal virtues of the friend rather than the more passive virtues of the wife.

¹⁰ While Bacon postdates Whitney, the idea of the friend as counselor itself was widely circulated in sixteenth-century England. Elyot's *The Boke Named the Governour*, for example, warns against friends who do *not* offer corrective counsel: "the company or communication of a persone familiar, whiche is always pleasaunt and without sharpnes, inclinyng to inordinate favour and affection, is alway to be suspected" (178-179).

As Lorna Hutson has noted, most early modern humanists envisioned separate but complementary spheres for husband and wife: the husband ventured outside the home to attain goods and influence while his wife stayed at home and maintained his family and estate (*The Usurer's Daughter* 21).¹¹ But, as I discuss in the Introduction, Cicero assigns a civic role to male friendship, and the virtue that he insists upon in *De Amicitia* is specifically designed to support the state. The personal friendship of two men was, in essence, a microcosm of the concord that held society together as a whole, and male friendship itself was a state that helped to support the state.¹² If humanist literature advised wives to exercise their virtues within the domestic sphere, it envisioned an actively political role for the male friend.

Indeed, early modern friendship discourses and the classical sources they cited often defined friendship *against* marriage. Aristotle acknowledges friendship within marriage, but he also asserts that marital unions are "friendship[s] involving superiority," unlike the perfect friendship that two virtuous men may form (271). Whitney's contemporary Michel de Montaigne even more explicitly differentiates male friendship from the husband-wife relationship:

Concerning marriage, besides that it is a covenant which hath nothing free but the entrance, the continuance beeing forced and constrained, depending elsewhere then from our will, and a match ordinarily concluded to other ends: A thousand

¹¹ Hutson also observes that "this formulation of conjugal interdependence . . . is, simply, too symmetrical to be anything other than fiction" (*The Usurer's Daughter* 21). I am not claiming that sixteenth-century marriages (or friendships, for that matter) worked in the ways that conduct books prescribed, but rather that different cultural expectations attended the institutions of marriage and male friendship.

¹² Alan Bray argues for the public and political significance of male friendship in what he calls traditional society, or early modern society before the advent of the Lockean civil society of the eighteenth century: "the bonds of friendship—between individuals and between groups—would become part of the sinews of an expanding and increasingly confident culture . . . The principal difference between the friendship of the modern world and the friendship [of traditional society] is that . . . friendship was significant in a public sphere" (2).

strange knotts are therein commonly to be unknit, able to breake the web, & trouble the whole course of a lively affection; whereas in friendship, there is no commerce or busines depending on the same, but it selfe. (91)

Here, the free and unforced alliance between male equals appears in direct contrast to the legal connection between husband and wife. And, while many early modern women surely did experience marriages of friendship and respect, many others such as Whitney cast a skeptical eye toward the duties that marriage entailed and the potential curbs that it placed upon a woman's freedom. As Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford claim, "early modern women entertained the hypothetical possibility of marriage as a perfect friendship, [but] they were apt to portray the real-life union of equals as the rare exception that proved the rule" (131-132).

By claiming the virtues of a friend rather than a wife and by characterizing her associations with others, particularly men, in terms of friendship rather than love or marriage, Whitney signals her independence from the domestic realm. The equality of friendship allows her to portray relationships with male friends without being bound to their authority, a freedom that Whitney characterizes as essential to her literary activities. For instance, in "the Auctor to the Reader," after Whitney asserts that she has grown tired of reading, she wanders outside only to have a male friend immediately order her back home, commanding, "yf you regard your health: / out of this Lane you get. / And shift you to some better aire, / for feare to be infect" (A6). Behind the friendly concern of these words lies an inherent threat, for, as Wendy Wall notes, "the author's introduction links infection to circulation 'abroad,' a word that was commonly used to describe publication, travel and harlotry" (299). By using the term "infect," the friend implies that it is Whitney's sexual virtue and not necessarily her physical health that is truly endangered by her foray outside.¹³ Even though this friend's advice is couched in terms of concern—he reminds her how "wofull" he and her other friends will be if she dies—he nevertheless tries to restrict her freedom to wander about, a trope Whitney frequently uses to illustrate her mental and literary freedom (A6).

Whitney initially seems willing to comply with her friend's warning, but as she makes her way back to the safety of domesticity, she ends up not at home but in Plat's "Plot" (A6). Her solitary freedom allows her to wander there as she chooses and to "be bolde, / to come when as I wyll: / Yea and to chuse of all his Flowers, / which may my fancy fill" (A7). This boldness results in the creation of the Nosgay, which Whitney claims has prophylactic powers: "A slip I tooke to smelle unto, / which might be my defence. / In stynking streetes, or lothsome Lanes / which els might mee infect" (A6v). This extended allegory of wandering may be interpreted in this way: Whitney may print her work without fear of infection, sexual or otherwise, because she is protected by the type of morality espoused in the adages. Her male friend's implied warning about the connection between extra-domestic activities and female sexual immorality proves unfounded, and since friendship gives neither friend absolute authority over the other, Whitney has the ability to simply ignore his bad advice. This friend may voice his concerns about the dangers Whitney faces as she wanders outside the domestic sphere, but he does not have the authority to place her back in that sphere.

Indeed, it is only because Whitney is exiled from domestic service in the first place that she has the freedom and boldness to wander into Plat's garden and write this

¹³ I am here indebted to Beilin's discussion of Whitney's relationship to public and domestic space. She writes, "by assuming that an educated woman could circumvent her domestic destiny and 'apply' her knowledge, Whitney wrote herself entirely out of domestic space and into the public sphere" (249).

preventative poetry. However, she does not reject marriage and domesticity explicitly. As Theodora Jankowski has pointed out, women who categorically refused to marry were viewed as transgressive because they removed themselves from the patriarchal economy of marriage and reproduction (3).¹⁴ Whitney attempts to neutralize this threat by presenting herself as an unfortunate woman who has unwillingly left domestic life and would gladly return if only she could. She complains that she has been dismissed from the service of "a vertuous Ladye" and is now "Harvestlesse, and servicelesse also" (C6v, A5v). She thus occupies an independent position because, as she claims, she has no choice. Bewailing her bad luck, Whitney warns two of her younger sisters who are serving in London against following her example: "The rolling stone doth get no mosse / your selves have hard full oft" (C8v). A self-acknowledged "rolling stone," Whitney is disconnected from the domestic realm because she is unmarried and unemployed, and she is disconnected from the world at large because she is sick. Yet, even as Whitney uses her own experience as a negative example, her dismissal from the domestic sphere also allows her to take on the role of the virtuous counselor. She is in a position to advise her sisters in writing precisely because she does *not* share their domestic position. Thus, Whitney's string of misfortunes places her in a uniquely independent position, and this independence, which she couches in terms of hardship, is what gives her the freedom to write. Whitney's authority as a writer and counselor therefore depends both on her moral

¹⁴ That marriage was understood as an adult woman's natural state and the legal implications of this belief are neatly underlined by the 1632 *Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights*: "Women have no voyce in Parliament, They make no Lawes, they consent to none, they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to bee married and their desires as subject to their husband" (6). Of course, such a patriarchal state of affairs was not absolute, as the passage acknowledges by concluding, "I know no remedy though some women can shift it well enough" (6).

virtue, which she is often at pains to prove, and on her independence from domestic service.

Of course, marriage-the expected destiny for a middle-class woman of the sixteenth century—could potentially put an end to this independence. While married women could (and did) write and print their own works in early modern England, Whitney herself imagines that marriage would curtail her literary activities.¹⁵ In the letter to her other married sister, Anne Barron, which appears in the collection of familiar letters framing the Nosgay, Whitney writes, "I know you to huswyfery intend, though I to writing fall" (D1v). Here, she contrasts her livelihood as an author to her sister's more conventional role of housewife, but the verb "fall" is what particularly resonates given the linkage between women's print publication and prostitution; a woman who exposed herself and her writing to public scrutiny might very well be considered "fallen." By employing this double-edged verb, Whitney demonstrates her awareness of the threat that print publication poses to her reputation. However, the following lines serve as a reminder that this author is, in fact, a virtuous woman who only writes because she is not *yet* married: "Had I a Husband, or a house, / and all that longes therto / My selfe could frame about to rouse, / as other women doo: / But til some household cares me tye, / My bookes and Pen I wyll apply (D1v). On the surface, Whitney conforms to the expectations of sixteenth-century English society: if and when she has a husband and a house, she will stop writing and perform her domestic duties just as other women do. She realistically accepts the cultural assumption that marriage and the unrestricted use of her "bookes and Pen" are, in much likelihood, mutually exclusive. Significantly, Anne offers

¹⁵ The other women I discuss in this dissertation, Aemilia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Katherine Philips, and Margaret Cavendish, were all married, and they all printed at least some of their works.

no published reply; as McGrath claims, Whitney's sister "has disappeared into a domestic space" (145). Anne likely received the same education as Whitney, but her intellectual energies seem to be directed toward the education of her "prety Boyes," whom Whitney hopes will "march amongst the best, / Of them which learning have possest" (D2). Since the "humanist theory was that learned women were more companionable wives and more intelligent mothers than unlearned women," many early modern women such as Whitney and her sisters received humanist educations but were then expected to confine their intellectual lives to the home and family (Beilin 250). Although Whitney's blessing for her nephews' education is a positive one, the scholarly aspirations of the young men in the family clearly gain priority over any their mother may possess.

Yet, what happens when an educated woman is not a wife or mother? This is Whitney's situation, and even as she shrewdly praises Anne's motherhood, she also manages to defend and quietly celebrate her own vocation. Whitney, who has been exiled from domestic service and does not have a husband or children, is free to pursue her own authorial activities, and the final couplet of the letter to her sister indicates that the acquisition of a husband and family is not necessarily preferable to her own single state. In marriage, Whitney imagines herself at the mercy of a household that will "tye" and confine her, in contrast to her present freedom to actively "apply" her writing implements.¹⁶ The word "wyll" also carries multiple connotations as both an indicator of future action and an expression of personal desire.¹⁷ Thus, when Whitney writes that she

¹⁶ Beilin also notes the "ironically contrasting verbs *tye* and *apply*." (249). I seek to extend Beilin's analysis of Whitney's relationship to domesticity by exploring exactly *how* Whitney writes herself out of domesticity: I suggest that Whitney's rejection of love and marriage and her positive depiction of an extended network of friends and family help her to neutralize the threat posed by her decision to print her writing.

¹⁷ Whitney, of course, is not the only (or best known) early modern poet to exploit the various meanings of the word "will." In William Shakespeare's sonnets, "will" is at once a verb, a noun expressing desire, and

"wyll apply" her books and pen, she is also claiming her freedom as a single woman to apply her will—a will that she imagines would be subjugated to the demands of a husband and children if she were married.

Whitney had also opposed marriage to authorship in her earlier publication, "The Copy of a Letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge Gentilwoman: to her unconstant Lover." In this poem, Whitney writes in the tradition of Ovid's *Heroides*, a collection of letters in which women who have been forsaken by their lovers lament their fate. In the author's introduction to the Nosgay, Whitney groups Ovid among those classical authors whose works merely frustrate and "wery" her (A5v). Perhaps the desperation of the abandoned women in the *Heroides* is what wearies Whitney, for in this earlier poem she replaces Ovid's anguished heroines with a female speaker who, although disappointed in her lover's moral inconsistency, will eventually recover from his loss. This revision of the *Heroides* reinforces Whitney's own self-depiction as a confident woman who remains skeptical of the power of love as depicted in Ovid's poetry. In this poem, Whitney takes the position of a woman who has recently discovered that her betrothed plans to marry another. However, instead of "reproducing the pleading of Ovid's abandoned mistresses (and providing pleasure to male readers by representing men's power over such women)" (Jones 47), Whitney represents her speaker as a self-assured woman who attacks her unfaithful lover on moral grounds. She begins the poem with a direct confrontation that highlights the betrothed's deception: "As close as you your weding kept / yet now the trueth I here: / Which you (yer now) might me have told / what nede you nay to swere?"

a pun on the author's first name. However, while Shakespeare also plays with the sexual nuances of the word "will," Whitney assiduously avoids such connotations.

(A2). This accusatory rhetoric immediately gives power not to the inconstant lover but to the female speaker who can confront him because she is on the side of right.

The abandoned speaker then emphasizes her own virtue by describing her eligibility for marriage: she claims to possess all of the wifely virtues of "chastnes," "constancy," and "trueth" (A4y). Even though it appears that she is attempting to win her lover back by listing her qualifications, in the next stanza Whitney writes, "These words I do not spek, / thinking from thy new Love to turne thee" (A5). This list of virtues serves to establish her credibility, which she then uses to take on the friendly office of advisor to her fickle betrothed. His very fickleness is, in fact, what authorizes Whitney's poetry, since possession of her erstwhile lover would effectively silence the poet: if the man had married the speaker, there would be no reason to write the poem. Moreover, since her errant lover has acted dishonestly, Whitney can publicize his wrongs while still maintaining both the virtue of her fictional alter-ego and her own virtue as the female author of a poem on love. The erotic nature of most love poetry made it, of course, a dangerous subject for any early modern woman writer to attempt. As Sasha Roberts has observed, early modern conduct books discouraged women from reading Ovid's erotic poetry; the fears that these male-authored tracts express over women reading amatory literature, she claims, "tell a compelling story of the anxiety and fascination that the figure of the eroticized woman reader evoked; a story which speaks of an assumption and fear—of women's independence in the early modern literary marketplace (22). Whitney both challenges this patriarchal anxiety—she has clearly read Ovid and remained virtuous—and defuses it by deferring sexuality into a future—marriage—that will not be fulfilled. As in the published letter to her sister, Whitney must claim the

virtues of a wife, but the fact that she is not a wife gives her both reason and authority to confront this wayward lover in writing.

Because Whitney's speaker takes the moral high ground instead of pleading with her lover to return, she gains the detached authority to judge his wrongdoing and even offer him friendly (if pointed) counsel. She shows him examples of classical lovers who also behaved badly toward women, so he may "heare how falsenes is / made manyfest in time" (A3). Unlike Ovid, Whitney concentrates on the deception of the man instead of the misery of the abandoned woman in these examples. For instance, the "two Ladies" whom Jason deceives are only briefly mentioned, but Whitney devotes six stanzas to his perfidy. She even imagines a proper revenge, musing that if Jason's deeds had been known to the gods, "They would have rent ye ship as soone / as he had gon from shore" (A3). The speaker's abandonment gives her the authority to pass judgment on her inconstant lover and, by extension, all the ancient heroes who loved and then betrayed women: "For they, for their unfaithfulnes, / did get perpetuall Fame: / Fame? wherfore dyd I terme it so? / I should have cald it shame" (A3v). Here, Whitney rewrites her classical sources, converting the "Fame" of these heroes into "shame" by the power of her pen. After offering these cautionary examples, the speaker then counsels the unfaithful lover on the subject of choosing a wife. He should seek a woman with "the chastnes of PENELOPE / the which did never fade. / A Lucres for her constancy, / and Thisbie for her truth," and if he is lucky enough to catch such a mate, Whitney warns him to improve his behavior: "If such thou haue, then PETO be / not PARIS, that were rueth" (A3). The speaker's authority to expose her lover's shame in writing and then offer him virtuous advice comes directly, in the concept of the poem, from her betrayal at his

hands. Just as Whitney presents her independence from the domestic realm in terms of misfortune and sickness in the *Nosgay*, here her speaker gains the authority to offer virtuous counsel to her unfaithful betrothed by claiming to be his innocent victim.

Whitney extends this authority into the following poem, "The admonition by the Auctor, to all yong Gentilwomen: And to al other Maids being in Love." In this poem, Whitney acts as a friendly counselor to other women by cautioning them against sharing her own unfortunate experience with love and by exposing the falsehood of male lovers. Young women who are inexperienced in love, Whitney asserts, can particularly benefit from her honest guidance: "To you I speake: for you be they, / that good aduice do lacke: / Oh if I could good counsell geue / my tongue should not be slacke" (A6v). Like a modern-day advice columnist, she warns, "Trust not a man at the fyrst sight, / but trye him well before," using the authority of one "who was deceived late" to move from the potentially disempowered position of forsaken woman to the authoritative position of the friendly counselor (A6v, A8v). Her speaker has been hurt by a false man but, in the process, has gained the experience and authority that allow her to dispense advice to other women. The story of the broken engagement creates the ideal space for an early modern woman poet such as Whitney: as an innocent victim, her speaker remains virtuous, but she also claims the experience necessary to offer her helpful friendship to those women who need it.

In the advice-giving "Admonition," Whitney applies her authority from experience and counsels women to be wary of love. For proof, she offers story after story of male deception and abandonment. She does posit the existence of honest men, such as Leander, who was carefully judged by Hero. However, this tale does not provide an

example of a lasting love relationship since Leander drowns in his attempt to reach Hero. Avoidance of love altogether, Whitney indicates, is the best policy for women, and she backs this point with an allegory about a little fish that is happiest before being hooked. This story also illustrates the value of experience, for, like the speaker of the "Letter," the fish "such prety shift did make: / That he from Fishers hook did sprint / before he could him take" (A8v). Due to this close call with death, tellingly associated with love in Whitney's allegory, the little fish learns from his experience and "pries on every baite, / suspecting styll that pricke" (A8v). The word "prick" literally refers to the fishhook, but in the sixteenth century "prick" also carried the very same slang meaning it does today (OED, s.v.). This double entendre is certainly part of the "subversive humor" that Jones identifies in Whitney's poetry (51), but beyond the humor is a very real claim to the value of experience, and beyond this the humanist belief that experience can be transferred textually. Unlike the male friend in the author's introduction to the Nosgay, who seems to believe that women must remain at home to avoid sexual "infection," Whitney implies that women can live actively in the world and still maintain their virtue as long as they enjoy the benefit of friendly advice such as hers.

By asserting that women can avoid heartbreak if they are sufficiently warned by one who has already experienced betrayal, Whitney develops a contrast between the friendly advice that she bestows upon her female readers and the deceptive tricks that Ovid teaches to his male readers. Even as she follows the Ovidian mode, Whitney attacks erotic Ovidian literature, which "doth teach [male lovers] this same knacke / To wet their hand a touch their eies: / so oft as teares they lacke" (A6). Whitney indicates that her poetry, the poetry of a woman who has been injured by the deceptive Ovidian lover, serves a very different purpose; like the adages of the *Nosgay*, this poetry teaches good sense and good morality backed by experience. Whitney's good sense dictates that love (which, in her poetry, inevitably goes hand in hand with constraint, deception, and heartbreak), is avoidable, but even if women do fall in love and are forsaken, they can recover and become better and wiser just as Whitney's speaker did. In her later poem to Dido, entitled "A carefull complaynt by the unfortunate Auctor," Whitney tells the forsaken queen that lost love is not the worst fate on earth, for Aeneas' "absence might well salve the sore, / that earst his presence wrought" (D3v). Whitney again rewrites her classical source by replacing Ovid's suicidal Dido with a woman who will eventually recover from Aeneas' infidelity. The speaker of both poems recasts the role of abandoned woman not only by asserting that heartbreak is both avoidable and curable, but also by claiming the authority to write from her own unfortunate experience with love. She thus presents her poetry as an ethical counterpoint to that of classical male poets-the same poets she claims to grow "wery" of reading in the author's introduction to the Nosgay-and asserts, in the persona of the friendly and experienced counselor, that a woman may gain a position of empowerment and authority by rejecting, avoiding, or simply recovering from love (A5v).

Whitney insists that young women are in need of cautionary advice such as hers because men behave in treacherous ways when they are in thrall to sexual desire. If the patriarchal culture and literature of the sixteenth century placed the chastity of all women under suspicion, Whitney herself indicates that men are the more morally suspect sex. This sentiment is certainly present in the "Admonition" when she warns against men who use "fayre and painted talke" or "the teares of Crocodies" to deceive their lovers (A6). Whitney's doubts about the integrity of male lovers reappear in the adages of the *Nosgay*. Jones notes that Whitney "adds pro-woman modifications to Plat's proverbs on gender relations" by generalizing the pronouns to "include both sexes" (42). But, while many of the adages about love are general enough to apply to both men and women, I would add that when Whitney does use specific pronouns in the adages on love, they are almost always masculine.¹⁸ This use of masculine pronouns emphasizes the sexual folly of men rather than women and represents a significant deviation from Whitney's source text, for Plat tends to focus on the danger that women pose to men. He warns, "Fayre women be daugerous marks for yong mens eyes to shoote at," and cautions his male audience to "Trust not a wonton eye in a woman, for it hat most commonly a whorish hart annexed with it" (19, 35). In her earlier poems, Whitney alters the literary tradition of Ovid's *Heroides* in order to focus on the treachery of men rather than the helplessness of women. In her revision of Plat, she again modifies her source to portray men rather than women as foolish, deceptive, or even dangerous when they are in love.

For instance, in "Flower 65," Whitney criticizes men for following their sexual desires instead of their reason: "Ech lover knoweth what he lykes / and what he doth desire, / But seld, or never doth he know, / what thing he should require" (B8). In a lighter vein, she pokes fun at the foolish behavior of male lovers in "Flower 76": "Affection fond deceaves the wise / and love mase men such noddyes / That to their selues they seeme as dead / yet live in other boddies" (C1v). Death is here a euphemism for orgasm, and these love-dazed men "live in other boddies" in the act of sex. Although it may seem risky for a single woman writer such as Whitney to include bawdy puns in

¹⁸ One significant exception is "Flower 34," which declares that "She that is an Adulteresse /of evylles is a sea" (B5v). That Whitney, who usually casts herself as a protector of women, would gender adultery female speaks to the strength of the double standard regarding adultery.

her writing, I would suggest that her moral tone and the fact that she admonishes men and not women for their sexual appetites give her a certain amount of license.¹⁹ Although she often claims authority from experience, it is always negative experience, such as the lack of a permanent home or the lack of a husband, which gives her the authority to write. In Whitney's early poems, the speaker's rejection at the hands of her inconstant lover gives her the authority to offer virtuous advice to him and to other young women based on her negative experience. In the adages, Whitney extends this moral authority by condemning love and dissociating herself from romantic relations entirely. Since she distances herself from both love and marriage (and, therefore, sex), Whitney claims the virtuous authority to pass judgment on—and sometimes make fun of—those who have not.

Friendly Advice: Friendship and Counsel

Whitney's criticisms of men in love do not, however, extend to men in general, who are apparently quite satisfactory as friends. In the adages, Whitney demonstrates some familiarity with the early modern discourse of perfect friendship, even if her own view of friendship significantly revises that of the dominant humanist tradition of *amicitia*. Whitney could have become familiar with discourses on friendship from a variety of texts. Plat's adages, of course, are the most obvious source, but Whitney might also have encountered Cicero's *De Amicitia*, which had been available in translation since 1481. Whitney's brother Geoffrey would almost certainly have been familiar with classical writers on friendship such as Cicero and Aristotle, and it is likely that Whitney

¹⁹ Paul Marquis, in commenting on Whitney's sexual humor in the "Copy of a Letter" and "Admonition," claims that "One might object to this reading of the sexual connotations in Whitney's texts on the grounds that such a bawdy playfulness was sharply discouraged in women of her class during the sixteenth century," and he concludes that the relative anonymity of the early poems gives her the freedom to bypass "gender decorum" (321). However, I would point out that Whitney does not enjoy such anonymity in the *Nosgay*, so she must carefully construct a virtuous persona before risking sexual humor.

shared his early education at home. In fact, Geoffrey's verse offers an interesting counterpoint to that of his sister. In his book of emblems, Geoffrey takes a positive, if fairly traditional, view of friendship. His emblem for friendship, entitled "*Amicitia, etiam post mortem durans*," ²⁰ illustrates lasting friendship as a withered oak supported by a fruitful vine; in the verse below this emblem, Geoffrey advises his readers to "be linckde with such a frende, / That might revive, and helpe when wee be oulde: / And when wee stoope, and drawe unto our ende, / Our staggering state, to helpe for to upholde" (62). Below this verse explanation, Geoffrey briefly alludes to the story of Orestes and Pylades, a popular exemplum for ideal male friendship in early modern friendship treatises. In other emblems addressing friendship, Geoffrey warns against false friends and flatterers and urges his readers not to test their friends unnecessarily. These commonplace sentiments demonstrate that, at the very least, Isabella Whitney would have been familiar with the tenets of ideal male friendship through her brother's work and that of his intellectual circle.²¹

While her brother offers a fairly straightforward view of friendship in his emblems, Whitney, as a female author, must fundamentally alter the discourse of ideal male friendship in order to participate in it. As I discuss in the Introduction, classical friendship writers—and the early modern humanists who looked to them as authorities gendered ideal friendship as male; women were by and large considered too weak, too dependent, and too inconstant to fulfill the demands of *amicitia*. Whitney's most significant alteration to the discourse of ideal male friendship, therefore, is her insistence

²⁰ "Friendship, which endures after death."

²¹ There is much evidence to suggest that Isabella and Geoffrey shared the same circle of literary friends and patrons. Geoffrey addresses several of his adages to his siblings (although none to Isabella), and among the many patrons to whom he dedicates emblems is George Mainwaring, Isabella's sole dedicatee and patron in the *Nosgay*.

on her own right to engage in the rhetoric of amicitia. Of course, by versifying Plat's original work-the adages are, in Whitney's own words, "of an other's growing"-Whitney could be seen as translating and organizing a man's work, an acceptable literary occupation for a woman, rather than intervening in what was a primarily masculine discourse (A4v).²² Yet, Whitney highlights her own voice by selecting, versifying, and organizing Plat's original adages, in addition to making several substantive changes. When she alters Plat's original adages in order to challenge the exclusionary nature of ideal male friendship, she is using the literary form of the moral adage to engage in another tradition-that of ideal friendship. One of the methods by which Whitney revises Plat's work is, as we have seen, by altering Plat's pronouns. While Whitney primarily uses masculine pronouns in the adages concerning love, she generalizes the pronouns in the majority of friendship adages so they may apply to both sexes. For instance, when she writes in "The 1st flower" that "Such freendes as have ben absent long / more joyful be at meeting / Then those which ever present are / and dayly have their greeting," the "freendes" to whom she refers could be either male or female (B2). Men may act foolishly and treacherously when they are in love, but both men and women, it seems, may engage in and benefit from faithful friendship.

We may also see the importance that friendship held for Whitney in her organization of the adages; the first "Flower," quoted above, offers an affirmative view of friendship, and the twenty-one friendship adages outnumber the eighteen adages on love. However, Whitney's view of friendship is not unquestioningly positive. Indeed, in several of the adages, she voices doubts about the possibility of perfect friendship, often

²² Higher up on the social scale, Mary Sidney Herbert also took advantage of the opportunities translation offered women writers by organizing, revising, and continuing the verse translation of the Psalms that her brother Philip began before his death.

turning a witty eye to the failure of friends to live up to the exalted humanist ideal. For instance, when Whitney asserts in Flower 59 that "Al things with frends in comon are," she is repeating a common proverb about friendship. To this, however, she adds the ironic caveat: "at least it should be so," indicating that such ideals are not always realized in practice (B8). Even more cynically, in the 28^{th} adage she declares that "None in adversitie hath help, / except they prospered have / And by ye menes have purchast frends / of whom they ayde may crave" (B4v). While such pessimistic statements would seem to devalue friendship, I would argue that Whitney is simply questioning the value of an ideal of friendship that is, ultimately, impossible to fulfill. Indeed, these more cynical statements about friendship are borne out neither in the familiar letters of the Nosgay nor in the rest of the adages, and Whitney immediately softens the jaded perspective of the 28th adage with the claim that while "Prosperitie wyll get thee friends," poverty will demonstrate which friends are truly "faythfull" (B5). Faithful friendship may be rare, she implies, but it is possible. Ultimately, Whitney's view of friendship is positive but also realistic; her poetic persona is that of a woman who lives in the real world and has little patience for the ideals of either love or friendship. While her adages on love are uniformly pessimistic, Whitney balances her more cynical statements about friendship with positive accounts of friendship's benefits.

One of the greatest benefits of friendship, according to Whitney, is good counsel, and indeed, the counsel-giving function of friendship coincides nicely with the advisory nature of the moral adage, a literary form which allows her to take on the role of the virtuous counselor and friend. In the 14th adage, Whitney advises, "Thy Friends admonysh secretly, / of crimes to which they swarve: / But prayse them openly, if so be, / their deeds do prayse desarve" (B3v). In the following adage, she tells her readers how to offer such corrective advice: "In every check, use some faire speach / for words do sooner pearce / That playnly passe, then those which thou / With rughnesse might reherse" (B3v). A good friend, she asserts, is above all a counselor who will privately and plainly encourage his or her friend to follow the path of righteousness. This statement, consistent with the moral and advice-giving tone Whitney cultivates throughout her poetry, echoes Cicero's claim that "It is in the friendships of men who urge upon each other what is good and worthy that personal influence carries the greatest weight; let us employ that influence to make our advice not only frank, but—if the circumstances so demand—pointed" (96). According to Cicero, friends must encourage virtue in each other because friendship itself depends upon the virtue of the participants: "the thing that brings friends together is their conviction of each other's virtue; it is hard to keep up a friendship, if one has deserted virtue's camp" (94).

As Cicero's military metaphor indicates, the type of virtue to which he refers is gendered male; it is, as discussed above, a specifically civic virtue that helps to support the state. However, we may see the appeal that the persona of the virtuous counselor and friend must have held for an early modern woman poet such as Whitney, for this role allows her to both maintain her own virtue and, at least textually, form non-hierarchical bonds with others. For friendship, unlike love or marriage, is primarily a relationship among virtuous equals. Whitney signals the equality of this relationship in the 16th adage, writing, "Admonisht be with willingnesse, / and paciently abyde / A reprehension, for such faults, / as friends in thee have spide" (B3v). If the friend takes on the role of virtuous advisor, she or he must also be willing to listen to and, if appropriate, abide by

the advice of a friend.²³ However, if a reciprocal exchange of advice demonstrates equality between friends, it does not require similarity. In fact, as Shannon claims, while the rhetoric of ideal male friendship emphasizes the similarity of friends, the role of the friendly counselor is actually predicated on a certain level of *dissimilarity*, since an effective advisor must be able to approach a situation from a different viewpoint than that of his or her friend: "You can identify the true friend because you have proof that he is not merged in your desire . . . but is acting now as a limit to it. The friend's differentiation proves the friend to be a friend" (50). Therefore, Whitney's celebration of the function of counsel in friendship, as well as her own enthusiastic participation in that function, not only allows her to make the case for her own equality but also turns what most traditional friendship writers considered a barrier to *amicitia*—difference—into a requirement for true friendship.

Honest counsel is also what divides the friend from his (or her) sinister double, the flatterer. If the helpful criticism and candid advice that Whitney deems so essential to true friendship necessitates a certain dissimilarity and distance between friends, the flatterer lacks that distance (or even worse, only pretends to). The flatterer, in other words, is *too* close to the friend. Whitney warns her readers of the fine line between friendship and flattery, kindness and obsequiousness in the 32nd adage: "To all men be thou liberall / but use to flatter none" (B5). In the following adage, Whitney cautions against the deceptive nature of flatterers, writing, "A fawning frende wyll at the length / a frowning foe approve / The hate of such is better sure, / then their deceatefull love" (B5). Open hatred, she claims, is less dangerous than the illusory love of a "fawning frende."

²³ Of course, at the beginning of the *Nosgay*, we see that Whitney decidedly does *not* abide by the advice of the friend who tells her to return home. Friends may offer counsel, but she maintains her right to ignore it.

On this subject, Whitney's judgments are firmly in line with the tradition in which she is writing, for most male-authored friendship writings condemn flatterers and address the difficulties of differentiating them from true friends. Shannon notes the recurrence of this theme in early modern friendship texts and concludes that "Sharp corrective speech arises ... as the evidentiary test by which true and false friends and flattery and good counsel may be distinguished" (49). Thus, a true friend must not only have the ability to see what his or her friend cannot but also be willing to voice his or her disagreement.²⁴ Whitney's tone, which is advisory in the adages and often sharply admonitory in her letters to and from siblings and friends, therefore demonstrates her honest purpose. No flatterer she, Whitney's anomalous position gives her the distance needed to offer honest, corrective counsel.

Whitney also draws an explicit connection between friendship and kinship in the adages, counseling: "A friendly mind, accoumpt it for / the neerest of thy kyn: / When al shal fayle, it sticks to thee, / what ever chaunce hath byn" (B6). Indeed, in the sixteenth century, the word "friend" had by no means lost its earlier meaning of family member (*OED*, s.v.). While an unmarried woman's close friendship with an unrelated male friend could, as we have seen, be subject to misinterpretation, kinship relations gave early modern women the opportunity to form close bonds with men that were viewed as completely respectable. And although Whitney imagines that the familial roles of wife and mother may restrict her writing, she still situates herself firmly within a family group. As Marion Wynne-Davies notes, family structures could be enabling as well as

²⁴ Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* offers a good example of such corrective speech when Musidorus attempts to draw his friend Pyrocles out of his love-induced distraction. Musidorus pays "loving attention" to Pyrocles and first counches his criticism gently, but he still chastizes Pyrocles' subjection to love: "O let me never know that any base affection should get any lordship in your thoughts" (114).

restrictive: "It is . . . important to delineate the implications of familial discourses for women writers, exploring how they were both liberated and contained by the ideological apparatus of kinship" (4). In the verse epistles that follow the adages, Whitney mingles letters to and from her siblings, cousins, friends, and fellow writers, thus fashioning herself as a valued member of a textual community of family and friends. This community of "friendly minds" provides a type of support system for Whitney; her publication of these letters indicates that this woman writer still maintains her connection to the home even as she moves outside of its boundaries.

For instance, in the opening letter, Whitney tells Geoffrey, "But styll to friends I must appeale / (and next our Parentes deare,) / You are, and must be chiefest staffe / that I shal stay on heare" (C6v). While she resides away from her "Parentes deare," her brother represents her natural ally and protector in London. But even when she and her siblings are not residing in the same area, Whitney asserts that family ties may be sustained through correspondence. If she cannot see Geoffrey in person, she asks that she "may have knowledge wheare / A messenger to harke unto, / that I to you may wryte: / And eke of him your answers have / which would my hart delight" (C6v). Likewise, she mildly admonishes her brother Brooke—who was apparently, like his sisters, in service in London—for not writing by reminding him of the anxiety she feels when she does not hear from him: "Which makes me feare, that I shall heare, / your health appaired is" (C7). This humanist belief in the ability of textual circulation to maintain familial and friendly ties across distance echoes Flower 3, which declares that "The presence of the mynd must be / preferd, if we do well: / Above the bodyes presence; for / it farre doth it excell" (B2).²⁵ Whitney's textual community of family and friendship mitigates the anxieties associated with the publication of her poetry, her removal from the domestic sphere, and her single status; this circle of friends and family, who are present in "mynd" but not in "bodye," signals to the reader that Whitney is not dangerously unattached to traditional family structures. The familiar letters of the *Nosgay* thus illustrate Whitney's enduring connection to the domestic realm without actually threatening her independence from its confines.

These exchanges between friends and family, as well as the heterogeneous form of the *Nosgay* itself, also offset "the anxieties of print publication by presenting a book that replicates private textual circulation" (Wall 297). Class as well as gender issues marked such anxieties. While cultural prohibitions surrounding women's public speech made print publication especially problematic for women writers, male authors were also eager to avoid what J. W. Saunders terms "the stigma of print" (139). In the sixteenth century, print had by no means replaced manuscript publication, and the aristocracy and upper classes more often circulated their poetry through manuscript. The commercial nature of the press could therefore mark the author of a printed work, male or female, as an outsider to such privileged circles. As Arthur F. Marotti observes, "aristocratic or 'gentle' men and women, or lower-class individuals with social aspirations, were reluctant to print their poetry because they felt threatened by the commercializing and democratizing features of the print medium" (210). While Whitney does not hide the commercial nature of her poetry-in the "Wyll and Testament", she asks her readers to buy her book and even notes the location of her bookseller's shop—she does draw upon

²⁵ Later in the century, John Donne would express the same faith in the ability of correspondence to maintain friendship during physical absence. In his verse epistle, "To Sir Henry Wotton," he writes, "Sir, more than kisses, letters mingle souls: / For thus, friends absent speak" (54).

the cultural status that manuscript publication held by mimicking its diverse and collaborative form. By including the voices of her friends and family as they answer, comment upon, and commend her own writing, Whitney (who is, by her own description, an impoverished former maidservant hailing from the minor gentry) signals her participation in an intellectual circle of friends.

The familiar letters of the *Nosgay* therefore not only attempt to neutralize any threat that Whitney's removal from the domestic sphere may pose but also advertise her standing in a group of primarily male literary friends. Within these letters, we find Whitney aligning herself with the traditionally masculine world of literary achievement rather than the domestic world to which women such as her sisters conventionally belonged. Despite her criticisms of men in love, it would be misleading to call Whitney's poetry an indictment of gender inequality. Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that she published her correspondence with male writers along with her poetry because of the validation it lent her writing. Whitney's printed correspondence with male poets such as Thomas Berry work as a form of what Bacon termed "countenance" (83), which is, as Alan Bray explains, "the appearance of friendship in the public eye that was itself a kind of currency" (54). Thus, even as she warns other women against misfortune by using her own example, Whitney claims a place for herself that is more closely allied to the masculine realm of literary production and publication than the feminine realm of domesticity and service. She seems to be, in other words, an exception to the rule. For instance, for all of the love and concern Whitney expresses in her letter to her younger sisters serving in London, she still titles it "An order prescribed" and takes on the didactic, authoritative tone of an older sister whose words should be heeded (C7v). In

this letter, Whitney instructs her sisters to "Peruse these lines, observe the rules / which in the same I tell," and warns them, "I hope you give no cause, / wherby I should suspect: / But this I know too many live, / that would you soone infect" (C7v, C8). Ironically, this prescription echoes the advice that Whitney receives from her male friend in the introduction to the *Nosgay*: like him, she uses the sexually connotative word "infect," and she advises her sisters to safeguard their domestic positions just as her male friend warned her against wandering away from home.

Of course, Whitney's "rules" for her younger sisters are essentially protective; as Phillippy claims, the letter details "the appropriate place of the maidservant within the order of social and familial relations much as a conduct book would, but it does so as a matter of self-preservation for women dependent upon the household for their livelihood and their honor" (453). Yet, even as Whitney warns her sisters against conduct that would endanger their place within the domestic realm, she herself claims the freedom to move outside of that realm. Her letters to and from male writers illustrate—and validate—her membership in an active literary community, and in these letters she abandons the stance of superior wisdom that she takes in the letter to her sisters and instead depicts relationships based on equality. I would suggest that Whitney's strategic self-distancing from domestic and sexual roles enables this depiction of equality between writers of different genders. Because Whitney portrays herself as a virtuous woman writer who is neither a wife nor lover, she can describe her relationships with male writers in terms of friendly equality.

Most of Whitney's letters to and from her male friends take the form of complaints: Whitney writes to a friend "bewaylynge her mishappes," and the friend

responds by claiming his misfortunes to be even worse or by offering advice and condolences (D5v). Ellinghausen claims that the form of the complaint only reveals the inadequacies of Whitney's textual friendships and asserts that the letters leave "the impression that the medium of exchange ultimately cannot mitigate Whitney's situation" (10). However, I would argue that the form of the complaint allows Whitney to demonstrate friendship's reciprocity, for while instruction goes only one way in her letter to her sisters, in Whitney's letters to and from male friends she both dispenses counsel and requests it, thus representing herself as an active and valued participant in a lively literary exchange. In addition, I would suggest that we need not take all of Whitney's misfortunes literally. In fact, I believe there is a grain of humor in her unending catalogue of woe; Whitney and friends such as Berry seem to be engaging in a poetic contest to see whose luck is worse. The complaint as a literary form may, in other words, be the medium through which friendship and support are expressed rather than an unmitigated expression of real-life hardship. Thus, the very structure of the complaint form gives Whitney the opportunity to once again celebrate the advice-giving function of friendship, as well as her own ability to amply fulfill that function.

Whitney maintains this authority to dispense advice to men at least in part by avoiding references to her own gender, a method she also uses in her dedication to George Mainwaring. Given the linkage between prostitution and women's literary publication in the early modern period, a woman writer's dedication to a male patron posed significant difficulties since the patron-artist relationship was predicated on the exchange of money. As Jones states, "Gender decorum encouraged women writers to seek women patrons rather than men . . . but far fewer women than men had the

independent wealth to act as patrons" (36). Perhaps this is why Whitney presents her *Nosgay* to a male patron, but whatever her motivations, she conspicuously avoids most references to her gender and couches the dedication in terms of friendship. She tells Mainwaring, "When I... had made this simple Nosgay: I was in minde to bestow the same on som dere frind, of which number I have good occasion to accompt you chiefe" (A4).²⁶ She then reminisces about their shared childhood and ends her dedication by ensuring Mainwaring that she is his "welwillyng Countriwoman" (A5).²⁷ Whitney also desexualizes her position with the use of an elaborate allegory, comparing herself to "the pore man which having no goods, came with his hands full of water to meete the Persian Prince withal, who respecting the good wyll of the man: did not disdayne his simple Guift" (A4v).²⁸ This allegory appeals to the aristocratic obligation to accept humble gifts graciously, but it also cleverly foregrounds status instead of gender differences. By comparing the inequality between herself and Mainwaring to the inequality between a poor man and a rich man, Whitney attempts to eliminate gender, with all of its concomitant problems, as a consideration and present herself, first and foremost, as a poet.

Of course, even though Whitney reminds Mainwaring of their shared background and refers to him as her friend, it would probably be incorrect to term this patronage

 $^{^{26}}$ The word "friend," in the sixteenth century, could refer to a patron or anyone who conferred benefits on another (*OED*, s.v.). Whitney makes use of the manifold connotations of the word "friend" to describe her relationships with others in positive terms.

²⁷ Lorna Hutson notes that Whitney's dedication attempts to turn this exchange relationship into one of kinship: "Whitney's invocation of a shared childhood and 'the good wyl that should rest in Countrie folke' ... thus serves to narrow the 'kinship' distance between herself and Mainwaring in the eyes of readers" (*The Usurer's Daughter* 124).

²⁸ Interestingly, this is the same allegory Elyot uses to dedicate the *Governour* to Henry VIII (Elyot exciii). The story of King Artaxerxes and the poor man's gift was a common enough figure for the relationship between a patron and artist, but this coincidence may indicate Whitney's familiarity with a popular text dealing with ideal male friendship. For early modern writers' frequent use of the Artaxerxes story, see Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, p. 129.

relationship a friendship in the modern sense of the word. However, she also downplays her gender in her letters to those male friends who are neither patrons nor relatives. For instance, in Whitney's letter to her friend C.B., she hints that she has been the victim of slander and asks for his counsel: "two wittes may compasse more than one, you must confesse" (D6). Here, Whitney asks for guidance not by virtue of her gender but because "two wittes," even if equal, are always better than one. She concludes the letter by humbly commending herself "to the conducting of my Friende," and while we may read this as an example of a woman meekly submitting to male authority, I assert that the surrounding letters work against such an interpretation (D6). Indeed, Whitney proffers advice as much as she requests it. As Hutson argues, the familiar letters as a group "build up an image of the reliability and soundness of Whitney's own judgment" (The Usurer's Daughter 125). In the letter titled, "To my Friend Master T. L. whose good nature: I see abusde," Whitney warns the recipient against those false friends who, unlike herself, only surround him for his wealth. In fact, she seems somewhat indignant that her previous advice has not been heeded: "Yf warnings styll you do reject, / to late your selfe shal rew: / Do as you lyst, I wish you well, / and so I say adewe" (D8v). Whitney's dissimilarity with T.L. results in her ability to clearly see what he cannot, and her friendship for him gives her the authority (and indeed, by the logic of the adages, the moral responsibility) to offer him her frank advice. Throughout the familiar letters, Whitney depicts herself as an equal member in a group of friends who help and counsel each other in times of trouble. As she affirms in her letter to C.B., "that burthen dothe not deare, / whiche frende wyll somtyme helpe to beare" (D6).

Whitney's printed letters therefore both signify her enduring connection to a supportive family and depict her as a respected equal in a circle of friends. They also shore up her self-representation as a morally upright and chaste woman—a representation that could be threatened by her authorial activities and her avoidance of marriage-for her friends' responses uniformly express their faith in her virtue. Her cousin G.W.'s epistle declares that Whitney's woes do not arise from any fault of her own but are rather the result of the "tirant Godesse" Fortune's whims (E1). Likewise, C.B. expresses his belief in Whitney's innocence when, in response to her complaint that she has been the victim of slander, he responds, "yf evell words and other wants, / have brought thee to this woe: / Remember how that Christ him selfe, / on earth was even so: / Thy Friends that have thee knowne of long, / Wil not regard thy enemies tong" (D7). Here, C.B. testifies to their long-term friendship and encourages Whitney to be consoled by Christ's example, for both she and Christ are blameless victims of false reports and "evell words." Whitney's fears of slander correspond to the very real possibility that she will face public censure or ridicule by publishing her poetry and refusing to confine herself and her words to the domestic realm. By demonstrating that her friends will not regard her "enemies tong," Whitney attempts to neutralize this threat and control her readers' responses to her foray into print. When C.B. testifies to the "vertue that hath ever beene, / within thy tender brest: / Which I from yeare to yeare, have seene, / in all thy deedes exprest," he is also expressing his belief that female virtue and a public role as a writer are not mutually exclusive (D7). If Whitney's friends can believe in the virtue of a publishing woman writer, so too, she implies, can her readers.

As in her earlier poems and the adages, Whitney must maintain this virtue by characterizing herself as an honorable and chaste woman and by distancing herself from sexual stereotypes. Indeed, I believe that Whitney's strategic self-distancing from sexuality and domesticity is what allows her to form relationships with male writers that are based on equality. By portraying herself as a chastely virtuous woman and by separating herself from marital and sexual roles, Whitney places her correspondence with these male writers on the firm basis of friendship. Yet, given early modern cultural constructs that associated female silence with chastity and publication with prostitution, Whitney's relationship to poetic discourses such as Petrarchism is necessarily more troubled and more complicated than that of her male correspondents. For instance, while Thomas Berry's verse epistle, included toward the end of the familiar letters, utilizes standard Petrarchan tropes, Whitney shuns such Petrarchan language in her reply. Rather than respond in kind, she changes the focus of the poetic conversation by advising Berry to renounce love and embrace friendship instead. This focus on friendship rather than love allows Whitney to circumvent the sexually charged nature of the Petrarchan complaint.

Berry's letter is in fact a response to Whitney's address to Dido, in which she contrasts her woes, which are caused by poor health and Fortune's spite, to Dido's troubles with love. Whitney encourages Dido to cease mourning for Aeneas by magnifying her own troubles: "greater cause of griefe / compells mee to complayne: / For Fortune fell conuerted hath, / My health to heapes of payne" (D3v). Love, Whitney indicates in this poem, is nothing compared to the misfortunes of poverty, slander, and ill health that she is currently facing. As in her earlier poetry, Whitney downplays the power of love and focuses instead on poverty and illness, woes caused not by a cruel beloved but by an abstract Fortune. Berry titles his letter, "An answer to comfort her, by shwyng his haps to be harder," and attempts to demonstrate that love is, in fact, the greater calamity. Using standard Petrarchan language, he claims to "pine as WAX, before the fire wastes," "freece to YCE," and "heate with perching SON" for an unnamed mistress (D4). As Nancy Vickers has argued, male poets could use Petrarchan tropes particularly the blazon—to assert control over the unattainable body of the female beloved" (103).²⁹ The threatening sexual power of the Petrarchan mistress, as described in Berry's verse epistle, therefore sits uncomfortably close to the female stereotypes from which Whitney has assiduously worked to distance herself.

In her response, Whitney once again rewrites the tradition in which she is engaging by steering clear of Petrarchism's expressions of sexual desire and the hostility toward the unavailable beloved that so often lurks beneath its surface. Thus, instead of assigning blame to the mistress, Whitney holds Dame Fortune responsible for Berry's troubles. Fortune may be gendered female, but she is also an abstract personification of a concept, rather far removed from flesh and blood women. Whitney further draws attention away from the distant female beloved of Petrarchan tradition by comparing Fortune not to a cruel mistress but to an unfaithful friend, declaring that Fortune "rightly be copard with those / whose painted spech, professeth frindship stil / but time bewrayes the meaning to be yll," thus changing the subject of the poetic debate from love to

²⁹ Vickers connects the suffering of the Petrarchan speaker to his dismembering and fragmentation of the woman's body in the blazon: "Woman's body, albeit divine, is displayed to Actaeon, and his body, as a consequence, is literally taken apart. Petrarch's Actaeon, having read his Ovid, realizes what will ensue: his response to the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment, of the threat. He transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove from his experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination" (103).

friendship (D5r)³⁰. Whitney concludes by declaring that once Berry's fit of love has passed, he "shall hoysed be to happye state agayne / Delighting oft among his friends & Kin, / To tell what danger earst his lyfe was in" (D5r, D5v). Friends and family thus provide a safe alternative to the life-threatening, albeit transitory, dangers of love. In the end of her epistle to Berry, Whitney draws a direct connection between her friendship for him and her poetic abilities by declaring, "thy Fame, for ever florish shall, / If IS. her Pen, may promise ought at all" (D5v). In other words, Whitney claims the ability to immortalize Berry through her verse. This is what poets tell their patrons and lovers tell their female beloveds, but Berry is neither patron nor beloved. Whitney's poetry repeatedly declares the superiority of friendship over love; thus, she will use her poetic abilities to confer fame on a fellow writer and friend.

The Fortunate and the Friendless: The "Wyll and Testament"

While Whitney does avoid Petrarchan tropes in her letter to Berry, she does not completely shun Petrarchan tradition in the *Nosgay*. In fact, she ends the collection with a poetic tour de force that not so much rejects Petrarchism as completely rewrites it. Whitney's "Wyll and Testament" immediately follows the familiar letters of the *Nosgay*. The poem's placement within the collection is important, I would assert, because it qualifies the stance of dispossession and exile that Whitney takes within the "Wyll and Testament" itself. In this reading, I am suggesting that we read the *Nosgay* as a cohesive whole rather than as a collection of isolated poems, concurring with Richard J. Panofsky's claim that the *Nosgay* should be read "in order from cover to cover" (xii). Indeed, given the reading practices of early modern readers, who tended to approach

³⁰ The "painted spech" of Fortune still genders her female since the word "painted" carries connotations of cosmetics and prostitution. Even as Whitney attempts to rewrite literary tradition, she does not entirely escape the gender bias built into the language.

individual poems in dialogue with the verse surrounding them and in context with the social occasions that produced them, I think it is likely that Whitney expected her readers to read the "Wyll" within the framework of the poetry and correspondence that precede it (Marotti 160). Read within such a framework, the stance of victimization and marginalization that Whitney assumes in the "Wyll" is greatly qualified by the authoritative tone of the adages and the vision of community offered by the familiar letters.

Of course, having lost her employment and unable to attain enough credit to stay in the city, Whitney's speaker in "The Wyll and Testament" certainly seems poor and isolated enough. Her misfortunes force her to leave London, so the will functions as her final leave-taking. As Whitney explains:

The Aucthour (though loth to leaue the Citie) vpon her Friendes procurement, is constrained to departe: wherfore (she fayneth as she would die) and maketh her WYLL and Testæment, as foloweth: With large Legacies of such Goods and riches which she moste aboundantly hath left behind her: and therof maketh

LONDON sole executor to se her Legacies performed. (E2)

As she does throughout the *Nosgay*, Whitney claims to be the subject of misfortune and dispossession. However, the familiar letters that precede the "Wyll" place this stance into context. Poor and unfortunate Whitney may be, but she is not friendless; indeed, she informs us that she is leaving London upon "her Friendes procurement" (E2). Moreover, Whitney describes the poem itself as an exercise in pretending: she "fayneth as she would die" so she may write her will, but her act of feigning places the entire poem in the context of the possible rather than the real. She is not, in fact, on her deathbed, and while

her departure from London may be real enough, she posits it firmly in the future and, in the poem itself, portrays herself as an energetic inhabitant of London's city streets with the freedom to move freely through them. Even the speaker's ostensibly pitiable state places her in a paradoxically powerful situation: her imagined death and what may be a real departure from the city give her the authority to dispense her property and goods as she pleases.³¹ In the concept of the poem, her property is the entire city of London and her goods the extremes of abundance and destitution that she has personally observed during her sojourn there.

The humorous tone of the poem emerges as its impecunious speaker bestows possessions that she could never hope to own; as Pamela Hammons notes, Whitney "makes jesting use of the great distance between her speaker and the material world that she describes—a world she can easily will away because, in truth, she possesses none of it" (399-340). The speaker begins by endowing London with its own great buildings: "I first of all to London leave / because I there was bred: / Brave buildyngs rare, of Churches store, / and Pauls to the head" (E3v). A comprehensive detailing of London's abundant commodities follows, including food "for daynty mouthes" and opulent clothing such as "French Ruffes, high Purles, Gorgets and Sleeves / of any kind of Lawne (E4). The irony of this impoverished speaker's power to bestow such lavish goods emerges when she reveals the source of the money that will purchase all of these luxuries. She tells her readers, "In many places, Shops are full, / I left you nothing scant. / Yf they that keepe what I you leave, / aske Mony: when they sell it: / At Mint, there is such store, it is / unpossible to tell it" (E5). This reversal places the readers in the same frustrating

³¹ Wall argues that the tradition of the mother's legacy, which Whitney appropriates here, "allowed Renaissance women writers to come forth as authors within a culture that denied them public expression" (300).

position as Whitney's speaker. The money and goods are all there—as the speaker asserts, "I left you nothing scant"—but they are still impossibly out of reach.

As Whitney's speaker makes her way across the city space of London, the often lighthearted humor of the poem gives way to the satire of social injustice. Her freedom to roam across the city is her means of conveying this satire, for she highlights social differences by physically moving from areas the rich would frequent, packed with goods and luxury items, to the dwellings of the poor, characterized by prisons and want. Whitney satirically bestows the goods that are already in London back to London, and she illuminates social inequalities by distributing wealth just as it was before. In other words, as she imaginatively doles out the goods of London, she ironically leaves the rich what they already had and "to the dispossessed, she leaves their raw, unmitigated fate. These mock bequests disclose a social world harshly indifferent to the desires of its individual citizens" (Wall 304). For instance, Whitney writes: "Now for the people in thee left, / I have done as I may: / And that the poore, when I am gone, / have cause for me to pray. / I wyll to prisons portions leave / what though but very small" (E5v). The poor are literally the refuse of society, the people who are "left," and Whitney ironically bestows prisons, want, and punishment upon them in the same tone with which she leaves luxurious clothes and plentiful food to the wealthy.

Allowing the reader to perceive these differences for themselves, the only moral judgments Whitney overtly applies to London refer to her own pecuniary state. She even tells the reader that she kept Ludgate, a debtor's prison, for herself in case she might need to dwell there, asking "What makes you standers by to smile. / And laugh so in your sleeve: / I thinke it is, because that I / to Ludgate nothing geve. / I am not now in case to

lye, / here is no place of jest: / I dyd reserve, that for my selfe" (E6). Imagining that her impoverished state may force her to repair to a debtor's prison, Whitney allies herself with the dispossessed and places herself on the fringes of society even as she moves freely through it. The speaker's victimization and poverty are therefore essential to her satiric purpose, and while I am suggesting that we read Whitney's claims of isolation and oppression in conjunction with the depictions of friendship and connection that precede them, I am not suggesting that such claims are specious. While we don't need to view Whitney's disenfranchisement as transparently autobiographical, such a stance does allow her to exercise her satirical voice and expose the injustices of London. After setting the entire poem in the realm of the imaginary, Whitney's claims of victimization are a way of imagining—and portraying—what would happen if she actually were friendless. In fact, she makes the fate of the friendless quite clear: "And such as Friends wyl not them bayle, / whose coyne is very thin: / For them I leave a certayne hole, / And little ease within" (E5v). If the speaker had not been able to leave London by the assistance of her friends, she implies, this would be the destiny awaiting her. Ones friends, it seems, are at times the only bulwark standing between oneself and the grim fates of debt and imprisonment.

Whitney's criticisms of these urban injustices, as well as her self-alignment with the poor and powerless, constitute yet another intervention in a traditional literary form. Satire was generally considered a masculine province both because it requires a privileged observer's viewpoint (normally gendered male) and because it critiques public institutions in an attempt to provoke social change.³² The "Wyll" also represents what is

³² Beilin notes, "looming in Whitney's frame may be a revision of Juvenal's Third Satire, or its heirs and successors . . . By changing the speaker's conventionally eager departure of the country to a reluctant

perhaps Whitney's most ambitious reworking of tradition: her unique use of the Petrarchan blazon to describe not a cruel beloved but an indifferent city. Just as the Petrarchan poetics of dispersal and fragmentation allow male poets to assert a type of control over the threatening body of an unavailable beloved, Whitney uses Petrarchan convention to imagine her own authority over a pitiless city that has refused to shelter her and "never once a help wold finde, / to ease me in distrs." (E2v). Like the Petrarchan lover, Whitney achieves symbolic possession of the beloved by blazoning him-or in this case, it—in her poetry. However, unlike the Petrarchan lover, she changes the sexual blazon of the mistress's body into a geographical mapping of city space, and she reproaches her beloved for financial, instead of sexual, stinginess. Just as Whitney's "Copy of a Letter" and "Admonition" expose and challenge the *Heroides*' celebration of male trickery and deception, the "Wyll's" adoption of the Petrarchan blazon to describe a city rather than a lover renders visible the imaginary claim of ownership that the male poet's blazon of his beloved enacts on the female body. As Wall argues, "this particular trope for loss and desire foregrounds the peculiarities of the poetic strategy of anatomizing the object of display and desire" (305).

Building on Wall's claim, I would also assert that Whitney, in addressing London as her lover, avoids being relegated to a domestic space. In the beginning of the poem, she compares her affections for London to the feelings that other women have for their lovers, writing, "many Women foolyshly / lyke me, and other moe. / Doe such a fyred fancy set, / on those which least desarve" (E2v). Yet, the very comparison highlights the

forced march, Whitney signals that her poem is essentially not a Juvenalian castigation and rejection of the city, although it will have its moments of indignation over the hardships of the poor in a city of plenty" (254). I agree that the poem is as much a celebration of London's bounty and excitement as it is a satire of urban injustice but would also suggest that Whitney's gentler, more playful tone may be a way of softening her intervention in this traditionally masculine tradition.

difference, for while other women set their "fyred" fancies on real, living men, Whitney devotes her love to a city. This strategy yields much of the humor of the poem, but it also renders a woman writer's participation in the Petrarchan blazon more acceptable since the speaker's frustrated desires are monetary rather than sexual. Moreover, just as her sister Anne belongs to her husband's household, Whitney, by characterizing herself as London's unfortunate lover, belongs to its city space. Thus, her claim to possess the city not only constitutes an ironic commentary on her own poverty but also functions as an assertion of belonging—even at the moment of her ejection. Of course, while the energy of the poem emerges from Whitney's posited departure from the city, this departure, located in the future, does not actually take place in the poem. Instead, Whitney claims for herself a legitimate place in the public space of the city, from the richest areas to the poorest.

The "Wyll" also demonstrates Whitney's ability to freely traverse the urban space of London. As we have seen, the freedom to walk where she pleases is an important symbol of creative power in her poetry. Just as, in the beginning of the *Nosgay*, Whitney uses the metaphor of solitary wandering to explain how she came upon the inspiration for her poetry, she concludes her collection of poems with a detailed listing of the city streets she has walked. Of course, the roaming she describes in the "Wyll" is probably more literal than the symbolic story of how she came upon "Plat's Plot," but in both instances, solitary walks lead to poetic inspiration. However, Whitney takes a more confident and self-assured tone in the "Wyll": the woman who tentatively walked outside in the introduction to the *Nosgay* to see if her "limmes had got their strength agayne" now openly admits to walking all over the city of London (A6r). Nor is it only the safe and affluent sections of the city that Whitney has frequented, for, in keeping with her selfidentification with the poor and disadvantaged, she also demonstrates her familiarity with the city's prisons, madhouses, and places of public execution. Bedlam, she informs us, "was oft my walke" (E7). The speaker's fears of infection, which expressed her reservations about entering the public sphere of the literary marketplace, now give way to a detailed charting of public space. All of the verse that Whitney positions before her "Wyll,"—the justification for writing found in her story of coming upon "Plat's Plot," the evidence of her moral authority in the adages, and her depiction of a circle of caring friends and family in the familiar letters—justify the comfort with which, in this the last poem of the *Nosgay*, she now claims the public space of London for her own.

Thus, it is Whitney's self-fashioning as a virtuous female author who is not contained to a domestic space that allows her to roam at her will across the city of London and write freely about what she sees. In fact, references to domestic space are few in the "Wyll," for Whitney obviously takes pleasure in listing the city streets and public spaces of London. Jones writes, "Whitney lists the streets and neighborhoods of the city with a precision and breadth that suggest she moved through them much more freely than class decorum permitted the noblewoman or the citizen's wife" (40). The fact that Whitney was not a noblewoman certainly would have increased her freedom, but I would claim that her relatively minor social position was not the only reason she could roam across the city and record its sights in such detail. Marriage, a family, or service in a domestic household would at the very least have limited Whitney's solitary, unobserved wandering. However, Whitney does refer to marriage in the "Wyll," and when she does, it is with a witty eye to the financial underpinnings of the institution. Her immense powers of bestowal, it seems, extend to people as well as goods:

> For Maydens poore, I Widdooers ritch, do leave, that oft shall dote: And by that meanes shal mary them, to set the Girles aflote. And wealthy Widdowes wil I leave, to help yong Gentylmen: Which when you have, in any case, Be courteous to them then: And see their Plate and Jewells sake may not be mard with rust. Nor let their Bags too long be full,

for feare that they doo burst. (E6v)

As in the adages, here she is a detached observer who, since personally disconnected from such courtship and marriage proceedings, can view them with an ironic eye. And what that eye sees is a mutually beneficial economic and sexual transaction: young women marry doting old widowers for financial security, and wealthy widows "help" young gentlemen in return for what may either be marital or sexual relationships. While both maids and young men seek financial gain through marriage, the relationship between the young gentlemen and the wealthy widows comes across as particularly exploitative. In what she satirically dubs a courtesy, Whitney urges the young men to go through the widows' wealth as soon as possible, before their jewels rust and their bags burst. The figure of the widow often inspired anxiety because men feared that, after their deaths, their widows would bestow their money and property upon a new husband, thus disrupting the smooth transmission of wealth from father to son.³³ Whitney approaches this patriarchal fear from the woman's point of view by highlighting, albeit in a humorous manner, the financial ruin that could potentially face a woman who made an unfortunate marriage.³⁴

Here, as she does in the rest of the Nosgay, Whitney takes an outsider's skeptical view of the follies of lust and the pitfalls of marriage. She does not face such dangers, she implies, because she is married to her writing: she cleverly turns her writing instruments into the active witnesses of her will, thus elevating them to the status of family and indicating their importance in her life: "In witnes of the standers by, / whose names yf you wyll have. / Paper, Pen and Standish were: / at that same present by" (E8v). With this statement, Whitney designates the tools of her trade her next of kin, symbolically filling the role that would ordinarily be occupied by a husband or child. Indeed, throughout the "Wyll," Whitney openly celebrates her status as an author. In "The Copy of a Letter" and the "Admonition," she describes her writing as a way to dispense advice based on her own ill fortune with love, and in the other sections of the *Nosgay*, she modestly portrays her literary vocation as a temporary alternative to marriage. But in the "Wyll," Whitney presents her reasons for writing in terms of pleasure, leaving money to "the Bookebinders by Paulles / because I lyke their Arte" (E6v). Here, her anxieties about print publication disappear, along with the complicated

³³ Mendelson and Crawford note that "Men's growing desire to control the transmission of wealth to the family of the first marriage led to increasing financial penalties on women who remarried" (183).

³⁴ Whitney here anticipates Margaret Cavendish's satirical treatment of this subject in *Bell in Campo*. In Cavendish's closet drama, the widowed Madame Passionate marries a profligate younger man who is only interested in her money.

maneuvers she must perform to closet the financial side of print publication and all of the negatively sexual connotations it carried for a sixteenth-century woman writer. The preceding poems and adages demonstrate that Whitney can publish her verse and still maintain her virtue, so here she seemingly no longer needs to qualify her occupation as a writer.

As I have argued in this chapter, Whitney's depictions of friendship and familial connection, as well as her own assertions of moral authority, seek to allay the cultural suspicions that she knew would accrue to a single woman who chose to sell her poetry in the literary marketplace. From the author's introduction that opens the Nosgay to the farewell to London that closes it, Whitney highlights the important role that both friendship and kinship play in her poetic project. Her elevation of friendship above other relationships such as love and marriage is a way of envisioning virtuous, equal relationships that support rather than hinder her independence as a woman writer. Moreover, the responsibilities of the friend coincide with the responsibilities of the moral writer; thus, in donning the mantle of the friend, Whitney is also taking on the role of the authoritative moral advisor. Friendship, in other words, fosters and justifies her poetic project. In the closing words of her "Wyll," Whitney sharply refuses the friendship of those who have not supported her and her writing: "And unto all that wysh mee well, / or rue that I am gon: / Doo me comend, and bid them cease / my absence for to mone. / And tell them further, if they wolde, / my presence styll have had: / They should have sought to mend my luck: / which ever was too bad" (E8). She thus denies the friendly office of mourning to those who have not befriended her while she lives. But, of course, Whitney has already informed us that this poem is a fiction: she is not yet dead. Therefore, her

readers still have the opportunity to "befriend" her by purchasing her work. As she disperses the goods of London, Whitney deems, "Amongst them all, my Printer must, / have somewhat to his share: / I wyll my Friends these Bookes to bye / of him, with other ware" (E6v). Whitney's friends will support her poetic enterprise by purchasing her work, and, as the commendatory poems and familiar letters of the *Nosgay* indicate, she has no shortage of such friends.³⁵ Whitney's participation in a circle of friends and family demonstrates that, despite her removal from the domestic realm, she is not an isolated (and thus threatening) single woman writer. She is not a wife, mother, or lover, but a virtuous equal in a supportive community of family, acquaintances, and fellow poets: she is a friend.

³⁵ Such support would be indirect, since publishers typically paid authors a flat fee for their manuscripts and kept the profits from sales. However, a publisher was far more likely to purchase more of an author's work if her or his previous efforts sold well.

Chapter Two "Virtue's Friends": Patronage, Religion, and Friendship in the Poetry of Aemilia Lanyer

Poore virtues friends indure the greatest wrong: For they must suffer all indignity, Untill in heav'n they better graced be. (42) *—Aemilia Lanyer, Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*

Aemilia Lanyer makes frequent appeals to the patronage, protection, and friendship of the titled women to whom she dedicates her remarkable collection of religious verse, Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum. In the nine dedications that precede Salve Deus, Lanyer acknowledges the often considerable social difference between herself and her dedicatees and even relies on it as she appeals to the duty of the socially superior patron to assist a virtuous but lower-born poet.³⁶ However, she also asks her readers to temporarily move away from the social realm, in which she is marginalized by both her gender and social position, in favor of the religious realm, in which individuals are judged by their personal merit and piety rather than their social class. In other words, Lanyer attempts to carve out a space, defined by religion, in which she may speak to her potential patrons as an equal. As we have seen, both classical and early modern writers celebrate the equality of friendship. Whether friendship demands equality or produces it is, however, often less clear. Lanyer's recognition of the vast social inequality between herself and a group of dedicatees that includes Queen Anne, Princess Elizabeth, and the Countess of Pembroke is both keen and abiding, but as she praises the religious piety of such women and asks them to acknowledge similar piety in herself, she invokes the Aristotelian appreciation of virtue in another, a type of friendship that the socially unequal relationship between patron and poet can accommodate.

³⁶ Mihoko Suzuki also notes that Lanyer appeals to "the privileged social position of these women as entailing a responsibility to aid and protect a woman author of lower rank" (114).

When Lanyer attempts to establish female connections based on shared religious virtue in most of her dedications to these titled women, it is their protection, patronage, and understanding that she seeks rather than their friendship in the modern sense of a close personal relationship. In the early modern period, however, the world "friend" also commonly referred to a patron or supporter-a meaning which persists even today in expressions such as "friends in high places" (OED, s.v.). Francis Bacon suggests that this utilitarian form of friendship is more attainable than the valorized classical ideal when he pragmatically states, "There is little friendship in the world, and least of all between equals, which was wont to be magnified. That that is, is between superior and inferior, whose fortunes may comprehend the one the other" (192; 84). Therefore, when Lanyer bids for the patronage of these aristocratic women, it is indeed a form of friendship that she seeks, albeit one that involves social inequality and the profitable exchange of services for gifts or social recognition. Aristotle recognized such friendships "based on utility" but declared them inferior to perfect friendships "between good men," which are based on virtue rather than material benefit (265). As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Lanyer's religious topic and her emphasis on female piety actually obscure the functional aspects of patronage and emphasize instead the binding power of virtue.

For example, in her dedication to Susan Bertie, the Countess Dowager of Kent, in whose household Lanyer received her education as a child, Lanyer eschews any financial reward for her literary efforts: "And since no former gaine hath made me write, / Nor my desertlesse service could have wonne, / Onely your noble Virtues do incite / My Pen, they are the ground I write upon; / Nor any future profit is expected, / Then how can these poore lines goe unrespected?" (20). ³⁷ Here, Lanyer asserts she is inspired by Bertie's "noble Virtues" rather than by any past or future monetary benefit, and she draws a causal relationship between the Countess Dowager's virtue and her recognition of the virtue in Lanyer's verse, thus portraying a relationship between poet and potential patron that is closer to Aristotle's "friendship of the good" than to a friendship of utility (265).³⁸ Lanyer's encomium of Bertie's virtues also points toward the type of virtue that she envisions as a basis for friendship between social unequals: Bertie's first virtue is "love and feare of God," she is patient, and she possesses "a mind . . . remote / From worldly pleasures" (18). In the narrative of the crucifixion that follows, these feminine virtues of piety, patience, and retirement are also embodied in Lanyer's feminized Christ, who becomes an important example of low-born virtue. ³⁹

Lanyer's depiction of her chief patroness, Margaret Clifford, Countess Dowager of Cumberland, similarly emphasizes the virtues of forbearance in the face of suffering, rejection of worldly pleasures, and religious piety. As in her dedication to Bertie, Lanyer claims to have personally observed and experienced Clifford's exemplary virtues: she reminisces fondly of the time she spent with Clifford and her daughter Anne at the country estate of Cookham, and she claims that Clifford's devotion to Christ inspired her religious subject: "For time so spent, I need make no excuse, / Knowing it doth with thy

³⁷ I am not claiming that Lanyer did not hope for monetary gain from her poetic endeavors; given the multiple dedications, I think it is quite likely that she did. I am suggesting that her focus on virtue and her religious topic emphasize female connections based on shared piety rather than on financial or even social benefits.

³⁸ Lanyer's dedication to the Countess Dowager, "the noble guide of my ungovern'd dayes," also depicts a semi-familial type of relationship, another recognized form of friendship (18). Lanyer apparently benefited from the practice of placing children into service in aristocratic households in which they received education and social training.

³⁹ Lanyer also includes a more active example of female piety in her account of Susan's mother's escape from England during the reign of Mary I. Susanne Woods notes a similar combination of traditional female virtues and more active forms of worship in Lanyer's dedications to Margaret Clifford: "Lanyer's several addresses to the countess of Cumberland in the *Salve Deus* portray a Christian stoicism, but also emphasize the Countess's active rejoicing in the contemplation of Christ" (112).

faire Minde agree / So well, as thou no Labour wilt refuse, / That to thy holy Love may pleasing be" (62). In the majority of the dedications of *Salve Deus*, Lanyer asks her patrons to appreciate and protect the virtuous writing of a socially marginal female poet; she asks, in other words, for the friendship of patronage. In her dedications to Margaret and Anne Clifford, however, Lanyer adjusts the formal language of patronage in order to claim a more intimate form of friendship.⁴⁰ Drawing on the time she spent in their company and on their shared victimization at the hands of arbitrary male power, Lanyer attempts to bridge the social difference between herself and these titled women by highlighting their common experiences. Moreover, in her dedication to Anne Clifford, Lanyer employs the liberty of speech granted by friendship in order to make her most radical statement against the hierarchical class system of Stuart England. This chapter will demonstrate how Lanyer uses the equalizing language of both friendship and religion to challenge the class system that places these friends above her.

Even as Lanyer invokes the privilege of friendship in her addresses to Margaret and Anne Clifford, she locates that friendship in the past. In her closing poem, "The Description of Cooke-ham," she complains against a personified Fortune who "casts us downe into so lowe a frame: / Where our great friends we cannot dayly see, / So great a diffrence is there in degree" (134). The privilege of friendship may allow Lanyer to protest a class system that rewards birth instead of merit, but that class system ultimately isolates her from her "great friends," thus proving a barrier to lasting intimacy. For those

⁴⁰ The seventeenth-century antiquarian John Aubrey suggests that a particularly skilled piece of writing may actually produce intimate friendship between author and patron. Aubrey claims that Philip Sidney initially set aside Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, "thinking it might be such kind of stuffe as he was frequently troubled with," but once Sidney read Spenser's work, "there was a great friendship between them, to his [Sidney's] dying day" (36). While Aubrey cannot be considered a reliable source regarding the actual friendship between Sidney and Spenser, his story demonstrates the close, even causal relationship early modern writers drew between patronage and friendship.

writers who portray patronage as a form of friendship, the inherent inequality of this relationship often remains a troubling presence within their works. As I discuss in the Introduction, William Shakespeare's sonnets, dedicated to his patron, W.H., often invoke the reassuring image of the friend as a second self only to expose that image as a fiction. What are most apparent in the sonnets are not the similarities between the speaker and his patron/ friend but rather the differences: the friend is young, and the speaker is old; the friend is independent, and the speaker depends on his patronage; the friend is honored, and the speaker is "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" (Sonnet 24). Patronage may offer opportunities to form friendships with social superiors, but for both Shakespeare and Lanyer, the friendships that result are marked by the anxiety of inequality.

Another patronage poet whose situation was somewhat similar to Lanyer's is Ben Jonson: both wrote country house poems for important patrons (Lanyer's poem actually predates Jonson's), and both were middle-class poets seeking patronage in the Jacobean court (although Jonson's bid for patronage was evidently more successful).⁴¹ Their selfpresentations differ significantly, though. In "To Penshurst," Jonson deliberately presents himself as a confident recipient of his patron Sir Robert Sidney's liberality: "That is his lordship's, shall be also mine. / . . . / Here no man tells my cups; nor, standing by, / A waiter, doth my gluttony envy; / But gives me what I call, and lets me eat, / He knows, below, he shall find plenty meat" (97). As Pamela Hammons points out, "Bricklayer's stepson Ben Jonson creates a speaker in "To Penshurst" who feels right at home at Sir Robert Sidney's table" (398). In this poem, Jonson praises the plenty of Sidney's estate as well as his patron's willingness to treat the socially inferior poet as if

⁴¹ Given Lanyer's not inconsiderable poetic talent, it is very tempting to assume this difference was due to gender. Lanyer, a female poet who sought female patrons, was clearly unable to establish herself as a court poet of patronage the way Jonson did.

he were an equal. Jonson's acknowledgement of his host's liberality actually highlights rather than reduces the social distance between them, but his self-confident representation differs strikingly from Lanyer's in "Cooke-ham," where her speaker claims to desire a greater intimacy with her patrons than they are willing to offer. Yet, despite these differences, the two poets still have much in common. Robert C. Evans suggests that Jonson's bluff self-confidence in part masks the anxiety of seeking patronage; by presenting his host's generosity in terms of freely given friendship, "Jonson distances himself from economic motives, all the while inviting financial reciprocation" (40). Conversely, Lanyer overtly expresses anxiety concerning the social distance between herself and her dedicatees, but she balances these expressions of anxiety with remarkably authoritative assertions of poetic power in her claims to present a mirror of religious virtue to her patronesses.

Early criticism on Lanyer's patronage verse focused on her attempts to create, in the words of Barbara Lewalski, a "contemporary community of good women," with herself as its "self-appointed female poet" (220, 221).⁴² More recent scholars have questioned the solidarity of this community: Lisa Schnell points out that "when Lanyer writes to women of the upper classes, she is marginalized—self-consciously, it seems—both as a woman and as a member of a socially inferior class group" (26); and Su Fang Ng suggests that "the problematic status of the so-called community of good women has much to do with Lanyer's negotiation of class hierarchy in the Stuart court system and her bid for patronage in a highly patriarchal world" (435). Friendship is a helpful lens through which to view the complex and often fraught relationships with her dedicatees

⁴² I agree with Lewalski that Lanyer desires to create a community of women who are linked through virtue instead of social class, but I also suggest that Lanyer remains well aware that the equality she posits in the religious realm remains unrealized in the social realm.

that Lanyer constructs in the dedications and in the text of *Salve Deus*. As I discuss in the Introduction, early modern discourses on friendship usually invoke the ideal of perfect equality between two virtuous men. If we take this ideal literally, Lanyer's relationships with her patronesses, both real and potential, do not even approximate friendship. Even as Lanyer asserts equality in the eyes of God, she remains acutely aware of inequality in the social realm. However, as Bacon indicates, the rhetoric of perfect equality in friendship was seldom realized in practice, a fact suggested by the multiple meanings of friendship in this period. As I discuss in Chapter One, Isabella Whitney takes advantage of the overlap between kinship and friendship to portray friendships that cross gender lines. Similarly, by situating herself and her text in the intersections of patronage and virtuous friendship, Lanyer attempts to form female ties of virtue across social boundaries. That such ties may ultimately prove unsustainable does not, I suggest, negate her attempt.

"This Mirrour of a Worthy Mind": The Dedications

In the first dedication of *Salve Deus*, "To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie," Lanyer asks Queen Anne to "Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene, / A Womans writing of divinest things" (3). Here, Lanyer emphasizes her own gender, implying that the very uncommonness of a "Womans writing of divinest things" confers value on her project. Lanyer also addresses the Queen in specifically feminine terms. Anne is a "Renowned Empresse, and great Britaines Queene," but she is also the "Most gratious Mother of succeeding Kings" (3). By referring to the Queen's motherhood in addition to these reminders of her sovereignty, Lanyer draws attention to at least one similarity between these two women of vastly different social levels: simply stated, they are both women, and they share some of the experiences of women in the decidedly patriarchal environment of James I's court.⁴³ Lanyer's interest in the situation of women—from her dedications to female patrons, to her indictment of men who slander women, to her assertive defense of the first woman and her depiction of the women who mourn Christ—permeates her "little Booke," and she encourages her potential patrons, powerful women whose aristocratic identity might well have been more important to them than an ideal of solidarity with all women, to imagine themselves as part of an inclusive female community in which social distinctions are less important than their common virtue (15). As Lynette McGrath suggests, Lanyer "sketches for herself, her patrons and other women readers 'in generall' the appealing and inspiring possibility of the caring and protection of women by women" (217).

Of course, as appealing as is this vision of the poet/patron relationship as one of women helping women, it never erases the social from Lanyer's work. However, Lanyer, who remains acutely aware of the class differences between herself and her dedicatees, attempts to turn such differences into an advantage. She asks the Queen, "To virtue yet / Vouchsafe that splendor which my meanness bars" (4). In the phrasing of this request, either the poem or Lanyer herself is "virtue," and the Queen, by recognizing such virtue in another woman, may share the "splendor" of her social position by supporting Lanyer's work.⁴⁴ Lanyer thus adopts the classical claim, voiced by both Aristotle and

⁴³ Theresa DiPasquale suggests that Lanyer's text obliquely criticizes the misogyny of James' court: "Lanyer conveys her disapproval of James, of his regime, and of the court culture that surrounded him through a variety of techniques, making clear that it is not just courtly debauchery or idolatry or misogyny that she condemns, but the specifically Jacobean versions of these evils" (108). As Lewalski has noted, and as this opening dedication indicates, Lanyer addresses herself instead to the alternative court culture represented by Queen Anne and other influential ladies of the court, a court of women that the dedications essentially recreate (220).

⁴⁴ Lanyer even provides a model for such support, claiming that she has been "clos'd up in Sorrowes Cell, / Since great Elizaes favour blest my youth" (8). After praising the late Queen Elizabeth and recalling her

Cicero, that friendship results from the recognition of virtue in another and applies it to women's connections across class difference.⁴⁵ Cicero declares that "virtue is the parent and preserver of friendship and without virtue friendship cannot exist at all," but the type of virtue he envisions is emphatically masculine, predicated on independent selfsufficiency and political and military service to the state (131).⁴⁶ In fact, Cicero explicitly excludes friendships based on need from his depiction of virtuous male friendship: "If people think that friendship springs from weakness and from a purpose to secure that which we lack, they assign her, if I may so express it, a lowly pedigree indeed, and an origin far from noble, and they would make her the daughter of poverty and want" (141).⁴⁷ Lanyer's dedications imply that need and virtue are not mutually exclusive, especially, I would suggest, in a society in which few women could claim the type of active independence that Cicero imagines in his ideal male friends. In Lanyer's verse, friendship between women may involve both virtue and practical assistance. As she celebrates her dedicatees' virtue in her bid for patronage, their hoped-for support becomes a sign that they recognize her virtue in return.

The virtue that Lanyer praises in her dedicatees and claims for herself differs from the type of virtue that Cicero praises in his ideal male friends in more ways than one. Just as the virtue of Cicero's friends is realized in the masculine realm of warfare and

former support, Lanyer hints that her "heavy burden" will be lightened if "such a one as shee will help to beare it" (8).

⁴⁵ Given her education in the household of Susan Bertie, which "was in a tradition that valued and admired educated women," Lanyer would have been familiar with the ideas of both Cicero and Aristotle (Woods 9). As Woods observes, "A humanist education in the tradition of Cheke, Ascham, and Wilson emphasized careful reading of specific classical texts, Latin and Greek, using the method of double translation. Ascham advocates starting the young Latin scholar off with selections from Cicero" (10).

⁴⁶ Cicero emphasizes the importance of self-sufficiency in male friendship: "For to the extent that a man relies upon himself and is so fortified by virtue and wisdom that he is dependent on no one and considers all his possessions to be within himself, in that degree is he most conspicuous for seeking out and cherishing friendships" (143).

⁴⁷ The feminine personification of friendship based on need as the "daughter of poverty and want" is the translator's. Cicero uses the gender-neutral "natam."

politics (virtue with an emphasis on the *vir*), Lanyer's virtue is specifically feminine. She contrasts the type of virtue that she imagines in her female readers with masculine activities in her address "To all vertuous Ladies in generall":

And let the Muses your companions be, Those sacred sisters that on Pallas wait, Whose Virtues with the purest minds agree, Whose godly labours doe avoyd the baite Of worldly pleasures, living alwaies free From sword, from violence, and from ill report, To these nine Worthies all faire mindes resort" (13).

In these lines, Lanyer opposes male warfare—swords and violence that are linked, interestingly, with "ill report" (apparently slander is also a male vice that women should eschew)—with more peaceful women who live in harmony with each other and the Muses. Linking the "godly labour" of poetic production with the service of God, Lanyer both legitimates her own authorial project and imagines religious verse as a specifically feminine activity. This association of women's religious writing with more traditional female virtues such as purity and piety reappears in her dedications to Princess Elizabeth, Arbella Stuart, and Mary Sidney. In all three of these dedications, Lanyer praises the high learning of these women as well as their devotion to Christ, and she links both of these virtues with their acceptance of her religious verse.

In fact, it is not Cicero but Aristotle who provides a closer model of the type of friendships that Lanyer attempts to form in the dedications. Aristotle may accord his "friendships of utility" a lower place on the scale of human relations than perfect friendship, which is based only on virtue, but he does recognize friendships of utility *as* friendship (262). Moreover, as I discuss in the Introduction, he suggests that two people of unequal social standing may attain friendship as long as their affection for each other remains in proportion to their status:

In all these friendships between persons of different standing the affection must be proportionate: i.e. the better person must be loved more than he loves, and so must the more useful, and each of the others similarly. For when affection is proportionate to merit the result is a kind of equality, which of course is considered to be characteristic of friendship. (270)

Here, Aristotle suggests that a type of equality may be realized between social unequals as long as the socially inferior friend compensates for his inferiority by offering a greater amount of honor and love. This description of friendship between unequals resembles the early modern system of patronage, in which a socially inferior poet praises his or her patron in return for recognition and monetary support. As Michael Brennan observes, the poet/patron relationship was generally viewed as a mutually beneficial one in which poets "were able to endow great figures with fame and immortality through the priceless gift of literary praise. In return for this glorification, members of the nobility were expected to support generously those who thus enabled them to transcend time and death" (9). Ideally, as Aristotle's description of unequal friendship suggests, this mutual exchange creates a type of parity between a noble patron and a socially marginal poet such as Lanyer.

In fact, we may view the *humilitas* topos that most early modern poets adopt when writing epideictic poetry as one aspect of the greater affection and honor that must

be offered in tribute to the socially superior friend or patron. This topos, voiced by both male and female poets, was designed to preemptively deflect criticism and acknowledge the social distance between the poet and patron. For instance, Edmund Spenser, who, like Lanyer, prefaced his work with multiple dedications, refers to *The Faerie Queene* variously as: "The labor of lost time, and wit unstayd" (25); "the fruit of barren field" (28); "this base Poeme" (27); and "The unripe fruit of an unready wit: / Which by thy countenaunce doth crave to bee / Defended from foule Envies poisnous bit" (26). The last example, addressed to the Earl of Oxford, suggests that the earl's recognition of the poem, his "countenaunce," will protect and elevate what the poet himself describes as an unworthy work. Lanyer too speaks modestly of her work, berating her "weak Muse" (129) and "want of womans wit" (51), and, like Spenser, she asks her patrons and readers to defend her poem "from any scandall that the world can frame" (45). Both poets cast themselves as humble recipients of the noble patron's grace and, essentially borrowing the authority of the dedicatee's powerful position, appeal for their protection from envy and scandal.

Of course, as Lanyer's reference to her "want of woman's wit" indicates, the work of a woman was, given the linkage of female speech and unchastity, far more likely to give rise to "scandall" than that of a man. Therefore, while both men and women deployed the *humilitas* topos, the reservations expressed by a woman writer such as Lanyer might represent not only a standard acknowledgement of the social distance between herself and her dedicatees but also an attempt to downplay her violation of traditional gender norms by fulfilling cultural expectations of feminine modesty. However, Lanyer balances her claims of personal unworthiness with more authoritative assertions of her work's value. For instance, when Lanyer asks Princess Elizabeth to accept "the first fruits of a womans wit" even though her "faire eyes farre better Bookes have seene," she at once disparages the merit of her work, deferentially alludes to Elizabeth's extensive learning, and asks for the grace of acceptance (11). Yet, as in the preceding dedication to the queen, Lanyer also suggests that Elizabeth should accept this poem *because* its author is a woman: "Yet being the first fruits of a womans wit / Vouchsafe you favour in accepting it" (11). These "first fruits" may simply represent Lanyer's first major work, but Lanyer is also one of the earliest English women to attempt to earn a living as a professional poet.⁴⁸ Therefore, while both her social position and gender demand modesty, Lanyer implies that her unusual position as a female author also gives these female dedicatees a reason to listen to and protect her words.

Lanyer's complex use of a familiar metaphor for the transference of a patron's authorizing grace to a poem, the mirror, also demonstrates this mixture of humility and authority. The mirror metaphor is a favorite of Lanyer's; it appears in many of the dedications, and it serves multiple purposes in each. In its first appearance, Lanyer asks Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth to "Let your faire Virtues in my Glasse be seene" and declares:

Then shall I think my Glasse a glorious SkieWhen two such glittring Suns at once appeare;The one repleat with Sov'raigne Majestie,Both shining brighter than the clearest cleare:

⁴⁸ While Whitney predates Lanyer, many critics consider Lanyer the first female poet in England to seek a professional writing career. Certainly, Lanyer is the first woman to, as Lewalski claims, "make an overt bid for patronage as a male poet of the era might" (213). Whitney did not have the access to court and therefore patronage that Lanyer enjoyed, but I claim she does craft a professional identity as an author in the *Nosgay*.

And both reflecting comfort to my spirits,

To find their grace so much above my merits. (8)

Lanyer also uses the mirror as a figure for her poem in her dedication to Anne Clifford: "Then in this Mirrour let your faire eyes looke, / To view your virtues in this blessed Booke" (41). Both passages offer distinctly humble visions: Lanyer's mirror, as a symbol of her poem, seemingly only reflects the "grace" and "virtue" of her prospective patronesses. Indeed, it can transform into something entirely different, a "Skie," when an extraordinary reader such as the queen gazes into it. Of course, an actual mirror does not portray anything in itself but merely reflects what is placed in front of it (or whoever chooses to view herself in it); if we view the metaphor in this light, the poem claims no merit in itself but only the ability to passively reflect the virtues of the dedicatee who reads it.

But Lanyer's mirror metaphor is not as simple or as self-effacing as these lines would indicate. After asking Queen Anne to "Looke in this Mirrour of a worthy Mind," Lanyer claims that the glass is "dym steele, yet full of spotlesse truth" (5). Her poem may be "dym steele," forged from a humble source, but it possesses the virtue of truth, a virtue that appears to be inherent in the material and not derived from any particular reader's reflection.⁴⁹ Indeed, in the Renaissance, the mirror was also a figure for an exemplary model or didactic example, as in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which provided (usually negative) examples of past rulers for the instruction of contemporary officials. McGrath notes that early modern conduct books for women such as the *Mirrhor of*

⁴⁹ The steel mirror was an important symbol of truth in the Renaissance. For instance, George Gascoigne's 1576 poem, "The Steele Glas," contrasts the appealing but false images shown by crystal mirrors with the more truthful images displayed by the steel glass: "That age is deade, and vanisht long ago, / which thought that steele, both trusty was and true, / And needed not, a foyle of contraries, / But shewde al things, euen as they were in deede."

Modestie also often included the word "mirror" in their titles; by implication, women who read such books were expected to see not a reflection of themselves but rather an ideal woman to emulate (241).⁵⁰ Lanyer herself evokes this didactic function of the mirror when she tells Bertie that "your rare Perfections shew'd the Glasse / Wherein I saw each wrinckle of a fault" (18). Here, she depicts women turning toward each other for exemplary models rather than toward male-authored texts. And while, in this example, Lanyer's mirror metaphor demonstrates the difference between the two women—Bertie's perfections highlight the young Lanyer's faults—it also portrays a process by which they become more alike since Lanyer suggests that she corrected her youthful imperfections by imitating her early patroness.

This type of mirroring between two women echoes the mirroring of friendship. As I discuss in the Introduction, the tradition of male friendship repeatedly emphasizes the similarity of friends, as Cicero's description of the friend as an *alter idem* indicates. According to Cicero, similar tastes, beliefs, and, most of all, similar virtue produce friendship: "nothing so allures and attracts anything to itself as likeness does to friendship. Then it surely will be granted as a fact that good men love and join to themselves other good men, in a union which is almost that of relationship and nature" (161). Cicero here emphasizes the natural attraction of like to like, and most early modern works on friendship follow his lead by depicting the similarity of friends as innate; for example, as I discuss in Chapter One, the extraordinary physical resemblance of the protagonists in Thomas Elyot's version of the story of Titus and Gysippus

⁵⁰ For a more thorough analysis of the mirror's significance in medieval and early modern thought, see McGrath (237-243). She argues that Lanyer's mirror represents a space for women's self-construction outside of men's images of women: "The poet holds the mirror which provides a reflection of women undistorted by the male interpretation of the woman" (240). I would like to extend this reading by examining the mirror's instructive connotations as well as its implications for friendship between women.

highlights the naturalness of their friendship. As Laurie Shannon has noted, friendship discourses implied not just ready-made likeness between friends but also a type of *becoming* alike through consent: "the political logics of sameness . . . figure an explicit mode of self-construction that proves enabling to a detailed scheme of sovereignty for the self . . . *Consensio* will work to signify both being alike and making an agreement" (22). Indeed, as Shannon points out, Cicero's exhortation to counsel and rebuke one's friends places a limit on similarity (49). A corrected friend, we can assume, will actively resume the path of virtue by following his or her more clear-sighted friend's advice. It is this type of likeness created through active self-fashioning that Lanyer evokes when she claims that she was inspired to correct her own faults by imitating Bertie's perfections.

Lanyer also claims to have been inspired by the literary achievements of Mary Sidney, the Countess Dowager of Pembroke and the most influential female literary patron of her day. Her dedication to Sidney is the longest of *Salve Deus* and one of the most accomplished, involving a dream vision as well as an extended metaphor that compares the refined "sugar" of Sidney's psalms to the less refined (but admirably natural) "hony" of Lanyer's verse (30). Both this metaphor and the dream vision again involve depictions of likeness across difference as well as accounts of the poet learning by observing other women. In the dream vision, Lanyer frequently draws attention to the act of observing: the sleeping poet views Sidney "with Reason's eie;" she takes "no small delight. / To see how all the graces sought grace here;" and she declares her visions "verie pleasing sights" (25). This pleasure in looking spurs Lanyer to search for knowledge: "And now me thought I long to heare her name, / Whom wise Minerva honoured so much, / Shee whom I *saw* was crownd by noble Fame" (26, emphasis added). Treacherously, Morpheus wakes Lanyer before she can observe all she wishes, but she declares her independence from him by determining to approach Sidney: "I know I shall enjoy the selfe same sight, / Thou hast no powre my waking sprites to barre" (30). Again, Lanyer's observation of another woman leads to knowledge and, she hopes, support for her poetic endeavors.

Therefore, after seeing the goddesses and, most significantly, the Muses attend Sidney, Lanyer declares her own intent to seek the attentions of this renowned poet and patroness:

For to this Lady now I will repaire,

Presenting her the fruits of idle houres; Thogh many Books she writes that are more rare, Yet there is hony in the meanest flowres: Which is both wholesome, and delights the taste: Though sugar be more finer, higher priz'd, Yet is the painefull Bee no whit disgrac'd, Nor her faire wax, or hony more despiz'd. (30)

Lanyer implies that Sidney's success as a poet has formed a model for her own attempt at literary recognition. Indeed, as Debra Rienstra has argued, Sidney's versification of the Psalms provides a precedent for female exegesis of the Bible and "makes possible the woman poet devising on Scripture" (92). But Lanyer's comparison of her own verse to Sidney's is also tinged with class distinctions. She claims that the fine sugar of Sidney's psalms possesses a "higher style" than her own "unlearned lines" (30). She does not deny the value of her own efforts, though; after all, her "hony" is sugar in its most natural

and "wholesome" form. A few lines earlier, in her dream vision, Lanyer describes a battle between art and nature that Sidney, as the judge, declares a draw, willing "they should for ever dwell, / In perfit unity . . . here in equall sov'raigntie to live, / Equall in state, equall in dignitie, / That unto others they might comfort give, / Rejoycing all with their sweet unitie" (25). Lanyer's description of Sidney's verse as sugar and her own as honey associates Sidney with art and herself with nature; thus, even as her metaphor points out differences in their works, it claims equal value, "equall sov'raigntie," for each. Speaking as one poet to another, Lanyer attempts to bridge the considerable social distance between Sidney and herself by suggesting that, however different their poetic styles and social status, their common literary interests may produce "sweet unitie."

Significantly, Lanyer again uses the mirror in this dedication as a figure for her poem: "So craving pardon for this bold attempt, / I here present my mirrour to her view, / Whose noble virtues cannot be exempt, / My Glasse beeing steele, declares them to be true" (31). The image reflected by this glass is left suggestively ambiguous. On one level, Lanyer indicates that this mirror truthfully reflects Sidney's "noble virtues," just as it reflects the virtues of her other dedicatees. Lanyer also asserts that her mirror will present "your Saviour in a Shepheards weed," employing the paradox of Christ's low birth to illustrate the virtue of her own humble verse. On another level, the dedication's emphasis on common literary pursuits, by producing a type of mirroring between the poet and the patroness, evokes the mirroring of friendship. Debora Shuger has suggested that the mirror, as a metaphor, "reflects" the relational nature of Renaissance selfconstructions: "one encounters one's own likeness only in the image of the other. Renaissance texts and emblems consistently describe mirroring in these terms, which suggests that early modern selfhood was not experienced reflexively but, as it were, relationally" (37). As Lanyer compliments Sidney's poetic achievements and suggests that they played a role in inspiring her own attempts, she clearly expects the famous patroness to see a version of herself in this middle-class woman writer.

Lanyer indicates that women can serve as models not only for each other but also for the entire fallen world when she claims that her readers will be "in the eie of heaven so highly placed, / That others by your virtues may be graced" (15). This line, addressed to "all vertuous Ladies in generall," evokes the humanist belief in self-improvement through imitation by claiming that the visibility of female virtue, placed high in the eye of heaven, will inspire others to practice those same virtues. Lanver highlights the exemplary virtues of one particular woman, Margaret Clifford, when she suggests that the countess dowager can "heale the soules of those that doe transgresse, / By thy faire virtues; which, if once they see, / Unto the like they doe their minds addresse, / Such as thou art, such they desire to be" (110). Here, Lanyer endows her most important patroness with the almost Christ-like ability to heal the souls of sinners with her mere image. As Micheline White points out, the "Countess performs pious activities expected of women, yet in inspiring imitation she also provides spiritual healing" (326). And, of course, Lanyer's book is the mirror that will reflect the inspirational image of Clifford's virtues—and the virtues of all of Lanyer's dedicatees—back upon the sinning world.

This didactic function of Lanyer's text goes more than one way. The noble women of the dedications may teach Lanyer and her readers through their virtuous examples, but Lanyer implies that they too have something to learn from her poem. If we return to the dedication to Queen Anne, we see that when the queen gazes in the mirror, it is not only her own image she finds. Lanyer asserts:

Here may your sacred Majestie behold That mighty Monarch both of heav'n and earth, He that all Nations of the world controld, Yet tooke our flesh in base and meanest berth:

Whose daies were spent in poverty and sorrow,

And yet all Kings their wealth of him do borrow. (5)

Lanyer's mirror conveys an image of Christ to the queen, an image that is implicitly instructive.⁵¹ Emphasizing the paradox of Christ's supremacy and his "base and meanest berth," Lanyer draws a connection between Christ's humble origins and her own relatively modest social position. Low birth, she counsels, may mask great virtue. Moreover, the queen as a "sacred Majestie" and Christ as a "mighty Monarch," titles juxtaposed in two successive lines, offer two very different versions of sovereignty. Lanyer reminds the queen of the limitations of her own, earthly sovereignty, also through the language of paradox, when she tells her that Christ's "daies were spent in poverty and sorrow, / And yet all Kings their wealth of them do borrow." Lanyer elsewhere pays homage to the queen's royal status, but here she asks her to acknowledge the superior form of sovereign power represented by the paradoxically low-born Christ over her own temporal and borrowed authority.

⁵¹ In its ability to show her readers another's image, Lanyer's mirror is similar to Merlin's glass in Book Three of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which "vertue had, to shew in perfect sight, / What ever thing was in the world contaynd, / Betwixt the lowest earth and heavens hight, / So that it to the looker appertaynd" (III.18). By evoking Merlin's mirror, Lanyer highlights the didactic nature of her poem and associates herself with Merlin, a powerful counselor to a sovereign.

Lanyer's mirror metaphor is itself paradoxical: on one level, it implies that her poem merely reflects the virtue of its readers, but on the other, it claims the extraordinary ability to deliver Christ to them and instruct them of his virtues. Poets such as Spenser and Shakespeare normally offer immortality in return for their patron's support: Spenser asserts that "The sacred Muses have made alwaies clame / To be the Nourses of nobility, / And Registres of everlasting fame" (26);⁵² and Shakespeare famously tells his patron: "So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (Sonnet 18). Lanyer as well offers immortality to her most important patroness, Margaret Clifford: "To thee great Countesse now I will applie / My Pen, to write thy never dying fame; / That when to Heav'n thy blessed Soule shall flie, / These lines on earth record thy reverend name" (51). However, in most of the dedications she conceives of the reciprocity of the poet/patron relationship in different terms. Acknowledging that her dedicatees are already famous—"Onely by name I will bid some of those, / That in true Honors seate have long bin placed" (16)—and apparently have no need to be further immortalized in verse, she offers them instead another type of immortality: that represented by the image of the Christ that she presents to them.

In fact, Lanyer often writes as if she is presenting not just an image but the actual body of Christ. She asks Bertie to "Receive your Love whom you have sought so farre" and entreats Lucy, the Countess of Bedford, to "Vouchsafe to entertain this dying lover" (33).⁵³ In the dedication to Margaret Clifford, Lanyer highlights her modest financial

⁵² Interestingly, Spenser also offers to immortalize Henry Cary, Lord Hunsdon: "Live Lord for ever in this lasting verse, / That all posteritie thy honor may reherse" (29). Lanyer had an affair with Hunsdon from approximately 1589-1592, and, as noted above, Spenser was an important influence on her own verse (Woods 16-17).

⁵³ The eroticized relationship that Lanyer envisions between women and Christ, implicit in these lines, is explored by DiPasquale, who argues that "Throughout *Salve Deus*, Lanyer implies that a woman's desiring

situation, providing a lengthy list of the treasures she does not possess, and then contrasts it with the one treasure her low estate does not bar her from presenting:

having neither rich pearles of India, nor fine gold of Arabia, nor diamonds of inestimable value; neither those rich treasures, Arramaticall Gums, incense, and sweet odours, which were presented by those Kingly Philosophers to the babe Jesus, I present unto you even our Lord Jesus himselfe, whose infinit value is not to be comprehended within the weake imagination or wit of man. (34)

Instead of offering the worldly goods that the wise men gave the infant Jesus, Lanyer offers Jesus himself to her patrons. As several critics have noted, Lanyer claims the priestly ability to deliver Christ to her readers. Kari Boyd McBride, for instance, claims that, "Rather than figuring herself and her book as humble supplicants for aristocratic favor, Lanyer's poetic assumes preemptively a divine favor that is most audacious in her repeated claims to offer her readers Christ, the Word made poetry paradoxically made flesh" (61).⁵⁴ I suggest, however, that Lanyer's deft use of paradox allows her to position herself as *both* humble supplicant and priestly authority. If she is a modestly-born poet seeking noble patronage in the social realm, her self-appointed role as the provider of Christ endows her with substantial authority in the religious realm. Just as, in the Christian tradition, Christ mediates between humankind and God, Lanyer's religious

Christian soul can be, and often is, in perfect harmony with her desiring body, and that union with Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of a woman's sexual longings" (164).

⁵⁴ According to McBride, Lanyer asserts priestly superiority over her dedicatees (64). I concur with White's more inclusive reading of the dedications, in which she suggests that Lanyer implies that all women wield such priestly powers: "woven throughout her expansive celebration of female piety are passages that matter-of-factly assert that women served as founders of Christ's healing church and that Jacobean women continue to wield hieratic healing power by fighting sin, feeding the poor, praying, reading and teaching the Bible, and writing religious verse" (324).

authority as the bestower of Christ's image allows her to carve out a space, defined by religion, in which she may speak to her dedicatees as an equal.

Moreover, by figuring her text as the body of Christ, Lanyer forestalls her readers' potential rejection of her work. As Mihoko Suzuki claims, "By likening herself to Christ, she claims a necessary connection between her patrons' devotion to the lowly Christ and their patronage of her as a writer" (Subordinate Subjects 121). In her dedication to Arbella Stuart, for instance, Lanyer conflates Christ and her text when she implores Stuart to "cast your eyes upon this little Booke, / Although you be so well accompan'ed / With Pallas, and the Muses, spare one looke / Upon this humbled King" (17). Lanyer first asks Stuart to look at her "little Booke," but three lines later her book transforms into Christ. Stuart's ability to see the true value of this "humbled King" implies her related ability to see the worth of Lanyer's poem. Lanyer makes a similar move when she tells Sidney that "it is no disparagement to you, / To see your Saviour in a Shepheards weed, / Unworthily presented in your view, / Whose worthiness will grace each line you read" (31). Here, Lanyer connects Christ's humble origins to the humble origin of her own text; just as Christ is paradoxically a "Saviour in a Shepheards weed," so too is Lanyer's poetry both "Unworthily presented" and full of "worthinesse." In fact, Lanyer's phrasing indicates that her book is the "Shepheards weed" that clothes Christ; it might appear humble because of her lower class, but it cloaks great virtue. In both of these dedications, Lanyer uses the figure of Christ to inspire her noble dedicatees to value spiritual worth over social and financial status.

It is this ability to set aside the social realm in favor of the religious, Lanyer indicates, that will enable ties of friendship among women. The community of women

bound together by piety that Lanyer envisions in the dedications invokes the ideal Christian community, an ideal that came with its own version of friendship. Whereas the classical tradition of friendship-the tradition that most early modern humanists emulated and adapted—emphasized affective ties between two individuals, the discourse of religious friendship that would also have been available to Lanyer offered a significantly different vision of friendship. Ivy Schweitzer notes that Christianity effected an "important change [in the nature of friendship], directing believers away from exclusive dyadic friendships to a broader fellowship of the faithful and, finally, in a move reminiscent of the pre-Socratic idea of *philanthropia*, to a 'brotherhood' with all humanity" (43). This Christian "brotherhood" is still strongly gendered, but it offers a conceptualization of friendship that is more communal and more accepting of difference than the intense and intimate bond between two men—a bond defined by its very exclusivity—imagined by the classical ideal. In the Book of John, Christ on the night before his crucifixion asks his male disciples to redirect outward the friendship that he has shown to them: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this hath no man, when any man bestoweth his life for his friends" (John 15: 12-13).⁵⁵ In the Christian tradition, the "friends" for whom Christ is laying down his life are not just the apostles but all sinners, and when she read these lines, Lanyer would almost surely have understood Christ's exhortation to "love one another" as a call to extend his love beyond the privileged circle of the apostles to all of humanity.

Lanyer offers a vision of this type of religious community—albeit one that is quickly interrupted—in her dedication "To all vertuous Ladies in generall." While, as

⁵⁵All Biblical references are to *The Geneva Bible, The Annotated New Testatment, 1602 ed.*

several observers have noted. Lanver decorously arranges her dedications more or less in order of rank, honoring Queen Anne first and Princess Elizabeth second, she places this general dedication to all virtuous women third.⁵⁶ Social distinctions in this dedication are seemingly lost in a general devotion to Christ, and Lanyer's female readers are here imagined not as queens or countesses but as undifferentiated virgins waiting for Christ, the bridegroom.⁵⁷ She exhorts her readers to "Put on your wedding garments every one, / The Bridegroom stayes to entertaine you all" (12). In fact, Lanyer directly alludes to the process by which grace, both the titular "Grace" of the royalty and nobility to whom she dedicates her poem and the "grace" that they will confer on her by supporting it (OED s.v.), gives way to the glory of worshiping God: "Come swifter than the motion of the Sunne, / To be transfigur'd with our loving Lord, / Lest Glory end what Grace in you begun, / Of heav'nly riches make your greatest hoord, / In Christ all honour, wealth, and beautie's wonne" (14). Indicating that the type of wealth, honor, and beauty that her dedicatees already possess are inferior to the riches found in Christ, Lanyer asks her dedicatees to turn away from such worldly pleasures, to "flie from dull and sensuall earth," and to enter, instead, the religious realm (15). In fact, as Susanne Woods has pointed out, Lanyer praises her dedicatees' rejection of the world throughout the dedications: "Virtue' as Lanyer presents it often derives from retirement and the deliberate rejection of self-display" (46). This turning away from the world suggests her

⁵⁶ Lyn Bennett points out the importance of the order of the dedications, noting that "Lanyer's practice of poetic decorum is integral not only to her attempt to persuade these women to sponsor her work (or, at the very least, to be sure that she does not offend them), it is also crucial to establishing the authenticity, and thus to effecting the persuasiveness, of the arguments her poems make" (211).

⁵⁷ The image of Christ as the bridegroom comes from the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25: 1-13. Lanyer demonstrates her readers' common devotion to Christ by depicting them as the wise virgins who fill their lamps with oil.

readers' abilities to see beyond earthly distinctions such as wealth and social rank to the worth of Lanyer's work.

However, while Lanyer imagines her dedicatees rejecting the world in order to join an undifferentiated Christian community of women, the world that they are supposed to reject quickly intrudes. She holds up to her readers the friendship of "all vertuous Ladies in generall" as a possibility, but that possibility remains unrealized both in the world at large and in her poem. In fact, Lanyer closes the dedication not with a vision of solidarity through the worship of Christ but with a reestablishment of social distinctions. She imagines her readers correcting her earlier temerity: "some of you me thinkes I heare call / Me by my name, and bid me better looke, / Lest unawares I in an error fall: / In generall tearmes, to place you with the rest" (15). Some women, those whom "Fame commends to be the very best," might object to being grouped with all the other ladies, no matter how virtuous (15). Lanyer concedes that she should praise some women "by name," and her vision of Christian fellowship among women gives way to the remaining dedications, which are duly differentiated by name and rank. However, she also declares, "Onely by name I will bid some of those, / That in *true* Honors seate have long bin placed" (16, emphasis added). This true honor is presumably not the type of worldly honor that, a few stanzas earlier, she compares unfavorably to the honor bestowed by Christ. Indeed, in the following dedications, she emphasizes not her dedicatees' wealth or station but rather their virtue, which is exemplified by intellectual and artistic achievement, devotion to Christ, and a pious preference for religious above worldly concerns. These are virtues that Lanyer too may possess, and if her community of Christian women is not ultimately realized, her evocations of female friendship based on

the recognition of mirrored virtue offer, at least, a vision of friendship between poet and patron that could be achieved in this world.⁵⁸

Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum and the Friendship of Christ

"Henceforth call I you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth: but I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

If the dedications at once offer a vision of supportive female friendship across social difference and acknowledge the difficulty of bridging that difference, the text of Salve Deus provides an example of an ideal friend who does overcome such gulfs. In Salve Deus, Lanyer depicts Christ as the perfect friend, one who in life condescends to friendship with those beneath him and in death extends friendship, in the broadest sense of the word, to all of humanity through his personal sacrifice. Lanyer's Christ is an exemplary model of friendship for both her dedicatees and the readers of her published work. Just as he offers friendship and understanding to those below him, she suggests, so too should they accept and support her endeavors. This portrait of Christ also rewrites classical conceptions of the ideal male friend, for Lanver celebrates not an exclusive bond between two male friends but the inclusive love that Christ offers to all people. Lanyer's feminized Christ overturns the gender dynamics of classical male friendship: her Christ, characterized by his gentleness, silence, and forgiveness, differs markedly from the emphatically masculine ideal male friend envisioned by Cicero and Aristotle.⁵⁹ The powerful men who barter over the death of this ideal friend serve as equally instructive

⁵⁸ By all indications, Lanyer did not achieve even this more realistic form of friendship. Even though her efforts probably did not attract lasting patronage, her vision of female friendship across social class offers a compelling example of the ways in which women writers could adapt the language of friendship for their own purposes.

⁵⁹ As I suggest in the Introduction, Aristotle's theory of friendship offers more flexibility than Cicero's both because he recognizes less than perfect friendships and because his ideas about virtue concentrate more on morality than on specifically masculine qualities. Still, he assumes that participants in perfect friendship are male.

examples, for they illustrate not only men's oppression of women, as several critics have observed, but also the consequences of flawed and ill-founded friendship. These examples of friendship, both positive and negative, provide a model for the acceptance of Lanyer's own text as well as offer a significant revision of the discourse of ideal male friendship.

The Christ that Lanyer creates in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* is closely aligned with women. Lanyer outlines Jesus' care and concern for women in her epistle, "To the Vertuous Reader":

it pleased our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . . . to be begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman; and that he healed women, pardoned women, comforted women: yea, even when he was in his greatest agonie and bloodie sweat, going to be crucified, and also in the last houre of his death, tooke care to dispose of a woman: after his resurrection, appeared first to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his Disciples. (50)

Here, Lanyer alludes to the women who surrounded Jesus in life, just as the women of the dedications and the women portrayed in "The Description of Cooke-ham" frame Lanyer's account of Jesus' death. In this passage, she directly connects Jesus' sympathy for women to her subject, his crucifixion. In the poem, she goes one step further and endows her Jesus with feminine characteristics, thus making the crucifixion representative of all women's persecution at the hands of powerful men. Within the space of two stanzas, Lanyer describes Christ as possessing the feminine qualities of "Innocencie," "Obedience," and "Patience" (74). When accused, Christ "no resistance

makes," and he chastises his disciple Peter for drawing his sword against the soldiers who come to arrest him, "so much he hates Revenge" (75, 77). Refusing to defend himself both physically and verbally, he answers his accusers with silence. This nonviolent, obedient, and remarkably silent Christ embodies early modern conceptions of female virtue.

This representation of Christ as feminine has received much critical attention.⁶⁰ Janel Mueller notes that Lanyer's "Christ . . . is silent except when induced to speak, and modest and taciturn when he does; he is gentle, mild, peaceable, and submissive to higher male authorites" (112). Barbara Lewalski writes, "we might be tempted to suppose that the ostensible religious subject of the title poem, Christ's Passion, simply provides a thin veneer for a subversive feminist statement," and although she dismisses this conclusion as "wrongheaded," she does claim that Lanyer "presents Christ's Passion as the focus for all the forms of female goodness" (207). Similarly, Tina Krontiris claims that "Lanyer's argument about men's sin in the crucifixion is given force by the feminine characteristics of the Christ she portrays" (116). According to these arguments, Christ's feminine characteristics—his silence, gentleness, and lack of resistance—highlight men's guilt in the crucifixion and support Lanyer's argument for the recognition of feminine virtue. I would also assert that Lanyer's Christ represents not only women's victimization at the hands of men but also a type of idealized friendship that transcends differences, a portrayal that radically rewrites classical and early modern conceptions of male friendship. Lanyer's feminization of Christ and her focus on his participation in friendships are not unrelated. Christ, as the true embodiment of friendship, is nominally

⁶⁰ Lynette McGrath makes a similar claim: "He [Christ] is portrayed in Lanyer's text as at once the embodiment and reflection of female virtue. Lanier draws the connection between Christ and women by emphasizing Christ's virtues of humility, love, meekness, nurturance, giving, chastity, and suffering" (342).

male but possesses predominantly feminine characteristics; therefore, Lanyer locates true friendship not in the Ciceronian virtue of fidelity to another male friend and service to the state but rather in a liminal figure who possesses both male and female attributes, extends friendship even to those far beneath him, and, in his sacrificial moment, creates ties of friendship among all of his worshippers.

Christ first appears in the narrative as a friend. After her introductory address to Margaret Clifford, Lanyer opens her account of the crucifixion on the night that Jesus is betrayed. As Jesus enters the garden of Gethsemane, "None were admitted with their Lord to goe, / But *Peter*, and the sonnes of *Zebed 'us*,⁶¹ / To them good *Jesus* opened all his woe, / He gave them leave his sorows to discusse, / His deepest griefes, he did not scorne to showe / These three deere friends, so much he did intrust" (67). Early modern writers on friendship recognized the benefit of unburdening oneself to a friend. Bacon in particular focuses on this advantage of friendship: "The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true; 'Cor ne edito'; 'Eat not the heart'. Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts" (393). Therefore, Jesus engages in a recognized sign of friendship, the sharing of troubles with a friend, but, unlike other writers on friendship, Lanyer focuses on the apostles' *inability* to ease his woes: "Beeing sorowfull, and overcharg'd with grief, / He told it them, yet look'd for no reliefe" (67). In fact, it is not just that Peter, John, and James are incapable of relieving Jesus' burden; they *are* the reason for his troubles. Lanyer addresses Jesus, "Sweet Lord, how couldst thou thus to flesh and blood / Communicate thy griefe? tell of thy woes? / Thou knew'st they had no powre to do thee good, / But were the cause thou must endure these blowes" (67). As humans, "Scorpions bred in Adams mud," the

⁶¹ James and John

apostles have contributed to the mass of sins that Jesus' death will eradicate (67). Any friendship in which Jesus engages is, therefore, fundamentally unequal—so unequal, in fact, that he cannot benefit from the advantages of friendship.

What emerges from this picture of friendship is not perfect equality but extreme inequality in which the perfect friend, Christ, condescends to friendship with those who are far beneath him. This is the ultimate example of friendship based on love rather than advantage: Jesus can gain no benefit from the apostles' friendship but engages in it out of love: "Yet didst thou tell them of thy troubled state, / Of thy Soules heavinesse unto the death, / So full of Love, so free wert thou from hate" (68). Cicero also asserts that friendship derives from love rather than advantage, but in his vision of friendship, that love is based upon mutual understanding and equality between a pair of male friends. In Lanyer's account, Christ extends his friendship and love to the apostles despite the lack of equality among them. Moreover, while the apostles are certainly privileged with close access to Jesus, *Salve Deus* focuses on the sacrifice of love that Christ makes for all Christians: he "tooke the keys of all Deaths powre away, / Opening to those that would his name obay" (103). Friendship here is realized not between a dyadic pair of equal male friends but rather among a wide swath of humanity connected through the worship of Christ.

Lanyer's vision of friendship thus rewrites the classical and early modern ideal by focusing not on an exclusive pair of equal male friends but rather on an ambiguously gendered Christ who extends friendship outward to all of humanity. For a woman who was attempting to form ties of patronage and friendship with social superiors, Christ offers a positive model of friendship that transcends even drastic inequality. Lanyer

further emphasizes the inequality of Christ's friendship for the apostles by detailing the ways in which they fail him. When Christ tells the apostles that they will all deny him, Peter mistakenly asserts his fidelity-"poore Peter, he was most too blame, / That thought above them all, by Faith to clime," Lanyer judges (66)—and when Christ is arrested, the apostles fail come to his support: "Those deare Disciples that he most did love, / And were attendant at his beck and call, / When triall of affliction came to prove, / They first left him, who now must leave them all" (78). Drawing from the Books of Matthew and Mark, Lanyer particularly emphasizes the moment Christ finds the apostles asleep in the garden after he asked them to wait for him: "But now returning to thy sleeping Friends, / That could not watch one houre for love of thee, / Even those three Friends, which on thy Grace depends, / Yet shut those Eies that should their Maker see" (69). Those to whom Christ has shown undeserved friendship, Lanyer indignantly reminds us, cannot fulfill even the most basic duties of a friend. Unlike the faithful virgins of the dedications, who fill their lamps with oil and watch for Christ, the apostles are literally found sleeping on the job.

The faulty friendship of the apostles also stands in contrast to the sympathy that the women of *Salve Deus* consistently show Christ. Lanyer details the mourning of the daughters of Jerusalem, the grief of Mary, and, in a much-studied passage, Pontius Pilate's wife's attempt to save his life. Opposing the unfailing friendship and clearsighted virtue of these women, whose "Eagles eyes" recognize Christ's innocence, to the failure of the apostles to comfort Christ and the active malice of the men who accuse him, Lanyer clearly identifies the crucifixion as a sin carried out primarily by men (94). This point is central to her argument, for, as Pilate's wife points out, men's sin in the crucifixion far outweighs Eve's original sin of disobedience: "If one weake woman simply did offend, / This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end" (87). The poem's gendered divisions between guilty men and sympathetic women have long been noted. As Janel Mueller points out, *Salve Deus* ' "schematic gender opposition first links the women with Christ in action and utterance and then sets them as a group over against the other males" (112). Certainly, Lanyer's critique of the apostles' failure in friendship is heavily gendered. When they deny Christ after his arrest, she scornfully notes, "Though they protest they never will forsake him, / They do like men, when dangers overtake them" (78). Unlike male-authored writings on friendship, which often use women as foils to virtuous male friends, Lanyer displays the weakness of Christ's male friends to highlight the virtue of the women who remain faithful to him.

While it is certainly true that Lanyer emphasizes men's guilt in the crucifixion and argues for the recognition of women's virtue and innocence, *Salve Deus* is by no means a blanket condemnation of men. As I note above, Christ himself is ambiguously gendered, possessing a male body but traditionally feminine characteristics. Indeed, Lanyer's account of Christ's crucifixion has as much to do with class as with gender.⁶² As flawed as the apostles are in their friendship to Christ, Lanyer saves her harshest condemnation for the powerful and highly-placed men, the "High Priests and Scribes, and Elders of the Land," who form their own friendships by negotiating Christ's downfall. Lanyer carefully outlines the process of Jesus' trial and sentencing as he is exchanged among the powerful leaders, Caiphas, Pontius Pilate, and Herod, who will decide his fate. These men represent the antithesis of the selfless friendship offered by Christ: they are

⁶² Lanyer's celebration of Mary, for instance, focuses not only on female virtue but on Mary's humble station: "For the Almightie magnified thee, / And looked downe upon thy meane estate" (95).

concerned only with self-promotion, and they exchange Christ among themselves to form strategic alliances: "their private gaine cares not to sell / The Innocent Blood of Gods most deere elected" (83). Unlike Christ, who extends his friendship to those beneath him and sacrifices himself for others, these leaders sacrifice the virtuous but low-born Christ in order to form misbegotten friendships among themselves. In this way, at least, Lanyer concurs with contemporary male writers on friendship: she opposes virtuous friendship to tyranny and condemns friendships based on the abuse of power, counseling, "If thou must make thy peace by Virtues fall, / Much better 'twere not to be friends at all" (89).

Lanyer's account of the process of Jesus' trial and condemnation closely follows Scripture. Jesus is first lead "To wicked *Caiphas*," the high priest of Jerusalem, whose "malice will not let him live" (79, 82). Caiphas sends Jesus to Pontius Pilate, who receives Lanyer's most scathing indictment because he receives the truth from his wife but still condemns Jesus to execution (88):⁶³

> Three feares at once possessed Pilates heart; The first, Christs innocencie, which so plaine appears; The next, That he which now must feele this smarte, Is Gods deare Sonne, for any thing he heares: But that which proov'd the deepest wounding dart, Is Peoples threat'nings, which he so much feares, That he to Caesar could not be a friend, Unless he sent sweet JESUS to his end.

⁶³ Lanyer here suggests the value of a wife's counsel, a topic that I explore more fully in Chapter Three on Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

Pilate sends the condemned Jesus to Herod as a means of political reconciliation, and the two leaders make their "peace by Virtues fall" (89). As Lanyer depicts it, the death of Christ is clearly the result of the machinations of powerful men and the political alignments that exist between them. Most troublingly, such alliances have the power to make even a well-intentioned leader such as Pilate sacrifice his integrity. Lanyer's final judgment of Pilate is damning: he is a "painted wall, / a golden Sepulcher with rotten bones" (91). Paint, of course, is another term for cosmetics, and the "golden Sepulcher," an appealing exterior with a rotten interior, echoes misogynistic criticism of women. Thus, Lanyer levels expressions used against women at a male leader. If most classical and early modern discourses on friendship excluded women and identified friendship as male, Lanyer criticizes the political alliances of powerful men. Indeed, these friendships, based on self-advancement and the sacrifice of virtue, are the polar opposites of the virtuous and mutually supportive female alliances envisioned in the dedications.

This problematic depiction of relations between the genders reflects what we know of Lanyer's personal experience. According to the records of Simon Forman, an astrologer Lanyer visited in 1597, she was the mistress of Henry Cary, Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain and a very powerful figure in Queen Elizabeth's court (Woods 16). This affair gave Lanyer access to high court circles where she probably made the acquaintance of many of the aristocratic women to whom she dedicates *Salve Deus*, but this access to court apparently diminished after she became pregnant and Hunsdon arranged a marriage for her. Forman writes, "She was paramour to my old L. of huns-Dean that was L Chamberline and was maintained in great pride and yt seemes that being with child she was for collour married to a minstrell" (Woods xviii). Forman's records

indicate that Lanyer was nostalgic for the life she led with Hunsdon and socially ambitious, inquiring whether "she shall be a Ladi. & how she shall speed" (Woods 23). As Woods observes, "To be suddenly married to a musician . . . was an abrupt, rather dramatic change from life in the world of the lord chamberlain" (21). After losing the protection of the aristocratic and politically powerful Hunsdon by becoming pregnant, Lanyer probably had few options beyond the marriage he arranged for her. We may hear the echoes of this life event in her indictment of influential men as they use the life and death of the low-born and humble Jesus as a political pawn.

Of course, the aristocratic women of the dedications also functioned as objects of exchange within marriage, although they perhaps had more family protection than the middle-class Lanyer. As McGrath writes, "in this instance, Lanyer exemplifies the prevailing reality for all women of her period—but especially non-aristocratic women like herself—that their material situation depended on male identification and male protection" (336). The leaders who exchange Christ in order to form alliances offer a negative example of friendship by illustrating the abuse of power against the low-born and powerless. Lanyer cautions her aristocratic readers against such friendships and encourages them to align themselves instead with the low-born but virtuous Christ (and, by extension, the low-born but virtuous poet). However, her condemnation of the exchange of Christ also identifies a way in which she, Christ, and her aristocratic dedicatees are all alike: to varying degrees, they are all subject to more powerful men. By asking her female readers—both the aristocratic readers supposed in the dedications and those who will buy her printed book—to identify with the humble Christ rather than

with the powerful authority figures who conspire against him, Lanyer emphasizes the commonality between the reader, the poet, and Christ.

Lanyer's relationship with the lord chamberlain could also be read as a form of patronage, a recognized form of friendship. One could argue that it is this patronage that she seeks to replace in the dedications with supportive ties among women. Forman's records, however, reveal another connotation of friendship, one that Lanyer's poetry explicitly rejects. Forman writes that Lanyer "is nowe very nedy and in debte & it seams for Lucrese sake wilbe a good fellow for necessity doth co[m]pell" (Woods 25). In other words, he supposes that she will grant him sexual favors in return for financial assistance. Apparently, he was disappointed. After visiting her house while her husband was at sea with the Earl of Essex, Forman records, "she was familiar & friendlie to him in all things. but only she wold not halek.⁶⁴ yet he felte all p[ar]tes of her body willingly. & kyssed her often. but she wold not doe in any wise wher upon he toke some displesure & soe dep[ar]ted [i.e. stopped being] friends" (Woods 26). Forman's version of friendship involved sex in return for money, and he was unwilling to accept the terms of Lanyer's friendship as she offered it, which apparently involved some level of physical intimacy without intercourse. Although he later states that "they were frinds again aferward," he angrily writes that he "never obteyned his purpos & she was a hore & delt evill with him after" (Woods 26). Ironically, Lanyer is a "hore" because she refuses to have sex with him. In sum, Forman's primarily sexual—and exploitative—conception of friendship between men and women is a far cry from the type of supportive female friendships that Lanyer attempts to form in the dedications and the ideal of perfectly altruistic friendship that she depicts in the figure of Christ.

⁶⁴ Forman's euphemism for intercourse (Woods 26)

In fact, Lanyer overtly rejects such friendships based on sexual exploitation in Salve Deus. Unmasking the violence underlying the Petrarchan metaphor of the hunt, she asserts that beauty draws the attention of predatory men: "For greatest perills do attend the faire, / When men do seeke, attempt, plot and devise, / How they may overthrow the chastest Dame, / Whose Beautie is the White whereat they aime" (60). Lanyer follows this claim with examples of famous women such as Helen, Cleopatra, and Rosamond whose beauty drew them into peril and disgrace. Even chaste beautiful women, it seems, are not free of danger, for "Lustful King John" pursues the virtuous Matilda although "Friends disgrace, nor Fathers banishment, / Nor Death it self, could purchase her consent" (61). As Woods writes, "Instead of indulging in the description of female beauty, or in the pathos of female passivity, she rejects beauty as a topic precisely because it makes women so vulnerable" (90). We know that Lanyer herself engaged in a long-term relationship that ended in pregnancy and an arranged marriage, and, based on the evidence from Forman, at least had to fend off men who attempted to become "friends" on sexual terms. Thus rejecting beauty as a topic and, with it, the type of sexual relationships with men that it attracts, she tells Margaret Clifford that she will focus on other qualities, the "Grace" that "makes thee pleasing in thy Makers sight" (62). Christ, Lanyer indicates, sees a woman's true beauty in her virtue.

With the very significant exception of this relationship between her female readers and Christ, most of the relationships between men and women that Lanyer depicts in *Salve Deus* are antagonistic. Men pursue beautiful women to catastrophic effect, Pilate ignores his wife's good advice, and male leaders kill Christ while women mourn him. But while it is certainly true that Lanyer emphasizes men's guilt in the crucifixion and rejects sexual relationships between men and women based only on the pursuit of outward beauty, the divide between men and women in the *Salve Deus* is perhaps not as deep as such examples may indicate. In fact, after several stanzas in which she praises biblical women, such as Judith and Esther, who thwart evil men, she provides an example, also derived from Scripture, of a friendship between a man and a woman, King Solomon and Queen Sheba. This friendship, she indicates, is based on the mind instead of the body, and she prefaces her account of their meeting by praising Clifford for spending her "pretious time that God hath sent, / In all good exercise of the mind" (118).

Queen Sheba, like Clifford, seeks out wisdom: "From th'utmost part of all the Earth shee came, / To heare the Wisdom of this worthy King; / . . . / Yea many strange hard questions did shee frame, / All which were answer'd by this famous King" (118-119). Sheba, attracted to Solomon's reputed wisdom, intelligently questions this great king and engages him in scholarly conversation. To describe this friendship derived from wisdom, Lanyer employs the likeness topos of friendship rhetoric:

> Spirits affect where they doe sympathize, Wisdom desires Wisdome to embrace, Virtue covets her like, and doth devize How she her friends may entertaine with grace; Beauty sometime is pleas'd to feed her eyes, With viewing Beautie in anothers face: Both good and bad in this point doe agree,

> > That each desireth with his like to be.

Since both are virtuous and wise, Solomon and Sheba find their like in each other. Even beauty, it seems, is redeemed in a virtuous friendship that is reciprocal instead of predatory and based on the pursuit of wisdom rather than physical pleasure. Solomon and Sheba provide a model of friendship between men and women, created from the urge to "see, to heare, and understand," that replaces the uneven sexual relationships, listed earlier in the poem, that prove dangerous to women (119). Even if this type of beneficial friendship of the mind proves the exception rather than the rule in Lanyer's verse, it holds out hope for a type of friendship that overcomes the divisions between men and women that seem so vast elsewhere in the poem.

Lanyer asserts that even the friendship between Solomon and Sheba is "but a figure" of the friendship between Christ and Margaret Clifford (120). While Sheba sought out an earthly king, Lanyer tells Clifford, "a greater thou hast sought and found / Than Salomon in all his royaltie; / And unto him thy faith most firmely bound" (123). Moreover, Clifford's allegiance to Christ demonstrates her rejection of earthly concerns—"Him hast thou truly served all thy life, / And for his love, liv'd with the world at strife," Lanyer praises—as well as her clear-sighted embrace of lowly virtue. For Christ does not appear to Clifford as a glorious king like Solomon but rather as a "seeming Trades-mans sonne, of none attended, / Save of a few in povertie and need" (124). Clifford, who is neither in poverty or need, has the perception to see the virtue in this lowly figure: "Then how much more art thou to be commended," Lanyer asks, "That seek'st thy love in lowly shepheards weed?" (124). In her dedication to Mary Sidney, Lanyer indicated that her book is the shepherd's weed that clothes Christ; therefore, Clifford's ability to see Christ's virtue beneath his shepherd's weed also indicates her

ability to see the virtue of Lanyer's writing. But the relationship between Christ and Clifford in *Salve Deus* does much more than provide a model of acceptance for Lanyer's poem. It, like the friendship between Solomon and Sheba but to a greater degree, redeems sexual desire between men and women. Christ is Clifford's "deerest Love," and Lanyer's description of Christ's crucified body is clearly erotic: "This is that Bridegroom that appears so faire, / So sweet, so lovely in his Spouses sight, / That unto Snowe we may his face compare, / His cheekes like skarlet, and his eyes so bright" (107). Lanyer, who earlier criticizes and rejects the violent Petrarchan metaphor of the hunt, here redeems the Petrarchan colors of red and white by identifying them with Christ, an appropriate object of desire. As DiPasquale suggests, Lanyer "opens up an alternative definition of heterosexual love as the fulfillment of a woman's desire for the perfectly responsive man, who neither pursues her nor lords it over her, but mirrors her and is mirrored by her desire" (184).

As all of this mirroring perhaps indicates, friendship is the context in which this redemption of sexual desire, achieved through the example of Christ, takes place. Lanyer's poem seeks not only to redeem women and display feminine virtue but also to place contemporary relations between men and women on a different, less combative footing. As Mueller claims, Lanyer seeks "to find and articulate transformative possibilities in gender relations" (183). Friendship, including friendship among women, friendship between men and women, and friendship with Christ, allows such transformations to take place. In Lanyer's poem, friendship is a relationship in which the recognition of virtue in another bridges difference, whether that difference is sexual or social. Christ is the ultimate example of such a friend: his altruistic friendship for

humanity provides a model for less perfect but still beneficial friendships among individuals. In Lanyer's verse, Christ is not only the perfect friend but also the perfect maker of friendships,⁶⁵ and in the end, Lanyer connects Clifford's friendship for Christ to her friendship and patronage for herself by claiming that Clifford's "excellence hath rais'd my sprites to write, / Of what my thoughts could hardly apprehend" (129). If the friendship between Lanyer and Clifford has more in common with early modern patronage relationships than with Ciceronian friendships of equality, Lanyer's verse suggests that devotion to Christ and a commitment to following his example, can, if not overcome, at least bridge such inequality. Of course, as in the end of the dedications, Lanyer remains acutely aware of the difference between the possibilities for friendship that she envisions and the social restrictions of the world in which she lives, and the last major work in the volume is not the story of the perfect friend, Christ, but "The Description of Cooke-ham," an elegy for female friendship lost to social distance.

Lasting Friendship?: "The Description of Cooke-ham."

"O my friends, there is no friend." (att. Aristotle)⁶⁶

Throughout the collection, Lanyer is quite clear about the nature and extent of

her relationship to her dedicatees.⁶⁷ Some, like Bertie, she has known for many years;

⁶⁵ This idea of Christ as the creator of friendship has precedent. Ivo, one of the speakers in Aelred of Rievaulx's *Spiritual Friendship*, states, "I should like to be instructed more fully as to how the friendship which ought to exist among us begins in Christ, is preserved according to the Spirit of Christ, and how its end and fruition are referred to Christ" (133). Indeed, the first line of the dialogue disrupts the typically dyadic conception of male friendship by imagining Christ as a third party within friendship: "Here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst" (131).

⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida discusses the paradoxical nature of this quotation in *The Politics of Friendship*: "these are the two disjoined members of the same unique sentence. An almost impossible declaration. In two times [*deux* temps]. Unjoinable, the two times seem disjoined by the very meaning of what appears to be at once both affirmed and denied: 'my friends, no friend.'(1) . . . It is "an apostrophe always uttered close to the end, on the edge of life—that is to say, of death" (5). In other words, perfect friendship can only be imagined in its absence, and discourses of friendship are often predicated on the absence or death of the friend. By placing her depiction of friendship in the past, Lanyer is in good company: both Cicero's *De Amicitia* and its early modern descendent, Montaigne's *On Friendship*, celebrate friendship in the context of mourning a deceased friend.

some, like Arbella Stuart, she has "not knowne so much as I desired" (17); and some she does not know at all. She admits to Katherine Howard, the Countess of Suffolk, for instance, that "it may seeme right strange, / that I a stranger should presume thus farre, / To write to you" (36). Lanyer attempts to initiate the friendship of patronage with all of the women she addresses in the dedications, but such friendships apparently encompass a rather broad range of familiarity. By far the greatest amount of intimacy she claims is with her chief dedicatee and patroness, Margaret Clifford, and Clifford's daughter, Anne. Situating her relationship with the Cliffords somewhere in between the useful but potentially distant friendship of patronage and the intimate equality of Ciceronian friendship, Lanyer both celebrates her connection to the Cliffords and rails against the social boundaries that make that connection so fraught. In "The Description of Cookeham," the first country-house poem in English, Lanyer depicts an idyllic time of female friendship across social boundaries and mourns its passing. This elegy for female friendship is the last poem in the volume, and while this position does not negate the transcendent possibilities of friendship made possible through Christ imagined in the earlier poem, it does highlight the differences between friendship as Lanyer imagines it should be and friendship as it is actually realized in the world. Even friendship with a woman as devoutly religious as Margaret Clifford, whom Lanyer depicts as the bride of Christ in *Salve Deus*, cannot, it seems, permanently overcome the divisions of class.

⁶⁷ Scholars differ on the credence they give to Lanyer's claims of friendship with her aristocratic dedicatees. For example, while Lewalski suggests that it would not be productive for Lanyer to "falsify too outrageously the terms of a relationship" (220), Lisa Schnell concludes that "the only relationship Lanyer had with any patroness occurred in the realm of wish-fulfillment fantasy" (31). Given Lanyer's time at court and her frankness in admitting she does not personally know some women, I see no reason not to take her at her word regarding the extent of her familiarity with her dedicatees.

"Cooke-ham" takes an elegiac tone from the first line: "Farewell, (sweet Cookeham) where I first obtain'd / Grace from that Grace where perfit Grace remain'd" (130). As in the dedication "To all vertuous Ladies in general," Lanver plays upon the multiple connotations of grace: Margaret and Anne Clifford have demonstrated grace to Lanyer by hosting her and encouraging her poetic endeavors, but as nobility, "Graces," their social station eventually separates them from the middle-class poet. Lanyer seems sure that her time at Cooke-ham is not to be renewed: "Never shall my sad eies againe behold / Those pleasures which my thoughts did then unfold" (130), she asserts, and she urges her memory to "retaine / Those pleasures past, which will not turne againe" (135). "Cookeham" therefore both portrays an affectionate friendship between the poet and her patronesses and expresses frustration at the limitations imposed by the social distance between them. However, rather than directly blaming these important patrons for this distance, Lanyer blames "Unconstant Fortune . . . / Who casts us downe into so lowe a frame: / Where our great friends we cannot dayly see, / So great a diffrence is there in degree" (134). Like Whitney, Lanyer casts herself as a victim of fortune. While Whitney's complaints demonstrated the reciprocity of friendship (misery loves company), Lanyer displays herself as a victim of fortune in order to highlight the absence of her friends.

Even though Lanyer nostalgically depicts the time that she spent with the Cliffords at their family estate as one of familiarity and inclusion, touches of resentment at their failure to return her level of devotion become evident in the poem. For instance, Lanyer claims that she "did alwaies beare a part" in "beauteous *Dorset's* former sports, / So far from being touched from any ill reports" (135). Contrasting her present isolation

with her former inclusion in Anne Clifford's innocent activities, she depicts a happy past of cross-class friendship. However, her concern with "ill reports" intrudes rather jarringly on this affirmative vision of female friendship; if the idyllic past needs such a disclaimer, perhaps it was not so idyllic after all. Lanyer's description of her friendship with Margaret Clifford also demonstrates this mixture of nostalgia for female friendship and frustration at its boundaries. She describes walks she took with the Cliffords after which they would rest underneath a great oak "Where many a learned Book was read and skand / To this faire tree, taking me by the hand, / You did repeat the pleasures which had past" (136). Once again connecting female friendship with intellectual pursuits, Lanyer portrays herself as a third companion in these mother and daughter outings. Margaret Clifford even extends a physical gesture of friendship toward Lanyer when she takes her by the hand.⁶⁸ Yet, the poet remains unsatisfied, for, upon departing. Clifford kisses the oak tree instead of Lanyer. Lanyer is thus forced to steal her kiss from the oak, "Scorning a sencelesse creature should possesse / So rare a favour, so great happiness" (137). Lanyer here appears not only as a devoted friend but also as a frustrated lover, and like the traditional Petrarchan lover, she resents the beloved's failure to return her love.⁶⁹

It is appropriate that Lanyer steals her kiss from a tree, for the animate natural world of Cookham reflects the poet's inner state. In what was to later become a convention of country-house poetry, Cookham bedecks itself in greenery when the Cliffords approach and mourns when they depart: "each thing did unto sorrow frame: / The trees that were so glorious in our view, / Forsooke both flowres and fruit, when once they knew/ Of your depart" (135). The natural world also reflects the tenuous nature of

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the importance of physical demonstrations of friendship in Renaissance England, see Alan Bray's "The Body of the Friend," in *The Friend*.

⁶⁹ I discuss the erotics of female friendship in more detail in Chapter Four on Katherine Philips.

Lanyer's friendship with the Cliffords. Like Lanyer, who claims to crave a closer familiarity with her noble patrons than they may be willing to offer, the "pretty Birds would oft come to attend thee, / Yet flie away for feare they should offend thee" (132). Even though Lanyer appears to be on relatively familiar terms with the Cliffords, she remains in the subservient position of waiting for any signs of affection they choose to extend to her, and while I do not go so far as to claim, as Schnell does, that "Lanyer has written not an encomium to but an indictment of the myth of aristocratic generosity and fairness" (34), it is certainly true that "Cooke-ham" demonstrates deep ambivalence between the speaker's gratitude for the Cliffords' friendship and her resentment at its limitations. Lanyer concludes that the low-born always feel more love toward their social superiors than they can expect to receive: "Many are placed in those Orbes of state, / Partners in honour, so ordain'd by Fate; / Neerer in show, yet farther off in love, / In which, the lowest alwayes are above" (134). Of course, Aristotle would agree with this assessment. In his examination of unequal friendship, he concludes that a greater amount of love on the part of the inferior party produces a type of equality. However, Lanyer's greater love for her "great friends" produces not settled equality but disappointment at its absence.

The disappointment that Lanyer expresses in "Cooke-ham" serves a particular political purpose, one that she makes clear in her dedication to Anne Clifford. Both this dedication and the dedication to Margaret Clifford demonstrate Lanyer's greater familiarity with the Cliffords than with her other patronesses—Lanyer writes her dedication to Margaret in prose, for example, lending it a more conversational, less formal tone—and she employs this greater familiarity to make her most trenchant criticism of the hierarchical class system of Jacobean England. Of course, Lanyer questions the validity of class distinctions throughout the dedications and the text of *Salve Deus* through the example of the low-born Christ. She begins her dedication to Anne Clifford by asking her to "enter with the Bridegroom to the feast, / Where he that is the greatest may be least," once again employing the unimpeachable authority of Christ to legitimize a potentially radical reversal of hierarchies, but she soon dispenses with this mediating figure and directly questions the class system that places Clifford above her:

What difference was there when the world began,

Was it not Virtue that distinguished all?

All sprang but from one woman and one man,

Then how doth Gentry come to rise and fall?

Or who is he that very rightly can

Distinguish of his birth, or tell at all,

In what meane state his Ancestors have bin,

Before some one of worth did honour win? (42-43)

Here, Lanyer hits at the heart of the class system by essentially exposing class distinctions as arbitrary: when seen through the lens of Scripture, everyone came from the same source, and aristocrats merely inherit their titles from an ancestor who happened to win some honor. Honorable ancestors do not guarantee personal worth, she asserts. If all such titles are essentially meaningless, Lanyer may speak to her noble friend as an equal. Rather than inherited titles, Lanyer argues, virtue should determine worth: "Titles of honour which the world bestowes, / To none but to the virtuous doth belong," (42).

Throughout Salve Deus, Lanyer suggests that virtue may produce friendship across class boundaries, but here she makes the more radical claim that virtue should replace class as a marker of value. Kari Boyd McBride claims Lanver's dedication to Anne Clifford suggests "Clifford's lack of virtue *because* of her title," but I would argue that Lanyer most directly challenges class distinctions in these lines not to insult a woman who seems, by all indications, to have been a friend and patroness, but rather because the liberty of friendship allows her to speak more freely in this dedication than in the others (72). Moreover, Anne Clifford's family history gives her good reason to champion the claims of virtue over those of inheritance. Clifford was disinherited by her father, who left his extensive estates to his brother Francis "in direct opposition to an entail made by King Edward II to an earlier Clifford, in which it was clearly stated that the Clifford lands should always descend to the direct heir, whatever the sex" (Clifford 2). Clifford defied pressure from her husband and King James to renounce her claims to the land, and she and her mother devoted themselves to fighting the disinheritance. Therefore, when Lanyer asserts that titles of honor belong to the virtuous and complains, "when they are bestow'd upon her foes, / Poore virtues friends indure the greatest wrong: / For they must suffer all indignity, / Untill in heav'n they better graced be" (42), she is both sympathizing with Clifford's disinheritance and pointing out that the court musician's daughter and the countess have in much common: they, "virtues friends," are both disadvantaged by the system of inheritance.

In fact, Anne Clifford's alienation from her own lands offers another reason for the elegiac tone of "Cooke-ham." The estate, which was leased from the king by Margaret Clifford's brother, did not actually belong to Clifford, so in a sense, both Lanyer and the Cliffords were guests at Cookham. Certainly, Lanyer implies that Margaret Clifford is sad to leave Cookham, and she counsels her to renounce such worldly pleasures and focus instead on the religious realm: "Vouchsafe to think upon those pleasures past, / As fleeting worldly Joyes that could not last: / Or, as dimme shadowes of celestiall pleasures, / Which are desir'd above all earthly treasures" (130). Of course, as we have seen, the religious realm is one in which Lanyer may imagine friendship between women of different classes and, theoretically, speak to them as an equal. Even as Lanyer advises the Cliffords to value virtue above worldly titles and place their hopes in heaven, the poem never manages to erase the social distance between these friends. In fact, Margaret and Anne Clifford researched and recorded "over three hundred years of Clifford history" to validate Anne's claim to the Clifford estates (Clifford 2). In other words, they sought to prove Anne's right to her father's lands through the same inheritance and class system that Lanyer seeks to replace. The liberty of friendship allows Lanyer to protest that system, but she cannot ultimately overcome it.

In the end of her dedication to Anne Clifford, Lanyer returns to the conventions of epideictic poetry: in praising Clifford, she does "but set a candle in the sunne, / And adde one drop of water to the sea" (45). She makes a similar move at the end of "Cooke-ham." As the estate sinks into desolation and decay, Lanyer makes her final farewell to her patron and friend:

This last farewell to Cooke-ham here I give When I am dead thy name in this may live, Wherein I have perform'd her noble hest, Whose virtues lodge in my unworthy breast, And ever shall, so long as life remaines,

Tying my heart to her by those rich chaines. (138)

Again, Lanyer employs the *humilitas* topos of the patronage-seeking poet: Margaret Clifford's virtues will live on in the poem and in Lanyer's unworthy but still-devoted heart. Despite the disappointments she has experienced in her connection with these social superiors, she declares her lasting friendship for them, and the poem itself, which preserves the Countess of Cumberland's memory, becomes the permanent sign of that friendship. After failing to permanently establish an intimate friendship with her social superiors, Lanyer falls back on the type of friendship that can attain permanence: the friendship of patronage.

"Cooke-ham" may be seen as a record of Lanyer's attempt to actualize the transcendent possibilities of friendship she envisions in the rest of *Salve Deus*. With the universal friendship and love of Christ as a model, how can pious women who are devoted to his example fail to create lasting friendship among themselves? Friendship across gender and class difference clearly was a reality in early modern England, but the poetry of Whitney and Lanyer indicates that, at least for women, gender may have been more easily crossed in friendship than class. Patronage may result in a supportive and productive—and indeed, even an affectionate—relationship, but Lanyer's speaker does not seem able to achieve the level of intimacy and equality with her social superiors that she craves. Even though *Salve Deus*' last representation of friendship ends in disappointment, Lanyer's vision of friendship based on religious virtue rather than social equality provides a significant intervention in the discourse of early modern friendship. Moreover, it is worth noting that "Cooke-ham" is not Lanyer's last word. She closes the

volume with a short note to "the doubtfull Reader," claiming that the title of her work, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, was delivered to her in a dream. This dream vision, she asserts, is "a significant token, that I was appointed to performe this Work" (139). In a work so devoted to exploring the possibilities of connection and friendship, the poet ends with a solitary assertion of poetic authority. If this final solitude represents a failure of lasting friendship, it does not represent a failure of her poetic vision.

Chapter Three "Friendship Fixed on Virtue": Friendship, Counsel, and Tyranny in Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* and *History of Edward II*

"For neither sovereign's nor father's hate A friendship fixed on virtue sever can" —*Elizabeth Cary, The Tragedy of Mariam (2.2 27-28)*

In these lines, Elizabeth Cary evokes the traditional opposition between friendship and tyranny. The hatred of a tyrannical sovereign, she indicates, cannot dissolve "a friendship fixed on virtue." In her closet drama, The Tragedy of Mariam, and her history, The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II, Cary demonstrates the ability of virtuous friends to oppose tyranny, but she also argues for the inclusion of women in such friendships. As I discuss in the Introduction, most early modern writings on friendship adopt Cicero's trope of the male friend as a second self, an image that emphasizes similarity between friends. This trope gained popularity with early modern writers for good reason, for it imagined a type of equality within a decidedly hierarchical society. However, Cary places pressure on this definition of friendship by demonstrating its shortcomings. If the friend is a second self, she asks in *Edward II*, what is to prevent him from usurping the self? Moreover, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary challenges the radical similarity implied by the figure of the second self by depicting a friendship that does involve significant difference. In her closet drama, Cary not only protests the exclusion of women from the classical and early modern discourses of ideal male friendship but also reveals the purposes behind that exclusion, arguing that men fashion themselves as ideal friends primarily by differentiating themselves from women. While Cary celebrates the personal and political empowerment that friendship can provide, she also exposes the misogyny that often underlies classical conceptions of friendship and

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challenges the exclusion of women from such paradigms by portraying positive—and politically effective—friendships between men and women. In doing so, she seeks to replace the exclusionary discourse of male friendship with a new vision of friendship dependent not on similarity in gender but on the shared virtue of the participants.

Such virtue most often takes the form of honest political counsel and, when necessary, vocal resistance to tyranny. If early modern conduct books located female virtue in the passive qualities of chastity, silence, and obedience-attributes dependent upon a woman's forfeiture of or resistance to action-Cary's vision of virtue is decidedly active in its vocal and political orientation.⁷⁰ Cary's deep engagement with political issues has been well noted by scholars: Heather Wolfe observes that Cary's "richly complex work actively questions the meaning of tyranny" ("Introduction" 1), and Mihoko Suzuki demonstrates that *Edward II* "constitutes a history of political thought, which places in dialogue both English and continental political theorists" ("Fortune is a Stepmother" 99). Cary's abiding concern with the causes of and responses to political tyranny goes hand in hand with her examination of friendship, for, as Laurie Shannon has pointed out, both classical and early modern writers repeatedly opposed friendship to tyranny. Indeed, Cicero presents this opposition as self-evident, simply stating, "we live in one way with a tyrant and in another with a friend" (197). We do so, apparently, because we are free to voice our honest opinions to the friend but not to the tyrant. Shannon writes, "Only a tyrant fears or prohibits 'friendly' communications of a difference in views; only a tyrant fails to see the virtue of a counselor speaking the sharp

⁷⁰ Work on virginity as a liberating and even subversive choice for women, particularly Theodora Jankowski's *Pure Resistance*, might complicate my use of the term "passive" to describe traditional female virtue. My point is not to discount the potentially empowering natures of a woman's choice to remain a virgin or be chaste within marriage but rather to emphasize that the off-repeated trinity of women's virtues—chastity, silence, and obedience—are more often defined by a resistance to action.

language of a healthy truth in an exercise of liberty of speech" (52). The difference between a friend and a tyrant, in other words, is their receptiveness to vocal correction: it is a friend's moral duty to proffer honest advice and voice disagreement, and it is a ruler's moral duty to listen.⁷¹ In both *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *Edward II*, Cary provides examples of rulers who fail to do so and delineates the tragic consequences that ensue.

Cary's tyrants, Herod, Edward II, and Queen Isabel, all place their self-interest above the good of their realm. This depiction of tyranny accords with Aristotle's definition:

The tyrant regards his own interest, but the king regards that of his subjects. For a ruler is not a king unless he has independent means and is better off in every way than his subjects are; and such a person needs nothing further, and therefore will study not his own advantage but that of his subjects . . . Tyranny is the exact opposite of this sort of rule, because the tyrant pursues his own good. (275)

Tyrants' concern for their own well-being makes them particularly susceptible to flattery. Their inability to distinguish the corrective speech of the friendly counselor from the seductive speech of the flatterer is both a cause and a symptom of their failure to rule justly. Herod's tyrannical actions result from his decision to listen to the wrong advisor: he silences both his honest counselor Sohemus and his wife Mariam but lends his ear to his duplicitous sister Salome, who feeds his insecurities and encourages his paranoia.

⁷¹ Elizabeth I, for example, assured her Privy Council before her coronation that she would be receptive to advice that countered her personal wishes: "This judgment I have of you: that you will not be corrupted with any manner of gift, and that you will be faithful to the state, and that without respect of my private will, you will give me that counsel that you think best" (52). In her Armada Speech, she also differentiates herself from tyrants who, because they have not acted in the best interests of their subjects, live in fear: Let tyrants fear; I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects" (325).

Similarly, Edward II errs in privileging the counsel of a single favorite over that of his official advisors. Rather than meet his council "as Friends," as Cary tells us Edward I once had, the new king ignores the guidance of his father's counselors and relies on the advice of only one man at a time, his favorites Gaveston and Spencer (14). This reliance upon a single friend rather than a council of many poses particular danger for the ruler, Cary indicates, because a king cannot engage in *amicitia* without abandoning the public trust that has been placed in him. In fact, the idea of the friend as a second self becomes a threat for the ruler, for Edward's favorites encroach upon his sovereign prerogative, wielding political power in his stead.

Seventeenth-century political thinkers clearly recognized the potential conflict of interest posed by a monarch's close friendship. Margaret Cavendish, for example, writes: Some say that Kings are unhappy, because they cannot have a Bosome-friend, for there must be some Equality for True Friendship; and a Prince makes himself a Subject, or his Subject as great as himself, in making particular Friendships, which may cause Danger to his Person and State. (*The World's Olio* X4)

A king, Cavendish explains, cannot engage in the type of intense, one-on-one friendship described by the humanist ideal without compromising his duties to the state by either lowering himself to the level of a subject or, even more dangerously, raising a subject to his level. In the ruler's case, a second self is a second king. Cavendish concludes that the monarch's "Privy Council is a Secret Friend, where he may and ought to disburthen his Mind, being an united Body, or should be so; which will increase his Joys with their Joys, and ease his Griefs with their Counsel, which is the part of a Friend: So as a Privy Council to Kings, is as a Private Friend to another Man" (Y1). Intimacy with a single

"Bosome-friend" may benefit the private man, but it endangers the ruler, who must rely on the counsel of many rather than the friendship of one.

Of course, even more dangerous to rulers than "bosome-friends" are flatterers, but early modern texts on friendship emphasize that flatterers are so treacherous precisely because it is so difficult to differentiate them from friends. Thomas Elyot, for example, cautions against the deceptively friendly speech of the flatterer: "the company or communication of a persone familiar, whiche is always pleasaunt and without sharpnes, inclinyng to inordinate favour and affection, is alway to be suspected" (178-179). Like the friend, the flatterer is affectionate and friendly, but overly so; therefore, the "sharpnes" of a true friend's advice will differentiate it from that of the flatterer. Similarly, Francis Bacon claims that the "liberty" of the friend's corrective speech may prevent a man from listening to his worst flatterer—himself:

there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. (394)

Liberty of speech and the willingness to offer advice counter to the listener's desire: these are qualities of both the true friend and the honest political counselor. In Cary's works, Herod and Edward II become tyrants when they stifle such freedom of speech, privileging the seductive words of flatterers over the corrective words of counselors.

While the candid speech of the good counselor may fail to prevent Cary's rulers from degenerating into tyrants, it can at least prove a means of resistance. Cary's condemnation of flatterers is firmly in line with the tradition of male friendship, but her portrayals of women who resist tyranny through friendship are not. The vocal form of political resistance that Cary envisions as a basis for friendship is not confined to one gender, for in *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *Edward II*, honest speech and opposition to tyranny are virtues to which both men and women may aspire. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, the male friends Constabarus and the sons of Babas defy Herod through their friendship, but Mariam and Sohemus also form a friendship based on their common refusal to remain silent in the face of the king's injustice. Cary also grants women the agency to resist tyrannical kings in *Edward II* where Cary portrays Isabel as a formidable political maneuverer whose rhetorical skills gain her the alliances she needs to defy her husband and king. Both men and women, Cary indicates, may resist unjust rulers by forming friendly connections.

Cary likely evinced such interest in women's political roles because, as a writer of both closet drama and history, she would have considered herself a type of political counselor. As Barbara K. Lewalski notes, closet drama was viewed as a form of advice to the monarch, "a recognized vehicle for the exploration of dangerous political topics— the wickedness of tyranny, the dangers of absolutism, the modes of and justifications for resistance, the folly of princes, the corruption of royal favorites, the responsibilities of counselors" (191). As the Chorus concludes in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, "This day's events were certainly ordained / To be the warning to posterity" (671). History works in much the same way by locating meaning for the present in the follies of the past. Indeed, Suzuki suggests that *Edward II* may have "been intended as political counsel to Queen Henrietta Maria in the tradition of *The Mirror for Magistrates*" ("Fortune is a Stepmother" 100). Such written forms of political expression would have been

particularly attractive to a woman writer, for while Cary could not sit on a privy council, she could voice political advice through her writing. In that writing, friendship often emerges as a litmus test for legitimate rule: good rulers encourage in their counselors the liberty of speech characteristic of friendship while tyrants suppress friendship, engage in inappropriate forms of friendship, and privilege flatterers over honest advisors. As we will see in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, friendship offers a mode of political resistance, but it also proves ultimately untenable in a kingdom ruled by a tyrant.

"To leave her love for friendship": The Tragedy of Mariam

Elizabeth Cary prefaces her closet drama, The Tragedy of Mariam, with a poetic tribute to her sister-in-law and friend, also named Elizabeth Cary. Thus, a play that is usually discussed in terms of its attitudes toward marriage begins by evoking quite another relationship, that of friendship. Indeed, true friendship, not marriage, was considered by many early modern thinkers to be the highest form of human connection and a more sacred and lasting bond than that of romantic love between a man and woman. However, as I demonstrate in the Introduction, both classical and early modern discourses on friendship excluded women either explicitly or tacitly through omission. Only two independent men alike in both virtue and station, such writings insist, may engage in true *amicitia*. Cary's dedicatory sonnet to another woman therefore subtly challenges this exclusive definition, but it is not the only means by which she questions the tradition of ideal male friendship. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary draws a parallel between men's oppression of women and political tyranny, demonstrating how both preclude positive, lasting ties of friendship among both men and women. Laying bare the rhetoric of misogyny that so often underlies portrayals of male friendship, Cary seeks to

replace the exclusionary discourse of male friendship with a new vision of friendship based not on gender but on a virtuous resistance to tyranny.

Cary highlights the theme of friendship by dedicating *The Tragedy of Mariam* to a female relative and friend, but the possibilities for friendship that she envisions in the dedicatory sonnet differ strikingly from those she depicts in the play that follows. In the opening sonnet, "To Diana's earthly deputess, and my worthy sister, Mistress Elizabeth Cary," Cary represents marriage as continuous with, and even enabling of, female friendship. In an extended metaphor, she compares her husband, Henry Cary, to Apollo, and his sister to Diana: "When cheerful Phoebus his full course hath run, / His sister's fainter beams our hearts doth cheer; / So your fair brother is to me the sun, / And you his sister as my moon appear" (621).⁷² Cary's evocation of her husband and her repeated references to Elizabeth Cary as "his sister" highlight the enabling role that her marriage played in forming this friendship. Here, marriage fosters female friendship by creating ties of kinship. While Cary deferentially privileges her husband over her sister-in-law in the poem—he is her "sun" while his sister is her "next beloved, my second friend"—she nevertheless depicts marriage and female friendship as complementary (621). By implication, Cary's "Apollo," her husband, is clearly her first friend; therefore, marriage not only enables female friendship but also constitutes a form of friendship itself. The sonnet's harmonious portrayal of the relationship between marriage and friendship stands in marked contrast to the drama itself, in which marriage and friendship are mutually exclusive. There, Herod's unreasonable jealousy precludes friendship within marriage, and Mariam's marriage to Herod engenders competition rather than amity between sisterin-law. Cary's positive depiction of friendship within marriage and a female friendship

⁷² Elizabeth Cary, neé Bland, was the wife of Henry Cary's brother, Sir Philip Cary (Wolfe 109).

facilitated by marital ties therefore introduces the play but also stands outside of it as an example of what is lost in a harshly patriarchal society that suppresses rather than fosters the friendships of both men and women.

We may see the importance that female friendship held for Cary in both this opening sonnet and in the events of her life.⁷³ As Shannon has noted of the dedicatory sonnet, the two women's identical names literalize Cicero's trope of the friend as a "second self" (85). If women cannot sustain friendship in the poisonous environment of the play itself, Cary does at least represent female friendship as a reality in the framing material, thus posing a challenge to the classical assumption that only two men may engage in faithful friendship. Moreover, while the opening sonnet does not posit a conflict between marriage and female friendship, it does portray the female friend as a source of inspiration and support in the husband's absence: "For, when my Phoebus' absence makes it night ... From you, my Phoebe, shines my second light" (621). The biography of Cary, written by one of her daughters, tells us that she experienced exactly such support from her sister-in-law as she was writing *Mariam*, for when her mother-inlaw confined her to her chamber, "one of her husbands sisters" came to visit her "by stealth" (109).⁷⁴ Female friendship offered a refuge to Cary later in life as well. When her husband denied her support in the wake of her conversion to Catholicism, she pleaded with Charles I to allow her to live with another sister-in-law and friend:

⁷³ I am not advocating a solely biographical reading of *The Tragedy of Mariam* since Cary wrote the play many years before her conversion to Catholicism and the estrangement from her husband that followed (Cary probably wrote *Mariam* sometime between 1603-1608, and she converted to Catholicism in 1626). However, I do believe that her biography and her personal correspondence may shed light on her treatment of friendship in the play by revealing the abiding importance that her friends held for her.

⁷⁴ The *Life* also tells us that *Mariam* was stolen out of this sister-in-law's chamber: "From this time she writ many things for her private recreation, on severall subjects, and occasions, all in verse (out of which she scarce ever writ any thinge that was not translations) one of them was after stolen out of that sister inlaws (her frinds) chamber, and printed" (110).

I woulde take a little house, in essex, neere a sister of my lords, and a deere frende of mine, the lady Barrett, one in whose conuersation, I haue euer placed, a greate part of my earthly felicity, and though hir religion mainely differ from mine, yet I know, shee loues mee. (Wolfe 284)

Cary was also close to the Duke of Buckingham's wife, mother, and sister, and they rallied to her defense after her conversion by loaning her money and writing letters on her behalf.⁷⁵ In "Phoebus' absence," whether due to his duties abroad or his later abandonment of his wife, female friends were an important source of emotional, financial, and political support to Cary.

In the context of Cary's own experiences, then, the total absence of female friendship in *The Tragedy of Mariam*—or any positive form of female connection, for that matter—is all the more remarkable. In Cary's play, the relations among the female characters are unremittingly antagonistic. Since Cary depicts a world in which women's avenues to power depend on their ability to gain the favor of men, even those women who should be natural allies either exploit each other for advancement or compete with each other for the favor of powerful men in what Danielle Clarke calls "a fascinating inversion of homosociality" (255). Cary foregrounds this hostility between women in the first act when Mariam's mother Alexandra scolds Mariam for her ambivalent response to Herod's rumored death. What at first seems like a mother's protective relief at the riddance of a dangerous son-in-law becomes more complicated when we find that

⁷⁵ The Duchess of Buckingham wrote to Edward Nicholas, her husband's secretary and a member of the Council, "that which I desire you to take notis of from me is that her children ar so near to me in bloud and she her selfe a lady whom I doe so much respect that I knowing you ar a friend to me will show her all the lawfull fauour you can" (Wolfe 294-295). This letter not only illustrates the interconnectedness of kinship and friendship but also shows how women could advocate effectively for one another by drawing on male relatives and friends.

Alexandra once effectively tried to sell Mariam to the most powerful ruler.

Remembering how she sent Marc Antony portraits of her two beautiful children "to captivate / The warlike lover," Alexandra surmises that if Antony had seen Mariam's portrait alone, "Then Mariam, in a Roman's chariot set, / In place of Cleopatra might have shown; / A mart of beauties in her visage met, / And part in this, that they were all her own" (1.2, 93-94, 117-120). To her mother, Mariam is a "mart of beauties," a commodity to be traded for political power and advancement. Most tellingly, at the end of the play, Alexandra rejects her daughter when Mariam loses Herod's favor and becomes a political liability. As the Nuntio relates, Alexandra rails at Mariam "as if nature she did quite forget" (5.1, 35). "Natural" female bonds are easily forgotten, Cary implies, in a political environment that pits women against one another.

The hostile relationship between Mariam and her sister-in-law Salome further exemplifies the strain that a combination of political tyranny and patriarchal social structures places on women's connections. Mariam and Salome are bitter rivals who completely invert the portrait of friendship between sister-in-laws that Cary paints in the opening sonnet; here, marriage creates discord rather than friendship, a theme that persists throughout the play. In Mariam's and Salome's first encounter, most of the accusations that they level at each other concern the right to speak and be heard, indicating that their primary rivalry is over Herod's ear. The stakes of this rivalry are high, for Salome's allegations against Mariam ultimately result in her execution. In their first encounter, Salome alleges that Mariam "durst not thus have given your tongue the rein / If noble Herod still remained in life," and Mariam responds by effectually refusing to respond: "With thy black acts I'll not pollute my breath" (1.3 13, 38). Since both women believe that Herod is dead at this point in the drama, Mariam simply pleads her case against Salome to another authority figure: "Heaven, dost thou mean this infamy to smother? / Let slandered Mariam ope thy closed ear!" (1.3 45-46). This verbal competition for the "closed ear" of male authority, whether it be that of a husband, a ruler, or a deity, creates antagonism among female relatives when, Cary's opening sonnet indicates, such ties of kinship should result in amity.

As both husband and ruler, Herod is an overdetermined authority figure who represents both the power of the monarch and that authority which, in both ancient Palestine and seventeenth-century England, cultural and legal precepts afforded the male head of the family. Salome and Mariam are therefore vying for influence over not only their most powerful male relative but also their king. Cary's consolidation of the figures of husband and ruler has been well observed: Clarke claims that *The Tragedy of Mariam* "asks searching questions about the limits of authority and jurisdiction, both within marriage itself and in the wider contexts in which it figures and adumbrates" (252), and Karen Raber notes Cary's examination of "the contradictions in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century political philosophy, which yoked justifications of monarchy to contemporary Protestant views of marriage, household government, and domestic organization" (150). However, somewhat less critical attention has been paid to Cary's examination of the effect that both marital and political tyranny—and their confluence in the figure of Herod—has on friendship.⁷⁶ This would not have been a peripheral concern

⁷⁶ The notable exception is Shannon, who offers an analysis of the play in relation to early modern discourses on friendship by arguing that Mariam's chastity represents a female character's failed attempt to enact the virtues of ideal male friendship: self-sufficiency, constancy, and honesty. She concludes that Cary "scrutinizes not the doctrine [of Ciceronian friendship] itself but its inaccessibility for women" (80). I would extend this reading by suggesting that Cary does, in fact, challenge the doctrine of ideal male friendship by revealing the misogyny and fear of heterosexual love that often underlie it as well as by portraying a positive, cross-gender friendship.

in the Renaissance, I assert, because friendship was not only widely conceived of as a corrective to political tyranny but also as a symbol of the ties— familial, personal and political—that held society together.⁷⁷ In Cary's Palestine, tyranny, both within marriage and the state, forecloses possibilities of friendship by punishing those who practice its hallmark: freedom of speech. Such restrictions on friendship, Cary implies, ultimately result in a dangerously disordered realm.

In this light, the absence of women's ties within the play is the sign of a dysfunctional society. However, Cary does provide us with an example of male friendship, albeit one that Herod's cruelty quickly destroys. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, the loyal Constabarus in many ways embodies the characteristics of perfect male friendship. When Herod orders the death of his political enemies, the sons of Babas, Constabarus secretly protects them in the name of friendship. Cary describes Constabarus' motives as purely noble and selfless, thus deviating significantly from her source text, Flavius Josephus' *The Antiquities of the Jews*. Josephus claims that Constabarus, an Idumaean, rebelled after Herod appointed him governor of Idumaea and Gaza. According to Thomas Lodge's 1602 translation, Constabarus

seeing himselfe in this estate beyond his expectation, grew more elate and proud than his good fortune required, and in a little time forgot himselfe so farre, that he thought himselfe dishonoured, if he should performe that which Herod commanded him, and scorned that the Idumaeans should bee under the Jewes subjection. (401)

⁷⁷ Alan Bray discusses the public nature of friendship in what he calls "traditional society": "the bonds of friendship—between individuals and between groups—would become part of the sinews of an expanding and increasingly confident culture . . . The principal difference between the friendship of the modern world and the friendship [of traditional society] is that . . . friendship was significant in a public sphere" (2).

In the *Antiquities*, Constabarus first commits treason by encouraging Cleopatra to take possession of Idumaea; that failing, he then shelters the sons of Babas, "knowing that the sonnes of Babas were greatly esteemed and honoured among the people, and foreseeing that their safety might be no small furtherance to himselfe, if at any time there might befortune any alteration" (401). In other words, Constabarus hedges his bets: he knows that the sons of Babas are popular with the citizens of Palestine, so he protects them in the hope that they, in turn, will support him if the political tide turns against Herod. The historical Constabarus is thus motivated "not onely . . . by friendship, but also by necessitie" (400). Friendship, a peripheral motivation in the *Antiquities*, becomes Constabarus' only incentive for disobeying Herod in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

Cary thus elides Constabarus' former treason, prideful ambition, and political maneuverings in order to emphasize his participation in an idealized male friendship. Dispensing with the messy motivations of the historical Constabarus, she distills his personality into the very type of the ideal male friend. This move not only renders Constabarus more sympathetic but also concentrates our focus on what he represents: the tradition of ideal male friendship. Unlike his counterpart in Josephus, Cary's Constabarus risks his reputation and his life, with little or no potential for reward, to save the lives of his friends, thus exemplifying Cicero's claim that "we are not led to friendship by the hope of material gain; rather, we judge it desirable because all its profits are encompassed by the feeling of love which it generates" (91). Indeed, when the first son of Babas laments his inability to requite Constabarus for his kindness, Constabarus declares:

Oh, how you wrong our friendship, valiant youth!

With friends there is not such a word as 'debt';
Where amity is tied with bond of truth,
All benefits are there in common set.
Then is the golden age with them renewed;
All names of properties are banished quite;
Division and distinction are eschewed;
Each hath to what belongs to others right . . .
All friendship should the pattern imitate
Of Jesse's son and valiant Jonathan,
For neither sovereign's nor father's hate
A friendship fixed on virtue sever can. (2.2 13-28)

Jonathan and David are one of the many pairs of male friends that early modern writers used as exempla of perfect friendship, and Constabarus' description of friendship itself is straight out of *De Amicitia*: like Cicero, he emphasizes the extraordinary sameness of friends by shunning all differences, or "Division and distinction." ⁷⁸ Constabarus' belief that "All benefits are there in common set" and "Each hath to what belongs to others right" also echoes Michel de Montaigne's claim that "all things [are] by effect common between [friends]; wils, thoughts, judgements, goods, wives, children, honour, and life" (194). Constabarus' words effectually amount to a textbook-perfect recitation of the

⁷⁸ Shannon also notes the closeness with which Constabarus' words and actions follow the ideal of *amicitia*, and this observation leads her to claim that "The representation of masculine friendship in the play is itself uncomplicated" (73). Shannon's work has been invaluable to my analysis; however, I would like to offer a divergent reading on this point by suggesting that Cary's representation of masculine friendship is far from uncomplicated. I believe that Cary represents friendship between men only to undercut it later by demonstrating its reliance on a false misogynistic discourse.

tenets of ideal male friendship as put forth by these classical and early modern authorities.

Of course, later in the play Constabarus must live up to these lofty declarations of friendship by facing public dishonor and death, for Herod returns to Palestine and promptly orders the deaths of Constabarus and the men he had tried to protect. Yet, even when marching to his execution, Constabarus praises "the sacred name of friend" and expresses his readiness to die for the sons of Babas by declaring, "friends should die / Alone their friends' disaster to prevent" (4.6 9, 26-27). To the end, then, Constabarus fulfills the ideals of *amicitia* by sacrificing everything—his high social position, his political power, and his life—for his friends. Thus far, Cary's depiction of male friendship would seem to be entirely positive: Constabarus' protection of the sons of Babas demonstrates the capacity of those united by friendship to resist tyranny, while his unjust execution demonstrates what is lost in a political environment that punishes rather than encourages friendship.

However, immediately after making his noble speech about the sacred nature of male friendship, Constabarus launches on a misogynistic tirade that condemns the "wavering crew" of womankind as a whole (4.6 33). Of course, he is perfectly justified to feel injured by one woman, Salome, who betrayed him to Herod. However, he reviles not only her but all women by characterizing them as "tigers, lionesses, hungry bears, / Tear-massac'ring hyenas!" (4.6 38-39). He declares, "You [women] are to nothing constant but to ill; / You are with naught but wickedness endued; / your loves are set on nothing but your will" (4.6 67-69). In the space of only thirty lines, Constabarus manages to characterize womankind as bestial, inconstant, hypocritical, bloodthirsty,

deceptively beautiful, prideful, foolish, unlawful, and destructive. The second son of Babas follows suit by rejoicing that his own and his friends' impending deaths will free them from women forever, asking, "Are we not blest?" (4.6 73). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has argued that male-dominated societies such as early modern England (and ancient Palestine, for that matter) depended on "the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men" (26). In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Constabarus and the sons of Babas affirm their friendship not by trading actual women but by exchanging the rhetoric of misogyny.

Feminist critics have, understandably, been troubled by Constabarus' last speech. After all, Constabarus is not an obvious villain whose words we may easily dismiss. In fact, he is an essentially positive character whose very name highlights his constancy to his friends. Why, then, does Cary place the play's most virulently misogynistic statements in his mouth? This quandary has led some critics to suggest that Cary accepted the rhetoric of female inferiority. For instance, Betty Travitsky writes:

the internalization of negative imagery and of patriarchal constructs of women by a woman writer—particularly by a woman writer as learned and pious as Elizabeth Cary—is surely chilling evidence of the pervasiveness of the patriarchal attitudes that underlay and determined women's place in Renaissance English society. (192)

Yet, I see no compelling reason to take Constabarus' opinions for Cary's own. Indeed, I would claim that the exaggerated nature of Constabarus' complaints against women encourages us to question their validity. Moreover, as Lewalski has argued, neo-Senecan closet dramas, which were "often perceived as dangerous by Elizabethan and Jacobean censors precisely because they allow for the clash of ideological positions," (179), do not vest unambiguous moral authority in any single voice, even a voice as noble as that of Constabarus.

In fact, I believe Cary places Constabarus' complaints against women immediately after his praise of male friendship precisely to demonstrate that the rhetoric of ideal male friendship is dependent on another type of rhetoric—that of misogyny. In other words, Cary uses the dramatic movement of the play to undermine Constabarus' earlier tribute to ideal male friendship. Ilona Bell has observed that several sections of the play's dialogue form individual sonnets and other lyrical poems. Constabarus' lyrical praise of male friendship constitutes one of these moments, and if, as Bell claims, Cary uses the "Elizabethan sonnet and lyric [to] dramatize a moment in time," she also shows us what happens after that moment has passed (20). Constabarus' poetic tribute to friendship repeats a culturally celebrated ideal, but the exaggeratedly misogynistic statements that follow this tribute expose the exclusion and even vilification of women upon which this noble ideal often rests.

This exclusion of women serves to define ideal male friendship by demarcating its boundaries. Alan Bray has suggested that negative images of women served to "cover up" and heal divisions between men: "The domination and 'governance' of women provided—actually in household and in the streets—a ready basis on which men could co-operate and a thing on which they could truly unite" (199). What is "covered up" in this case is Herod's accountability. Tellingly, Constabarus never mentions that it is in fact a male ruler who ordered his execution, and he concludes his speech by asserting that even the best of women are "worse than men" (4.6 72). As Tina Krontiris argues,

Constabarus and the sons of Babas are "victims of Herod's tyrannical rule . . . yet taking Herod's position as given, they throw the blame for what befalls them on women" (88). By ignoring Herod's responsibility for his unjust execution and by contrasting duplicitous women with virtuous men, Constabarus further exalts the sacrifice he is making for his male friends and glorifies the death that they are about to face for each other. Seemingly, he and the sons of Babas can only truly think of themselves as honorable, constant, and faithful—the very qualities required by *amicitia*—by characterizing women as dishonorable, inconstant, and faithless. Such differentiation reinforces their homosocial bond, but it also obscures Herod's responsibility. The rhetoric of misogyny inherent in the tradition of ideal male friendship thus limits its usefulness as a mode of political resistance.

Constabarus' scaffold speech also reveals the anxiety about heterosexual erotic desire that lies at the heart of many early modern celebrations of male friendship.⁷⁹ As Shannon notes, "Renaissance friendship's intersubjective condition founds itself on emphatic principles of sameness; its most consistent impulse is homonormative" (19). In Cary's play, erotic love for women disrupts the homonormative nature of male friendship. After Constabarus lists the many failings of women, the second son of Babas proclaims, "had I leave to live, / I would forever lead a single life / And never venture on a devilish wife" (4.6 76-68). Constabarus carries this rejection of heterosexual desire and reproduction even further by declaring, "Twere better that the human race should fail /

⁷⁹ In using the terms heterosexual and homosexual, I understand that they are necessarily anachronistic to the time period I am discussing. While I use these terms to discuss the play's exploration of the differences and tensions between erotic male friendship and erotic relationships between men and women, I attempt to avoid loading them with the assumptions about personal identity that they typically carry in the 21st century. Here, I concur with Tison Pugh's claim that "Despite the awkwardness of anachronism, these words allow us to see medieval [and Renaissance] literature in terms true to its complexity" (12).

Than be by such a mischief multiplied" (4.6 61-62). This "mischief" refers, of course, to women, but it also refers to the actual act of reproduction, heterosexual sex. According to these ideal male friends—the very embodiments of *amicitia*—heterosexual marriage and intercourse are, unlike male friendship, deeply disruptive and undesirable. Of course, this uneasiness with heterosexual intercourse, born of the dichotomy between women's ability to reproduce and the cultural belief in their inferiority, stretches as far back as Euripides' Hippolytus, who complains that Zeus, "to propagate the human race ... should not have provided this from women, / but mortals ought to place bronze or iron / or a weight of gold in your temples / and buy offspring in exchange for a set value" (118-119). Hippolytus imagines replacing women with a sort of divine exchange system, but early modern texts more often offer the stability of male friendship as an alternative to the instabilities of heterosexual desire. The speaker of William Shakespeare's 144th sonnet, for example, contrasts the "purity" of his male friend, his "better angel," to the "foul pride" of his "worser spirit, a woman coloured ill." Here, the speaker not only finds heterosexual desire disruptive (or, indeed, in the language of the sonnet, demonic) but also fears that it will corrupt the "purity" of his friendship with the young man. The purity of male friendship—a relationship between equals—thus stands in contrast to but also seems strangely vulnerable to the corruption of heterosexual desire.

Tom MacFaul asserts that heterosexual romantic love and male friendship appear to be incompatible in so many early modern texts precisely because "the Humanist ideal of friendship bears some similarity to romantic love; the Humanist ideal in fact seems to want to displace love as a priority in men's lives" (65). He goes on to claim that this resemblance places "a great deal of pressure on friendship," but I would also suggest that it places at least an equal amount of pressure on romantic love (MacFaul 65). Indeed, early modern texts on friendship were often extremely careful to differentiate friendship and heterosexual erotic love.⁸⁰ Montaigne, for example, claims that male friendship produces a "generall & univerall heate, and equally tempered, a constant and setled heate, all pleasure and smoothnes, that hath no pricking or stinging in it," but he declares that a man's passion for a woman is "a rash and wavering fire, wavering and diverse: the fire of an ague subject to fittes and stints, and that hath but slender hold-fast of us" (91).⁸¹ The constant and steady warmth of masculine friendship, Montaigne indicates, is far more lasting than the intense but dangerous burning of heterosexual love. In fact, heterosexual love is dangerous precisely because it, unlike virtuous male friendship, is based on difference rather than sameness. If male friendship is predicated on equality, heterosexual love is "a monstrous form of male subordination, not only to a passion but to a person, an inferior, a woman" (Shannon 65). The idealizing discourse of male friendship therefore positions itself in opposition to both the weakness of women and the dangerous passions of heterosexual love.

In one of the play's most forceful examples of this conflict between heterosexual love and male friendship, Salome's lover Silleus, thinking to defend his beloved's honor,

⁸⁰ I stress heterosexual erotic love because male friendship and same-sex eroticism were by no means mutually exclusive (as Shakespeare's 144th sonnet indicates), nor do early modern writers on friendship work so diligently to differentiate the two. For an extended study of male friendship and homoeroticism, see Bray's *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*.

⁸¹ The translator, John Florio, may have worked a double-entendre into this passage when he translates "qui n'a rien d'aspre et de poignant" as "that hath no pricking or stinging in it." That male friendship "hath no pricking" at first seems to be exactly Montaigne's point. However, Montaigne then goes on to discuss the benefits of an eroticized friendship of both body and mind: "such a genuine and voluntarie acquaintance might be contracted, where not onely mindes had this entire jouissance, but also bodies, a share of the alliance, and where man might wholy be engaged: It is certain, that friendship would thereby be more compleate and full" (91-92).

challenges Constabarus to a duel. Constabarus defeats Silleus soundly but then takes him home and cares for him. Surprised by Constabarus' kindness, Silleus says:

Thanks, noble Jew. I see a courteous foe.
Stern enmity to friendship can no art.
Had not my heart and tongue engaged me so,
I would from thee no foe, but friend, depart.
My heart to Salome is tied too fast
To leave her love for friendship; yet my skill
Shall be employed to make your honor last,
And I will honor Constabarus still. (2.4 106-113)

In contrast to the total lack of female alliances in the play, here a former foe becomes a potential friend when he recognizes his adversary's virtue. However, Cary once again places this admirable male friendship—in this case, arising from the honorable treatment of an injured enemy—in context by demonstrating its incompatibility with heterosexual love. Silleus praises the ability of friendship to overcome "stern enmity," but he also recognizes that his love for Salome is irreconcilable with his newfound respect for her husband. In his own words, he feels that he would have to "leave her love for friendship," and he only expresses his feelings of friendship for Constabarus conditionally: he "*would* from thee no foe, but friend, depart" if his heart were not already dedicated to Salome (111, 109, my italics). Tellingly, this interaction between Silleus and Constabarus is entirely Cary's creation, for in Josephus' account, Salome falls in love with Silleus only after her husband's death. This invented episode once again allows Cary to display the virtuous possibilities of ideal male friendship while also

criticizing its limitations. If perfect male friendship can only be articulated through an accompanying misogynistic discourse, she indicates, such a discourse also sets up a false binary between friendship and erotic, heterosexual love. Like Silleus, no character in Cary's play is able to maintain both friendship and romantic love; they inevitably have to choose one or the other.

Silleus, of course, makes the wrong choice, for his beloved is the deceitful Salome. Salome, who is scheming, selfish, and ultimately murderous, actually is inferior to her husband. In this, she would seem to justify all of Constabarus' complaints against women. Yet, Cary constructs Salome's villainy in specifically masculine terms. When Salome reveals her intention to divorce her husband, he incredulously asks, "Are Hebrew women now transformed to men? / Why do you not as well our battles fight, / And wear our armor? Suffer this, and then / Let all the world be topsy-turved quite!" (1.6 47-50). As Elaine Beilin asserts, Salome's transgressive behavior "raises the specter of the 'mannish woman' and the 'womanish man,' both signs of divinely arranged order turned upside down" (168). Salome's fickleness in love is not, then, a fault shared by all women; rather, Constabarus describes his wife's unfaithfulness and her wish for a divorce as specifically, and unnaturally, masculine. In fact, it is actually Salome's brother Herod who most embodies the quality of inconstancy. He divorces his first wife, Doris, in order to forge an alliance with the beautiful and royal Mariam even though his vows of love for Doris once "came pouring like the rain, / Which all affirmed my face without compare, / And that, if thou mightst Doris' love obtain, / For all the world besides thou didst not care" (2.3 25-28). The only difference, then, between Herod and Salome is that his fickleness is sanctioned by law.

Women's exclusion from the tradition of ideal male friendship, Cary indicates, is therefore not a result of their unique inability to fulfill its tenets of constancy and faithfulness. What Constabarus identifies as woman's innate deficiency turns out to be rather a product of differing standards for men and women, and Cary demonstrates that it is precisely these proscriptions that society places on women—and on women's speech in particular—that foreclose their participation in friendship.⁸² Therefore, rather than locating the exclusion of women from friendship in their natural inability to fulfill its demands, Cary identifies the societal structures that make it difficult for women to participate in the type of idealized friendship that Constabarus and the sons of Babas enjoy. We have already seen that the play's political and social environment discourages friendship between women by pitting them against one another. This patriarchallystructured environment also shuts down possibilities for friendships between men and women by placing strict restrictions on women's speech. Cary indicates that such restrictions are particularly relevant for the married woman, further deepening the play's divide between heterosexual relationships and friendship. Cary introduces this theme early in the play when Constabarus admonishes his wife for speaking to Silleus: "Oh, Salome, how much you wrong your name, / Your race, your country, and your husband most! / A stranger's private conference is shame" (1.6 1-3). Even though Constabarus does not suspect his wife of adultery at this point in the play, he urges her to "seek to be both chaste and chastely deemed" (1.6 20). This line echoes the motto, "Bee and Seeme," that Cary later had inscribed on her daughter's wedding ring (*Her Life* 118).

⁸² The Chorus seems to make the same mistake as Constabarus when it interprets Mariam's ambivalence about Herod's rumored death as a moral failing rather than as a response to specific events. When Herod dies, Mariam feels torn because she remembers both the love he bore her and his responsibility for her relatives' deaths, but the Chorus ascribes her reaction to "a wavering mind" and "expectation of variety" (2.0 6, 26).

Chastity is important, but Cary seems to have been aware that, for women, the appearance of chastity is equally so.

Of course, we know that Salome is guilty of adultery. Here, a woman's private words do represent a betrayal of her husband. However, Cary indicates that this blanket prohibition against "private conference" covers the chaste and unchaste alike. After Sohemus and Mariam privately discuss Herod's impending return, the Chorus discourses on the duties of a wife, declaring, "Tis not enough for one that is a wife / To keep her spotless from an act of ill, / But from suspicion she should free her life, / And bare herself of power as well as will" (Chorus 1-4). Mariam's private words to Sohemus automatically place her under suspicion even though the Chorus at first does not indicate that she is guilty of anything other than a careless disregard for appearances. However, the Chorus' proscriptions grow progressively stronger:

> That wife her hand against her fame doth rear That more than to her lord alone will give A private word to any second ear

When to their husbands they themselves do bind Do they not wholly give themselves away? Or give they but their body, not their mind, Reserving that, though best, for other's prey? No sure, their thoughts no more can be their own, And therefore should to none but one be known. (Chorus 13-15; 19-24) A wife's private speech to "*any* second ear," the Chorus declares, becomes a form of adultery, for she is sharing the best part of herself, her thoughts, with someone other than her husband (Chorus 15, my italics). The Chorus' restriction seems overly severe, if not downright impracticable, even by the standards of seventeenth-century England. As Barbara J. Harris's study of fifteenth and sixteenth-century marriages reveals, aristocratic husbands often entrusted their wives with business that would necessarily have involved speaking to male servants, associates, and family friends.⁸³ Even though Cary's later advice to her married daughter indicates that she understood the value that appearances held for a wife, the Chorus seems to place prohibitions on women's speech that no woman could actually follow.

In fact, according to the Chorus, married women should not only avoid speaking their minds to anyone other than their husbands, but they should also relinquish ownership of those minds, for "their thoughts no more can be their own" (Chorus 23). The negative ramifications this belief holds for women's friendships are clear, for, as Cavendish asserts, "it is our Minds that make Friendship" (*The World's Olio X4v*). If, as the Chorus claims, a woman cannot speak to anyone other than her husband without revealing "a common mind," she certainly cannot be friends with anyone other than him (Chorus 30). In Chapter One on Isabella Whitney, I examined the suspicions elicited by a single woman's friendship with an unrelated man. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary indicates that wives face similar suspicions when they forge friendships outside of their marriages. However, she also demonstrates the illogic of this conflation of women's

⁸³ Harris claims that "most wives emerged as their husbands' de facto, if junior, partners in supervising their families and managing their assets. Once women had proved their competence, the majority of men delegated considerable power and control over their resources to them, whatever they thought in the abstract about female abilities and male authority" (64).

friendships and women's sexuality by portraying a chaste and virtuous friendship between Mariam and her husband's counselor Sohemus. Mariam and Sohemus fulfill many of the principles of ideal friendship even as their relationship challenges the exclusionary definition of that friendship. Like the homosocial bond between Constabarus and the sons of Babas, this friendship is predicated on liberty of speech and a virtuous resistance to Herod's tyranny; however, unlike that bond, the friendship between Mariam and Sohemus challenges the likeness *topos* of the discourse of ideal male friendship by crossing gender lines—lines that much of the early modern discourse on male friendship deemed uncrossable.⁸⁴

The Chorus' condemnation of women's speech outside of marriage immediately follows Mariam's and Sohemus' first scene together, indicating that it views her private words with her husband's counselor as intellectually, if not physically, adulterous. However, Mariam's conversation with Sohemus concerns not love but survival under a tyrannical husband and king: after learning that Herod is alive, she vows to forsake his bed, and Sohemus counsels her against endangering herself by angering her husband unnecessarily. The anxious words they exchange are clearly not those of illicit lovers. In fact, Sohemus claims that Mariam's extraordinary beauty inspires in him not lust, but respect: "Thine eyes' grave majesty keeps all in awe, / And cuts the wings of every loose desire; / Thy brow is table to the modest law. / Yet though we dare not love, we may admire" (3.3 91-94). While this rejection of sexual desire may have more to do with temptation overcome than with admiration based solely on internal qualities, Sohemus praises Mariam's chastity and virtue even more than he does her beauty: "But fare thee

⁸⁴ Montaigne, for instance, writes, "Seeing (to speake truely), that the ordinary sufficiencie of women, cannot answer this conference and communication, the nurse of this sacred bond: nor seeme their mindes strong enough to endure the pulling of a knot so hard, so fast, and durable" (91).

well, chaste queen! Well may I see / The darkness palpable, and rivers part, / The sun stand still—nay, more, retorted be— / But never woman with so pure a heart" (3.3 87-90).⁸⁵ In Josephus' account, Mariam cajoles Sohemus with "pretty presents and feminine flatteries," and he betrays Herod only to curry favor with the beautiful and politically powerful queen (397). Cary, however, emphasizes the pure nature of Mariam's and Sohemus' relationship. Like Constabarus' friendship with the sons of Babas, this seems to be a "friendship fixed on virtue," but in this case, the gender of the participants renders them vulnerable to accusations of sexual transgression (2.2 28).

Herod believes that Mariam's and Sohemus' relationship is adulterous at least in part because he cannot conceive of friendship between a man and a woman. In this, his beliefs are firmly in line with the classical tradition of male friendship. Yet, while that tradition excludes women from ideal friendship because they are allegedly neither strong nor independent enough to fulfill its demands, Herod, like the Chorus, assumes that a woman cannot be friends with a man because any woman who speaks to a man other than her husband is automatically sexually and morally suspect. Significantly, even though Salome engineers a (rather flimsy) ruse that makes it seem as if Mariam is trying to poison Herod, nobody at first suggests to him that she has been sexually unfaithful. This is a conclusion he reaches independently when he learns that Sohemus revealed his order to kill Mariam if he were not to return from Rome. In a remarkable leap of logic, Herod moves from his discovery of Sohemus' disobedience to an immediate assumption of his wife's infidelity:

⁸⁵ I am arguing that Sohemus' love for Mariam is virtuous, but not necessarily asexual. His fulsome praise of her virtue suggests that her very chastity inspires his love and devotion. This bears some similarity to Castiglione's description of courtly love in *The Book of the Courtier*, in which the beauty of a virtuous lady inspires her admirer to pursue higher thoughts of virtue.

Oh, damned villain! Did he falsify
The oath he swore ev'n of his own accord?
Now do I know thy falsehood, painted devil,
Thou white enchantress. Oh, thou art so foul
That hyssop cannot cleanse thee, worst of evil.
A beauteous body hides a loathsome soul.
Your love Sohemus, moved by his affection,
Though he have ever heretofore been true,
Did blab, forsooth, that I did give direction,
If we were put to death, to slaughter you. (4.4 15-24)

Herod focuses on Mariam's physical attractiveness; she is a "painted devil," a "white enchantress," and he assumes that only her "beauteous body" could have motivated Sohemus to disobey his order. While Sohemus takes the Neo-Platonic view that Mariam's beauty is a sign of her inner virtue, Herod degrades it in his assumption of her infidelity. The possibility of a friendship between Mariam and Sohemus—or Sohemus' refusal to carry out an immoral command—never occurs to Herod; the exchange of private speech between Mariam and Sohemus is alone enough to convict Mariam of adultery. Herod even more explicitly links sexual promiscuity with female speech when he tells Salome, "She's unchaste; / Her mouth will ope to ev'ry stranger's ear" (4.7 77-78). This image links a woman's mouth to her genitalia, opening to "ev'ry stranger." Free speech, one of the characteristics of ideal male friendship, becomes for the female friend a sign of sexual betrayal. That Cary puts this conflation of women's speech and sexuality in a despot's mouth points to the tyranny implicit in this point of view. Herod's passionate love for Mariam slides easily into the type of misogyny voiced by Constabarus, which is yet another reason love and friendship appear to be so incompatible in this play. If Mariam cannot form friendships outside of her marriage—or indeed, even talk to men other than Herod—without risking dishonor, to whom exactly is she supposed to speak? Certainly, Cary implies, not Herod. While the emerging ideal of companionate marriage advocated friendship and respect between husband and wife, it did not provide an outlet when one partner proved incapable of fulfilling this ideal. This is exactly the problem that Milton addresses in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*: "a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage," he declares, but when such intellectual communion proves impossible due to the shortcomings of one's spouse, "such a marriage is no marriage" (707). Milton speaks only from the husband's point of view, but Cary approaches this problem from the even more circumscribed position of the wife.

Mariam cannot be friends with her husband because he expressly does not want to hear what she has to say. Even though Herod urges her to talk,—"Oh, speak, that I thy sorrow may prevent . . . Be my commandress, be my sovereign guide: / To be by thee directed I will woo,"—he becomes infuriated when she actually voices her discontent (4.3 10, 12-13). In fact, as Margaret Ferguson has pointed out, "it is precisely because Mariam speaks her mind not only to others but also, and above all, to her husband that she loses her life" (242). Rejecting the honest communication that would characterize true friendship between husband and wife, Herod, like any tyrant, will only accept the words he wants to hear. Rather than listen to his wife's complaints, he orders her to "smile, my dearest Mariam, do but smile" (4.3 57). Eerily, after he has had Mariam killed, Herod madly echoes his earlier command: "Bid her now / Put on fair habit, stately ornament, / And let no frown o'ershade her smoothest brow" (141-143). Herod may regret killing his wife, but even in his repentance he can only imagine Mariam as he wants her to be: beautiful, smiling, and silent.

Tyranny within marriage, marked by Herod's extreme jealousy, therefore discourages the type of friendship between husband and wife advocated by the ideal of companionate marriage by foreclosing an open exchange of views. Mariam cannot be friends with Herod, who refuses to listen to her honest speech, but his unreasonable jealousy, coupled with the failure of female bonds and the cultural proscriptions voiced by the Chorus, also precludes any possibility for friendship outside of marriage. By the end of the play, Mariam's isolation is complete. Herod's marital and political tyranny come together in her fate, for she is punished not only for forming a friendship—albeit a chaste one—outside of her marriage but also for speaking the truth to a tyrant. In fact, Mariam's angry accusations directly contribute to Herod's willingness to believe in her infidelity; he essentially silences his wife through death because she speaks an unpleasant truth. As I discuss in Chapter One, Robert Cleaver's A Godly Forme of Household Government suggests that women may offer modest counsel within marriage, even though the final decision always rests with the husband (88). Mariam's angry accusations are probably not the type of modest advice that Cleaver envisions, but they are the type of sharp and truthful admonition that the good friend is supposed to offer to the erring friend and the good counselor is supposed to offer to the erring ruler.

Herod also preemptively rejects the speech of Sohemus, who epitomizes classical and humanist conceptions of the upright counselor. When Mariam swears to forsake Herod's bed, Sohemus advises her against such a rash move by declaring, "If your command should me to silence drive, / It were not to obey, but to betray. / Reject and slight my speeches, mock my faith, / Scorn my observance, call my counsel naught; / Though you regard not what Sohemus saith, / Yet will I ever speak my thought" (3.3 23-27). Here he claims the right to counsel his friend and advise against what he understands to be a poor decision even if Mariam chooses to disregard his advice. His belief that to remain silent "were not to obey, but to betray" signals his refusal to be a flatterer and echoes Cicero's advice to "let that influence [of friendship] be employed in advising, not only with frankness, but, if the occasion demands, even with sternness" (157). The frankness of the friend aligns with the frankness of the honest counselor, who must be willing to offer advice that runs counter to the wishes of his sovereign. It is significant then, that Cary describes Sohemus' execution as a silencing. When Herod learns that Sohemus has revealed his order, he declares, "Go, let him die; / Stay not to suffer him to speak a word," thus stilling the voice of an honest counselor in anticipation of the truth he may speak (4.4 13-14).

Rather than listen to either Sohemus or his wife, Herod chooses instead to listen to the flatterer Salome, who, like Shakespeare's Iago, flatters her sovereign by feeding his worst fears. Salome does not tell Herod exactly what he wants to hear, but she does play upon his unstable emotions to serve her own ends. As Herod wavers over Mariam's execution, Salome reminds him of his wife's supposed adultery, asking, "Sohemus' love and hers shall be forgot? / "Tis well, in truth. That fault may be her last, / And she may mend, though yet she love you not" (4.7 114-116). Ironically, this harsh reminder of Mariam's lack of love for Herod treacherously mimics the frankness of the true friend. Most classical and early modern writings on friendship wrestle with the problem of distinguishing friends from flatterers, but this task becomes even more difficult when flatterers pretend to offer the friend's blunt and honest counsel. Cicero admitted that this form of flatterer "is very hard to recognize, since he often fawns even by opposing, and flatters and cajoles by pretending to quarrel" (205). However, while Salome's mocking tone and constant reminders of Herod's supposed cuckoldry may seem like strange forms of flattery, she does in fact flatter Herod's ego by encouraging him to think of himself as a victim. This is the central difference between Mariam's sharp speech and Salome's: while Mariam reminds Herod of injuries he has caused others, Salome reminds him of injuries supposedly done to him. This focus on victimization rather than responsibility allows Salome to portray herself as the honest speaker of unpleasant truths and Mariam as the flatterer who "speaks a beauteous language, but within / Her heart is false as powder" (4.7 73-74).

However, Mariam refuses to manipulate Herod's emotions by separating language from its meaning. She tells Sohemus, "I know I could enchain him with a smile, / And lead him captive with a gentle word. / I scorn my look should ever man beguile, / Or other speech than meaning to afford" (3.3 45-48). Mariam is actually very much like Sohemus in her insistence on her right to speak freely. In this, they partly fulfill the likeness *topos* of the rhetoric of ideal friendship. Just as Sohemus declares, "Yet will I ever speak my thought," Mariam refuses to censor herself by severing her words from her emotions. As we have seen, Mariam's fate hinges on Herod's interpretation of her relationship with Sohemus, but the candor with which Mariam and Sohemus address each other, interpreted by Herod and the Chorus as adulterous, is actually one of the signs of true friendship. When Sohemus tells Mariam that Herod is still alive, Mariam frankly admits to him that she "will not to [Herod's] love be reconciled! / With solemn vows I have forsworn his bed" (3.3 15-16). As Shannon notes of this scene, "this level of communicative freedom is a benefit associated with ideal friendship" (77)⁸⁶ As I noted earlier, Sohemus also addresses Mariam with the honest, admonitory speech so characteristic of *amicitia* when he advises her to appease Herod. In fact, it is ironic that he, like Herod and the Chorus, discourages Mariam from engaging in "unbridled speech" (3.3 65). However, Sohemus advises her to temper her language not because he equates female speech with sexual impurity but rather because he worries (and rightfully so) that Mariam's honesty will "endanger her without desart" (3.3 66). Even though Sohemus disagrees with Mariam's course of action, he is the only character in Cary's play who expresses genuine concern for her safety and places her well-being above his own.

Even though they are alike in their verbal candor, Mariam and Sohemus are not entirely the mirror images or other selves depicted in the classical rhetoric of friendship, for they differ in both gender and station. However, Cary indicates that they are similar in what truly matters—their willingness to speak the truth. Moreover, this verbal honesty illustrates their moral resistance to tyranny. Like the ideal male friends Constabarus and the sons of Babas, both Mariam and Sohemus have the courage to defy Herod's tyrannical commands. Cary describes Sohemus' resistance to Herod as primarily verbal, as when Sohemus declares, "it shall my soul content, / My breath in Mariam's service

⁸⁶ Shannon notes the freedom with which Mariam speaks to Sohemus but does not claim that the two are friends. She argues, rather, that this scene is a failed attempt on Mariam's part to enact the masculine virtues of forthrightness and honesty.

shall be spent" (3.3 95-96). Mariam, who opens the play by asking, "How off have I with public voice run on?" also resists Herod through her verbal honesty (1.1 1). Her true virtue therefore lies not in her chastity—a passive virtue that is never even tempted—but in her courageous willingness to speak out against the injustice of her husband and king. Cicero claims that virtue is the bedrock of friendship, but, as we have seen, virtue is defined differently for men and women. Yet, I would claim that, in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, verbal resistance to tyranny is a virtue that both men and women can fulfill. Through the character of Constabarus, Cary illustrates the virtues of classical male friendship—its nobility, its selflessness, and its power to defy tyranny—while also criticizing its exclusivity and its reliance on a false misogynistic discourse. However, in the relationship between Mariam and Sohemus, Cary provides us with an example of a friendship based not on factors over which these characters have no control—namely, their gender and station—but on their shared resistance to tyranny.

Of course, such virtuous friendships face harsh penalties under the rule of a tyrannical king. Cary emphasizes the strength of the friendship between Mariam and Sohemus by demonstrating that Sohemus is just as willing to die for Mariam as Constabarus is to die for his male friends. When Sohemus learns that Herod is still alive, he knows that Herod will kill him in retaliation for his act of principled disobedience. However, he states, "Yet, life, I quit thee with a willing spirit, / And think thou couldst not better be employed" (3.3 83-85). The friendship between Mariam and Sohemus crosses gender lines but still displays the noble, self-sacrificing, and virtuous aspects of *amicitia*. I believe it is important to stress that Cary does not condemn friendship itself in *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Indeed, idealized friendship inspires noble acts of self-sacrifice

in both Constabarus and Sohemus. However, she does challenge the misogyny that often underlies the rhetoric of ideal male friendship as well as the classical assumption that only two men alike in station can fulfill *amicitia* by portraying a positive friendship between a man and a woman. As Cary's opening sonnet to the other Elizabeth Cary, her female "beloved" and "second friend," indicates, true friendship can flourish between any two people alike in virtue, regardless of their gender.

Second Selves or Sinister Doubles? Edward II

In The Tragedy of Mariam, Cary demonstrates that the Ciceronian ideal of friendship's emphasis on similarity fails to recognize friendships that do involve significant difference. There, Herod misinterprets the friendship between Mariam and Sohemus because he is incapable of identifying it *as* friendship. In Cary's later work, The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II, she identifies another problem with the radical similarity implied by the trope of the friend as a second self, cautioning that the boundaries between the self and the friend may become dangerously blurred if the friend does, in fact, become an alter idem. In Edward II, the fantasy of the friend as a second self gives way to the nightmare of the sinister double who replaces rather than reinforces one's identity and appropriates rather than supports one's social position. Such a threat is particularly relevant for the ruler, who occupies the highest position in society and therefore cannot engage in the equality of *amicitia* without dangerously diminishing his own authority. The benefits of friendship enjoyed by the common manequality with another, the sharing of goods, and the open communication of one's thoughts—represent, when enacted by a sovereign, a betrayal of the public trust that has been placed in him. As Shannon notes, "Soveraigne amitie' and ethical monarchy, as

perfectly incompatible systems of propriety, demand precisely the opposite actions" (163).⁸⁷ Cary's Edward II attempts to create the equality endorsed by the tradition of ideal male friendship by sharing power with his favorites, but monarchal power appears to be the prize in a zero-sum game: Edward's favorites do not share his authority; they usurp it. By surrendering his sovereign prerogative to inferiors, Edward allows his second selves to abuse his power and hold tyrannical sway over his subjects.

Edward's favorites gain such power by monopolizing his ear. Cary's abiding concern with the duty of monarchs to heed good counsel, evident in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, takes center stage in *Edward II*, where she repeatedly warns against the dangers of listening to only one advisor at a time. Most early modern writings on friendship, however, describe the male friend as a source of helpful counsel. Bacon, for instance, in his essay, "Of Friendship," suggests that counsel from a single friend "that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate" is more beneficial than "scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct" (395). The trope of the friend as a second self reinforces this idea, for the friend who imparts his thoughts to his "other self" unburdens himself with the knowledge that his confidences will be kept. However, just as kings cannot enjoy the equality of *amicitia* without endowing a subject with undue authority, so too are they barred from enjoying only one friend's advice, as Bacon himself seems to recognize in his other essay on friendship, "Of Followers and Friends." There, he claims that for a ruler to be "governed (as we call it) by one is not safe; for it

⁸⁷ Shannon, in her study of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, also notes the incompatibility of kingship and friendship: "Where friendship rules, kingship fails, and participation in friendship exacts the price of sovereign status" (159). I would like to extend this argument by suggesting that Cary's examination of a monarch's friendship reveals problems inherent in the trope of the friend as a second self itself. In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary reveals that the privileging of similarity in the discourse of ideal male friendship encourages misogyny and excludes friendships that do cross gender barriers. In *Edward II*, she demonstrates the danger that the idea of the friend as a second self poses to the male friend himself.

shews softness" (437). A benefit enjoyed by the private man therefore becomes a sign of weakness in the monarch. Cavendish, in the passage I discuss earlier in this chapter, suggests that a king's Privy Council may act as his "bosom friend" by listening to his concerns and offering sound advice (*The World's Olio* X4).⁸⁸ In *Edward II*, the king makes himself vulnerable to flatterers when he ignores the advice that comes to him from such proper channels and listens instead to only one "bosom friend" at a time. Cary's history, itself a recognized form of counsel, cautions that "Admission of the Royal ear to one Tongue only" corrupts not only the king but also the Privy Council itself, for it "ties all the rest, and resembles the Councel-chamber to a School where Boys repeat their Lessons" (62).

Therefore, much like Herod, who listens to Salome rather than his wife or his counselor, Edward II privileges single flatterers over those who speak the corrective language of true friendship or, in the case of the king, good counsel. Also like Herod, Edward vastly underestimates his wife's ability to form alliances outside of marriage. In contrast to the scrupulously honest Mariam, Isabel betrays her royal husband both sexually and politically, but she also seems to understand what Edward does not: that a ruler's strength lies in his or her ability to form political alliances rather than close personal friendships. Indeed, the flexibility of the word friendship in the early modern period encompassed both friendship between individuals and political friendship between nations. Isabel is herself an object of exchange meant to ensure friendship between England and France by creating ties of kinship between her husband and her brother, the French king. Gayle Rubin suggests that women who are exchanged among men "are in

⁸⁸ As a member of the aristocracy, Cary is also promoting her belief in the aristocracy's ability (and duty) to promote good governance.

no position to realize the benefits of their own circulation" (543), but she also points toward the disruptive potential of a woman who, rather than passively act as an object of exchange, attempts to form her own alliances: "It would be in the interests of the smooth and continuous operation of [the exchange of women] if the woman in question did not have too many ideas of her own about whom she might want to sleep with" (547). Isabel's affair with Mortimer, himself "strong in Friends and Kindred," gains her a powerful ally, but her victory over Edward primarily results from her ability to form political and military alliances, precisely the types of friendship that Edward neglects (Cary 92).

Unlike his wife, Edward eschews political alliances and pursues only the Ciceronian ideal of *amicitia*. However, that ideal suggests that male friendship is a relationship born of strength. Cicero advises, "But the fair thing is, first of all, to be a good man yourself and then to seek another like yourself. It is among such men that this stability of friendship . . . may be made secure" (190-191). Friendship, he argues, arises not from necessity but from the pleasure of recognizing virtue in another. By contrast, Edward's friendships with his favorites are signs of his weakness and, more importantly, his tyrannical disposition. While Gaveston and Spencer are both opportunists who take advantage of Edward's affection, Cary makes it clear that these favorites are the symptoms rather than the causes of Edward's inadequacies as a ruler. As Janet Starner-Wright and Susan Fitzmaurice note, "Edward is a two-dimensional character who is flawed from the beginning and remains so to the end" (80). Indeed, Edward I, whom Cary portrays as a just and virtuous king, recognizes that his son in unsuited to follow in his footsteps:

with an unwilling eye he beholds in his Son many sad remonstrances which intimate rather a natural vicious inclination, than the corruption of time, or want of ability to command it. Unless these might be taken off and cleansed, he imagines all his other Cautions would be useless and to little purpose. The pruning of the Branches would improve the Fruit but little, where the Tree was tainted in the root with so foul a Canker. (3)

Removing his son's favorites, or "pruning the Branches," Edward I realizes, would help only superficially when the corruption is internal. Indeed, when the barons do prune a branch by killing Gaveston, the king merely replaces him with Spencer. Like the Hydra's heads, Cary indicates, favorites will spring up as long as there is a weak king to support them.

Edward's favorites do not, therefore, corrupt a good king; rather, they attach themselves to a king who is not independent or virtuous enough to stand alone. Cary writes, "The Royal honour of his Birthright was scarcely invested in his person, when Time (the Touchstone of Truth) shews him to the world a meer Imposture; in Conversation light, in Condition wayward, in Will violent, and in Passion furious and irreconciliable" (2). This description exemplifies early modern conceptions of tyrants.⁸⁹ A legitimate king by birth, Edward II is nevertheless an "Imposture" who succumbs to his passions and privileges his personal desires over the public good. The classical ideal of male friendship, representative of virtue and self-sufficiency, cannot exist in tandem with tyranny; as Aristotle argues, "in the perverted constitutions friendship, like justice, is little found, and least in the worst; for in a tyranny there is little or no friendship" (278).

⁸⁹ Rebecca Bushnell demonstrates the connection that classical and early modern authors drew between personal desire and the illegitimate use of authority: "The Platonic tradition describes the tyrant as giving in to excessive desire, which unseats the sovereignty of reason" (9).

Cary therefore presents Edward's love for his favorites not as an example of classical friendship but rather as a parody of that tradition. For example, alluding to a common example of ideal male friendship, she refers to Edward as Pythias and Gaveston as "his beloved Damon" (11). However, any good humanist would immediately recognize the inappropriate nature of this comparison, for while the friendship of the classical Damon and Pythias inspires mercy in the tyrant Dionysius, Cary's Gaveston only encourages his monarch's tyrannical actions. Similarly, Cary repeatedly evokes the image of the friend as a second self, writing that during Gaveston's banishment, "Their Bodies were divided, but their Affections meet with a higher Inflammation" (24). This description is very close to Aristotle's formulation of friendship as "one soul in two bodies," but Cary's word choice introduces a troubling note. "Inflammation" suggests romantic passion, illness, and, in the early modern period, drunkenness, all three of which involve a loss of control over the self (OED s.v.). If, as Montaigne claims, male friendship is a "constant and setled heate," the inflammation of Edward's affection for his favorites represents amicitia gone awry (91).

Or, perhaps it represents not so much friendship gone awry as it does ideal male friendship carried to its logical extreme. Even though Edward's relationships with his favorites violate the tenets of Ciceronian friendship, these distorted versions of *amicitia* also reveal contradictions in the tradition of ideal male friendship itself. For instance, if the "constant and setled heate" of male friendship can rage into an "inflammation," a loss of control over the self more akin to romantic passion, then the friend as a second self also carries the potential to usurp the self rather than reinforce it. Cary writes that Edward and Gaveston are so close "that the one seem'ed without the other, like a Body without a Soul, or a Shadow without a Substance" (5). Again, she evokes Aristotle, but in this description, Edward and Gaveston are not so much one soul in two bodies as they are bodies *without* souls, shadows *without* substance. Here, the sharing of the soul with the friend actually represents a loss of the self. Of course, Cary's qualified "seem'ed," alerts us to the fact that Gaveston's friendship is insincere; while Edward actually does lose himself in his identification with his friend, Gaveston only seems to do so. A consummate flatterer, Gaveston, "to assure so gracious a Master, strives to fit his humor," and encourages Edward's misrule by licensing his every impulse: "The discourse being in the commendation of Arms, the echo stiles it an Heroick Virtue; if Peace, it was an Heavenly Blessing; unlawful Pleasures, a noble Recreation; and Actions most unjust, a Royal Goodness" (20). Cary describes Gaveston as an empty "echo" who does become Edward's second self, but only by molding himself to fit his sovereign's desires.

However, one participant's insincerity in friendship does not necessarily remove the threat of losing oneself in identification with the friend. In fact, Gaveston's flattery of Edward encourages the king to cede to him an increasing amount of authority: "A short time invests in his person or disposure all the principal Offices and Dignities of the Kingdom . . . nothing is concluded touching the Government or Royal Prerogative, but by his consent and approbation" (20). Just as Cary's earlier reformulation of Aristotle indicates that Edward loses his soul in an attempt to share it with his friend, so here he surrenders his monarchal power when he tries to enact the equality of *amicitia*. Cary describes Gaveston in parasitical terms—he is a "Mushrome," a succubus who feeds on the power of the sovereign—and Edward grows more and more insubstantial as Gaveston gains power: "In the view of these strange passages, the King appear'd so little himself, that the Subjects thought him a Royal Shadow without a Real Substance" (22, 20). This, Cary indicates, is the underside of the trope of the ideal male friend as a second self. The idea of the friend as an *alter idem* offers, on one hand, a reassuring vision of equality between friends, but on the other hand it implies a troubling instability of identity. If the friend is another self, then the self may be replaced.⁹⁰ Edward's sovereignty only increases this threat, for his favorites' usurpation of his authority hazards not only his own individuality but the security of his entire realm by creating "more Kings than one, in one and the self-same Kingdom" (Cary 40). Although the friendships between Edward and his favorites, which are based on weakness, flattery, and dishonesty, in many ways invert the early modern ideal of male friendship, they also raise questions about its endorsement of a radical similarity between friends.

In fact, as I discuss in Chapter One, honest speech and good counsel, correctives to tyranny, demand at least a modicum of difference between friends. As Cicero advises, "friends frequently must be not only advised, but also rebuked" (197). The likeness between friends implied by the classical ideal therefore reaches its limit in the duty of one friend to admonish the other when he errs. Similarly, the corrective rebuke of the honest counselor poses a limit to monarchal power, whereas the sycophancy of the flatterer promotes tyranny by encouraging the monarch to indulge his desires. Cary directly connects flattery to uncontrolled monarchal power when an ambitious page asks Edward, "Are you a King (Great Sir) and yet a Subject? . . . if you command, who dares countroul

⁹⁰ Other early modern texts voiced anxiety about the lack of individuality implied by the trope of the friend as a second self. In Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, for instance, Bel-imperia readily transfers her love from the slain Don Andreas to his best friend, Horatio. After giving Horatio a scarf that she had once given Andreas as a love token, she muses: "Yet what avails to wail Andrea's death, / From whence Horatio proves my second love? / Had he not loved Andrea as he did, / He could not sit in Bel-imperia's thoughts . . I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend" (18). Here, the two friends appear to be interchangeable: one is so easily replaced by the other that mourning the deceased friend becomes unnecessary.

your Actions; which ought to be obeyed, and not disputed?" (10). We are supposed to recognize the danger of this argument: the monarch's power *should* be disputed, Cary suggests, when his desires run counter to the interests of the state. When Edward persuades his council to recall Gaveston from exile, the narrator opines, "It had been far more honourable and advantageous to the State, if this young wanton King had pointblank found a flat denial" (19). Denial and disagreement, born of difference, Cary indicates, are far more advantageous to both the sovereign and the state than the constant agreement of a flattering "second self."

Cary indicates that Edward's council actually fails him when it accedes to his request. Unlike Sohemus in The Tragedy of Mariam, who claims that to withhold his disagreement "were not to obey, but to betray," Edward's counselors lack the courage to oppose their sovereign (3.3 23-27). After Edward asks his council to countenance Gaveston's return, "They sadly silent sit, and view each other, wishing some one would shew undaunted Valour, to tye the Bell about the Cats neck that frights them; but none appears" (14). Cary's narrator disapproves of the council's cowardice but also indicates that its failure ultimately lies with the king. She writes that Edward I had met his counselors "as Friends without assurance," suggesting that this good king had encouraged the liberty of speech advocated by the early modern ideal of friendship (14). If a monarch cannot engage in the equality of *amicitia* without endangering his sovereign position, he can, Cary suggests, at least partly strive for that ideal by encouraging a friendly liberty of speech in his council. However, his son quashes any semblance of friendship between king and counselors by restricting their speech (14). When Parliament puts Spencer on trial, Edward threatens them in advance: "Your Priviledge

gives warrant, speak in freedome; yet let your words be such as may become you; if they flye out to taint my Peace or Honour, this Sanctuary may not serve to give Protection" (60). Here, the king gives lip service to the ideal of free speech but also places strict limits on what may actually be said.

Attempting to silence Parliament and his official advisors before they can say what he does not wish to hear, Edward prefers to listen to a single friend at a time. Here again classical models of male friendship prove problematic when they are literalized, particularly by a sovereign. Classical and early modern discourses on friendship repeatedly use a pair of male friends to exemplify perfect friendship: Laelius and Scipio, Damon and Pythias, Jonathan and David, Titus and Gysippus are thus held up again and again as models worthy of imitation. However, Edward's attempt to imitate these models results in disaster because the business of the monarch is too weighty to entrust to only one advisor. Cary writes:

Neither is it safe for the Royal ear to be principally open to one mans information, or to rely solely on his judgment. Multiplicity of able Servants that are indifferently (if not equally) countenanced, are the strength and safety of a Crown, which gives it glory and luster. When one man alone acts all parts, it begets a world of errour, and endangers not only the Head, but all the Members. (48)⁹¹ As Cary's reference to the body politic indicates, Edward's reliance on a single intimate friend rather than a "Multiplicity" of servants imperils the "strength and safety" of his

⁹¹ This is one of Cary's many asides on the importance of council. In another passage, she even more explicitly advocates disagreement among counselors: "Certainly, in the Regiment of a Kingdom, it is a discreet and wise consideration in Court and Councel to maintain a divided faction, yea, and interchangeably so to countenance them, that the one may be still a fit Counterpoise to the other. The King by this means shall be served with more sincerity and diligence and informed with more truth and plainness" (75).

realm. And indeed, Edward's abuse of friendship radiates outward: when the barons revolt against Spencer, "Soon are they brought to view each others Countenance; where Friend against Friend, and Son against the Father, Brother against the Brother, stood embattl'd: such mischief follows still a Civil Discord" (69-70). Ironically, Edward's attempt to engage in *amicitia* with a single, personal friend destroys the greater bonds of friendship that create concord in society. A wise sovereign, Cary implies, will foster friendship within his realm by considering counsel from a variety of sources rather than attempt to engage in intimate friendships himself.

Both Edward I and the Privy Council incorrectly imagine that marriage will counteract the intimacy of those friendships. The council believes a queen "might become a fit counterpoise to qualifie the Pride of such a swelling greatness" (18), and Edward I is "confident that Wedlock, or the sad weight of a Crown, would in the sense of Honour call him in time off to thoughts more innocent and noble" (3). In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary opposes marriage and friendship by critiquing the misogyny inherent in the discourse of ideal male friendship. Here, the conflict is more explicitly sexualized: Isabel "saw the King a stranger to her bed, and reveling in the wanton embraces of his stoln pleasures, without a glance on her deserving Beauty" (89). I have been referring to Edward's relationships with his favorites as friendship because I believe they represent an attempt to engage in the equality and intimacy of *amicitia*, but, as I have indicated before, the tradition of ideal male friendship held ample space for same-sex desire. The erotic nature of Edward's passion for Gaveston and Spencer is clear: Gaveston is Edward's "Ganymede" (4), and Cary refers to both men as seductive "Syrens" (52). However, that Edward privileges his personal desires over the good of his subjects and allows his

passion for his favorites to usurp his reason is far more problematic, I would argue, than the fact that this passion is same-sex oriented. Indeed, the publication of *Edward II* in 1680, "during the Exclusion Crisis when monarchial prerogative was again under debate and Charles II was under attack for ceding too much power to his mistresses," demonstrates that the history's readers viewed its cautionary tale about the dangers of endowing royal favorites with inappropriate authority as pertinent, regardless of the gender of those favorites (Suzuki, "Fortune is a Stepmother" 90).

In fact, if we look closely at Edward I's hopes for his son's marriage, we see that they are more political than sexual. The old king associates wedlock with "the sad weight of a Crown," and indeed, marriage in royal families was an important political act meant to generate heirs and create ties of kinship among the royal families of Europe (3). Therefore, Edward II's marriage to the French king's sister is less about love than it is about assuming the role and responsibilities of an monarch whose marriage will form essential political alliances. Significantly, Cary repeatedly describes Edward's friendship with Gaveston in terms of youth and immaturity: the "youthful Prince" and his friend, she writes, engage in "all those bewitching Vanities of licentious and unbridled Youth" (4-5), and Edward I urges his counselors to "temper the heat of my youthful Succesor" (7). Edward I's privileging of intimate male friendship over a politically strategic marriage represents, for Cary, the immaturity and irresponsibility of a monarch who refuses to sacrifice his personal affections for the public good. Essentially, when Edward spurns Isabel in favor of Gaveston and Spencer, he also damages the alliance with France that she represents.

However, Cary indicates that it is precisely this type of friendship—the friendship among nations-that most benefits a ruler. While Edward neglects such political friendships in his pursuit of *amicitia*. Isabel, originally an object of exchange meant to seal an alliance between England and France, proves adept at cultivating strategic friendships of her own. Cary immediately gestures toward Isabel's ability to either help or harm the king: Edward returns from his wedding "feifed of a Jewel, which not being rightly valued, wrought his ruine" (19). Isabel is a "Jewel" who could be valuable to her husband, but since he cannot recognize that value, he also cannot recognize the potential danger she poses to his rule. Spencer is more wary of the queen, but he too underestimates her ability to act independently. When he delays her trip to France indefinitely, Isabel and Mortimer escape by pretending to go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury; "Thus," Cary writes, "did our Pilgrims scape the pride and malice of him which little dream'd of this Adventure: his Craft and Care, that taught him all those lessons of Cunning Greatness, here fell apparent short of all Discretion, to be thus overreached by one weak Woman" (92). Even after Isabel's escape, Spencer downplays the threat she poses, assuring Edward, "Alas, what can the Queen a wandring Woman compass, that hath nor Arms, nor Means, nor Men, nor Money?" (93). The sexual connotations of the phrase "wandring Woman" are supposed to diminish the queen, for she wanders not only physically but also sexually in her affair with Mortimer. But this "wandring" also symbolizes her destabilizing ability to move independently outside of the control of the king and of Spencer.

In the above quotation, Spencer assumes that Isabel cannot pose a serious threat without "Arms, nor Means, nor Men, nor Money," but she eventually gains all of these through her rhetorical strengths, which Cary describes as specifically feminine (93). Isabel delivers her petition to the French king, for instance, with "sweetly becoming modestie," and in it she both appeals to familial duty ("a wronged Sister cannot be forsaken") and assures her brother of her subjects' loyalty and love for her: "Though I am here, and those behinde that love me, besides the Justice of my Cause, the strongest motive, I bring the hearts of a distressed Kingdom, that, if you set me right, will fight my Quarrel" (97). Following this speech, "a showre of Chrystal tears enfore'd her silence; which kinde of Rhetorick won a Noble pitie" (97). In this emotional appeal, perhaps inspired by Elizabeth I's strategic use of affective language, Isabel uses traditionally feminine qualities and behaviors to her benefit. Indeed, when later seeking assistance from the Earl of Hainault, Isabel does not hesitate to make "her winning looks (the handmaids of her Hopes) express their best ability,"—unlike Mariam, whose blunt speech and refusal to manipulate Herod with her beauty work against her (114).

However, the plain-spoken Mariam and the politically savvy Isabel are not complete opposites; rather, Cary indicates that Isabel speaks the truth in a more rhetorically effective form:

... humble Sweetness, cloath'd in truth and plainness, invites the ear to hear, the heart to pity. Who by a crooked fortune is forced to try and to implore the help of Strangers, must file his words to such a winning Smoothness, that they betray not him that hears or speaks them; yet must they not be varnish o're with Falshood, or painted with the terms of Art or Rhetorick; this bait may catch some Gudgeons, but hardly him that hath a solid Judgment. (110)⁹²

⁹² Cary, who claims in the "Author's Preface" that she wrote this history to "out-run those weary hours of a deep and sad Passion," was in a similar position. The letters she wrote to Charles I and the Privy Council

Of course, the flatterers Gaveston and Spencer also file their words and speak with "a winning Smoothness," but Cary claims that Isabel's words are effective because they are both carefully crafted *and* free of falsehood. The successful female supplicant, she indicates, will speak the truth but speak it with care.

In *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary demonstrates that the appearance of honesty, for women, is at least as important as honesty itself. Here, she provides an example of a woman who speaks truthfully but also uses the traditionally feminine qualities of modesty and humility to her advantage. Isabel weeps and speaks emotionally, but Cary makes it clear that she, unlike Edward, is actually in full control of her emotions for most of the narrative.⁹³ For instance, even though Isabel's speech moves the French court, it gains her only transitory support. After Spencer bribes the French Council, "The Queens distressed tears are now forgotten; they gave impressions, these a real feeling: words are but wind, but here's a solid substance, that pierc'd not the ear, but hearts of her assistants" (99). When honest speech fails due to the council's corruptibility, Isabel wisely masks her emotions and encourages her followers to do the same. Cary writes, "Though that her heart were fir'd, and swoln with anger, she temporizeth so, 'twas undiscovered" (104). Similarly, Spencer, though suspicious of the queen, is unable to discern her plot to escape England because "she seem'd as pure and clear as Crystal" (90). Of course, such masking, while it furthers Isabel's plans, was also negatively associated with both femininity and tyranny. As Rebecca Bushnell writes, "the tyrant's

after her husband withdrew his support provide another interesting example of this type of supplicatory rhetoric.

⁹³ The significant exception is in the end of the narrative, when Isabel's desire for revenge results in her unmerciful humiliation of Spencer. Cary condemns this action strongly and attributes it to the queen's tyrannical indulgence of her private emotions: "She thus passeth on with a kinde of insulting Tyranny, far short of the belief of her former Vertue and Goodness, not as the antient Romans did their vanquish'd Prisoners, for ostentation, to increase their Triumph; but merely for Revenge, Despite, and *private* Rancour" (128, my italics).

hiding 'inside,' sheltering inside an attractive exterior, evokes the image of woman as the deceiver who hides her thoughts inside herself," and indeed, Isabel's ability to mask her emotions may foreshadow her tyrannical actions at the end of Cary's narrative (20).

However, Cary also indicates that an effective ruler *must* be able to hide his or her thoughts and emotions. After Edward's downfall, she muses, "natural Weakness, or temporary Imperfection, should be always masked, and never appear in publick, since the Court, State, and Kingdom, practice generally by his Example" (139). Indeed, Niccolò Machiavelli, whom Cary refers to by name, also urges princes to practice deception: "it is necessary to be able to cover over this character well, and to be a great hypocrite and dissembler" (76). Machiavelli claims that such dissembling will maintain the prince's power while Cary focuses on the poor example a monarch's unconcealed vices provides to the public, but both characterize masking and concealment as integral to successful rule. Isabel, who seems as "clear as Crystal" whilst formulating plots, thus appears to be a far more successful practicer of statecraft than Edward, who privileges his personal desires over his political responsibility. Edward attempts to follow the tenets of ideal male friendship by sharing every emotion with his favorites, and, in doing so, sacrifices to them his sovereign identity and authority, ⁹⁴ while Isabel carefully conceals her thoughts and emotions until she believes that voicing them will gain an ally. As much as a ruler may benefit from encouraging in his council the honesty and liberty of speech

⁹⁴ In criticizing Edward's behavior, Cary markedly diverges from Montaigne, who writes of his friend Etienne de la Boétie, "Our mindes have jumped so unitedly together, they have with so fervent an affection considered of each other, and with like affection so discovered and sounded, even to the very bottome of each others heart and entrailes, that I did, not onely know his, as well as mine owne, but I would (verily) rather have trusted him concerning any matter of mine, than myself" (93). This description of total knowledge of the friend's mind and heart, evoking Shakespeare's celebration of "the marriage of true minds," clearly contradicts both Cary's and Machiavelli's conception of the successful ruler who conceals his or her (in the case of Machiavelli, just his) thoughts. Montaigne's quotation, while clearly positive, also demonstrates the slippage of the self within ideal male friendship when he claims that he would trust his friend even more than he would trust himself in executing his own affairs.

advocated by the early modern ideal of friendship, Cary implies that the ruler himself (or herself) should be wary of revealing every thought and feeling.

Unlike Edward, who attempts to engage in the equality and similarity of ideal male friendship, Isabel forms useful political friendships in which difference becomes an advantage. Significantly, Cary enters into a digression on the nature of true affection and friendship when Isabel finds a ally in Robert of Artois. Contrasting the French court's betrayal with this faithful friend's continued support, Cary writes, "if Vertue guide the chooser, the beginning is mutual goodness, which still ends in glory. The very height and depth of all Affliction cannot corrupt the worth of such a Friendship, that loves the Man more than it loves his Fortunes" (105). Robert of Artois' friendship for the queen, based on virtue and "mutual goodness," provides Isabel with support when marital and familial ties have failed. Moreover, Cary stresses the purity of this friendship, writing, "The correspondencie of firm Affections is purely innocent, sincerely grounded" (105). The friendship between Robert and Isabel, like that between Mariam and Sohemus, violates the likeness *topos* of the discourse of ideal male friendship but is still predicated on virtue—as well as, in this case, practical necessity. Moreover, Robert provides Isabel with helpful counsel when he advises her to travel to the Holy Roman Empire. Rejecting the "sweet enchantments" of "such as seem'd her friends," Isabel resists the flatterers who advise her to reconcile with Edward and follows instead the counsel of a virtuous friend and ally (101).

This type of honorable and practical friendship involving difference, Cary indicates, is more advantageous to a ruler than the intimate friendships practiced by Edward. Isabel again demonstrates her ability to form alliances in Hainault, where she persuades the Earl of Hainault and his brother to support her cause, as well as in England, where she rallies the support of the barons and the Commons in order to overthrow the king. Isabel and Edward in fact follow opposing trajectories: at the beginning of the narrative, Isabel is so isolated that she is forced to receive her enemy Spencer, but she eventually garners enough friends and allies to defeat both him and her husband. By contrast, Edward, who devotes himself to friendships that mimic the classical and early modern ideal but fails to form the kind of strategic and political alliances that Isabel cultivates, finds himself completely friendless in the end. When Parliament deposes the king, he "that day found neither Kinsman, Friend, Servant, or Subject to defend his Interest" (131). Edward's neglect of the public good in favor of personal friendship results, ultimately, in friendlessness in every sense of the word—personal, familial, and political.

Therefore, having already surrendered his sovereign powers and, in a sense, his very identity to his favorites, Edward at last surrenders the title of king. However, after his defeat, Cary's sympathy shifts away from Isabel and toward the forsaken king. Isabel carries her prerogatives as wife and queen too far; the queen and Parliament have the right to counsel and correct Edward, Cary asserts, but not the right to depose him: "they could not else so generally have forgot the Oaths of their Alligiance, so solemnly sworn to their Old Master, whom they had just cause to restrain from his Errours, but no ground of colour to deprive him of his Kingdom" (131). While Cary takes an understanding tone toward Isabel's affair with Mortimer and portrays the queen in a positive light as she musters support throughout Europe, she harshly condemns her deposition of Edward and her final, tyrannical actions. Isabel's gratuitous humiliation of Spencer, Cary writes,

"was at best too great and deep a blemish to suit a Queen, a Woman, and a Victor" (129). The woman who cannily reigned in her emotions when she was not in power thus falls prey to the same error her husband made: she allows her personal desires—in this case, for revenge—to take precedence over her duties as a sovereign. In the end, Cary condemns neither Isabel's resistance to an unjust ruler and husband nor the political alliances and friendships that she forms but rather her abuse of the power that those alliances gain her.

Cary's tyrants—Herod, Edward II, and, finally, Isabel—all succumb to their personal emotions and desires. Virtuous male friendship was often envisioned by classical and early modern writers as a corrective to such tyranny, but Cary indicates that the pursuit of such an ideal may, paradoxically, actually lead to tyranny. The honesty, virtue, and liberty of speech advocated by the Ciceronian ideal do provide modes of resistance to unjust and illegitimate rule, but that ideal's valorization of similarity becomes problematic in the political sphere. When Edward II creates second selves by endowing his favorites with equal authority, for instance, he surrenders not only his own sovereign identity but also endangers the stability of his realm. Aristotle accords the friendship of two equals a higher status than friendships "of utility" that are based on material benefit, but in *Edward II*, Cary indicates that it is precisely such useful friendships, rather than those that follow the ideal of *amicitia*, that ensure the strength of a crown (262). Isabel's political alliances with male rulers therefore prove more effective in the end than Edward's close friendships with his "second selves." Cary also delineates the dangers of privileging similarity over difference in The Tragedy of Mariam. There, Herod tragically misinterprets his wife's friendship with his counselor because he is

incapable of recognizing a virtuous friendship that is not based on similarity. The misogyny underlying the discourse of ideal male friendship, voiced by the male friends Constabarus and the sons of Babas, essentially renders a non-sexual friendship between a man and a woman illegible. However, in both *Edward II* and *The Tragedy of Mariam*, Cary demonstrates not only that such friendships can exist but also that they, like the valorized male ideal, may provide a stance from which to resist, even if only momentarily, oppressive authority.

Chapter Four Redeeming the Age: Katherine Philips's Friendship Writings

"... Friendship, without which the whole Earth would be but a Desart, and Man still alone, tho' in Company" –*Katherine Philips, "Orinda to Poliarchus," Dublin, July 30, 1662.*

Friendship is the central theme of Katherine Philips's writing. To say this is not to discount the political and literary scope of her concerns but rather to point out that friendship is the ever-present lens through which she views these broader issues. As the above lines, written to her friend Sir Charles Cotterell, indicate, Philips views friendship as an all-encompassing force, one that ties not only individuals but also all of society together into a harmonious whole. Her own circle of friends is an example of how friendship transforms the impersonal "Company" of others into the network of fulfilling relationships that we see reflected in her poems and correspondence. The membership of Philips's circle was varied, consisting of intimate female friends, family members, and other authors, primarily male, who shared Philips's literary interests and royalist convictions. The rhetorical strategies she uses to depict these friendships vary accordingly. Best known for her poems of passionate attachment to other women, Philips deploys the Ciceronian trope of the friend as the second self to describe her relationship with her beloved female friends, thus holding up virtuous unity between women as an alternative to civil unrest. She situates these poems of love for other women in a recognizable and celebrated tradition by employing the ardent language of canonical male friendship texts, but at the same time, her assertion that women can fulfill the classical virtue of *amicitia* constitutes a direct revision of that tradition.

Philips also engaged in friendships with male writers and artists, and while these friendships did not involve the passionate intensity evident in her poems to female

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friends, these cross-gender friendships were at least as important to her self-conception as a poet, translator, and political commentator. Unlike her poems on female friendship, Philips's poems and letters to male friends emphasize virtuous friendship within difference. Dispensing with the Ciceronian trope of similarity and instead focusing on common literary pursuits, she emphasizes intellectual rather than emotional connections and describes her relationships with her male friends in terms that acknowledge—and can support—difference. Philips's negotiation of the politics of similarity and difference in all of her writings on friendship illustrates the possibilities for depicting friendship available to a woman writer in the mid-seventeenth century.

As we will see, these possibilities differed from those available to the other women writers I discuss in this dissertation. While Philips's work shares some similarities with that of Isabella Whitney—both depict themselves as unique female participants in a circle of male authors, for instance—Philips, writing almost 100 years later, seemingly does not have to work so hard to safeguard her virtuous reputation. One reason for this increased freedom is that Philips was a married woman, and while, as Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* points out, married women's friendships with men other than their husbands certainly did not escape suspicion, Philips was often able to situate her friendships with men in the context of service to her husband, as when she uses her influence with Cotterell to help him politically. Moreover, Philips's elevated social milieu and the political upheaval of the English civil wars, which, as Mihoko Suzuki has pointed out, opened up new opportunities for women's political participation, accorded her more freedom in depicting friendships with male friends (*Subordinate Subjects* 5). Indeed, when Philips's correspondence with Cotterell, whom she dubbed "Poliarchus" in coterie fashion, was posthumously printed in 1705, the editor praised them as "the effect of a happy Intimacy between her self and the late famous POLIARCHUS, and . . . an admirable Pattern for the pleasing Correspondence of a virtuous Friendship" (153).⁹⁵ Unlike, for example, the tragically misinterpreted friendship between Mariam and Sohemus in Cary's drama, the friendship between a married woman and her male friend is here presented not only as non-transgressive but also as a model of virtuous friendship worth imitating.⁹⁶

However, the editor's following comments demonstrate that the specter of sexual transgression that haunts cross-gender friendships, if not as prominent as in Whitney's verse and Cary's drama, has not been entirely banished:

They [Philips's letters to Cotterell] will sufficiently instruct us, how an intercourse of writing, between Persons of different Sexes, ought to be managed, with Delight and Innocence; and teach the World, not to load such a Commerce with Censure and Detraction, when 'tis remov'd at such a distance from even the Appearance of Guilt. Things of this Nature, coming from so great a Mistress of Thought and Expression as ORINDA, and address'd to as polite a Person as *Poliarchus*, cannot but challenge our Regard, and engage our Esteem. (153)

These elaborate disclaimers demonstrate that a friendship between a man and a woman, no matter how recognizably virtuous, was still vulnerable to "Censure and Detraction." The editor's preemptive defense of Philips is also class-inflected; one senses that if Poliarchus were not so "polite a Person" and Orinda's respectable reputation not already

⁹⁵ The editor of the 1705 edition of *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus* is unknown. This quotation appears in Patrick Thomas's "Appendix" to *Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*.

⁹⁶ I am not arguing for continuous progress in women's ability to engage in friendships but rather suggesting that Philips's social class and political situation opened up new opportunities for expressing friendship between men and women.

firmly established, their correspondence might not be so far removed from the "Appearance of Guilt." If, during Philips's lifetime, it was possible for her to engage in a friendship with a man that she, her husband, and her circle of friends apparently considered irreproachable, and if, forty years after her death, her letters to a male friend could be held up as a model of virtuous friendship, cross-gender friendship still remained treacherous ground. The possibilities available to Philips for articulating such friendships therefore differed drastically from those available for describing her friendships with women.

The intimate, erotic attachment that Philips expresses in her poems addressed to close friends Mary Aubrey, whom she addresses by the coterie name of "Rosania," and Anne Owen, her "Lucasia," is, of course, nowhere to be found in her poems and letters to male friends. The primary reason for this difference is that Philips's affections for her female friends were erotic while her feelings for male friends were not. However, the language of early modern friendship was itself so inherently erotic that Philips could not simply reproduce it in her declarations of friendship for men: in her poems and letters to male friends, she had to deliberately avoid or revise this traditional discourse. In fact, Philips does not merely avoid erotic language in her writing to Cotterell and other male friends (certainly, a common-sense move for any married woman corresponding with a male friend); she employs an entirely different vocabulary, one that focuses not on the "enjoyment" of friendship but on its opportunities for conversation, not on souls but on minds, and not on love but on esteem. While Philips's poems to Aubrey, Owen, and other female friends primarily describe her connection to these women in affective terms, her poems and letters to male friends focus instead on their shared artistic and literary

endeavors. Margaret Cavendish, another early modern woman who succeeded in conducting friendships with men, asserts that "it is our Minds that make Friendship" (*The World's Olio* x4v), and it is precisely such friendships of the mind that Philips seeks to establish with the men in her circle. For instance, Philips repeatedly seeks Cotterell's advice on literary matters and asks him to look over and correct several of her poems. After sending him one poem intended for the Duchess of York, she writes, "you are so much my Friend, that it shall not be seen at Court, till you have first put it in a better Dress, which I know you will do, if it be capable of Improvement; if it be not, commit to the Flames" (32). Literary criticism and editing thus become performances of friendship.⁹⁷

Philips's friendships with Cotterell and other male members of her society were political as well as literary. Or, more accurately, their shared literary pursuits almost always carried a political component. Even the quotation with which I open this chapter, which expresses Philips's belief in the centrality of friendship to human relations, is an adaptation of a passage from William Cartwright's *The Lady Errant:* "O my *Olyndus*, were there not that thing / That we call Friend, Earth would one Desart be, / And Men Alone still, though in Company" (105).⁹⁸ By incorporating this allusion into her letter to Cotterell, Philips not only assumes that her friend will recognize the reference and agree with the sentiment but also refers to their shared royalist sympathies. Cartwright, a poet and playwright who died at the siege of Oxford, was praised as "the epitome of cavalier culture" (Thomas, "Introduction" 6), and Philips's first poem to appear in print, "To the

⁹⁷ Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger also point out the connection that Philips draws between friendship and literary criticism: "Ties of friendship and personal connections are needed to participate in the literary and critical activities which in turn help to strengthen social, political, and cultural bonds among various individuals. Philips's letters clearly show that critical acts of judgment are signs of sociability" (369).
⁹⁸ Phillip Souers identifies this allusion in *The Matchless Orinda* (261).

most Ingenious and Vertuous Gentleman Mr. Wil: Cartwright, my much valued Friend," is one of the fifty-four commendatory poems prefacing the 1651 edition of his work. Philips, who was only twelve when Cartwright died, almost certainly did not know him personally, but she still refers to him as her "much valued Friend." In this case, shared political and aesthetic ideals produce a type of friendship that does not necessarily depend on personal interaction.⁹⁹ Following Philips's commendatory verse are poems by such members of her circle as John Birkenhead, Sir Edward Dering, Francis Finch, John Jeffreys, Henry Lawes, and Henry Vaughan. The Cartwright volume effectively serves as a textual gathering of friends with shared political convictions, and Philips's 1662 letter to Cotterell, albeit written in a much less embattled political environment for these royalist friends, includes him in this textual community.

Philips and Cotterell speak the same literary and political language, a language that enables this friendship between a man and a woman. Their common interests bridge but do not negate their differences in class and gender. In fact, Philips emphasizes these differences when she portrays herself as an exceptional female talent in the masculine world of letters and asks Cotterell to use his greater power and influence to promote her work. But Philips's poems to her female friends are another matter entirely. In her poems to Mary Aubrey and Anne Owen, Philips borrows heavily from classical descriptions of ideal male friendship in order to emphasize the similarity between herself and these female friends. Evoking the paradox of Cicero's portrayal of the friend as an *alter idem* and of Aristotle's claim that friendship is one soul in two bodies, she asserts

⁹⁹ Carol Barash notes that, "In calling the dead Cartwright her 'friend,' Philips marks 'political ally' as the first public meaning of her fluid conception of 'friendship'. . . . The world 'friend' will take on other meanings for Philips as it is redirected towards women, but it never entirely loses these early resonances of political community" (63).

that friends "are, and yet they are not, two" (107). If Philips attempts to establish her friendships with men as primarily based on intellectual pursuits, she describes her friendships with women in emphatically emotional terms: they are joined hearts and "mingled soules" (146). This emotional language and Philips's repeated emphasis on the unity of female friendship are both rooted in the tradition of ideal male friendship. Recent scholars, revising an early tendency to read Philips's friendship poems solely as effusions of personal feeling, have noted her adept use of literary tradition: Harriette Andreadis, for example, observes that Philips's rhetoric "echoes the fervent emotionalism of male-male platonic friendship and the literary conventions of metaphysical (malefemale) love poetry—that were conventional and acceptable in the homosocial culture of the mid-seventeenth century" (103). But for a woman to employ this rhetoric is also to revise it. By applying the language of male *amicitia* to descriptions of female friendship, Philips loads female friendship with all of the political significance carried by the classical tradition.

For example, Philips presents female friendship as a positive example of unity in an era marked by the discord and uncertainty of the English civil wars. She tells Aubrey that their twinned souls will "teach the World new love; / Redeem the age and sex" (147). Implicitly acknowledging the challenge this "new love" between women poses to the old order, Philips asserts that female friendship will redeem not only the troubled age but also a gender long excluded from or deemed incapable of virtuous friendship. Here she participates in what Hero Chalmers has identified as a general cultural shift, driven by the dual trends of Neo-Platonism and French *preciosité*, in the relationship of women to friendship in the mid-seventeenth century. Observing that the Neo-Platonic "notion of friendship or love which placed a premium on the conjunction of souls irrespective of physical separation was evidently highly amenable to royalists separated by imprisonment, exile, or death," Chalmers argues that women's association with Neo-Platonic ideals and their prominence in French salons led to a new view of women's friendships as a civilizing force (72). Certainly, Philips's contemporaries applauded her participation in intimate female friendships: Francis Finch dedicates his treatise, *Friendship*, to "noble Lucasia-Orinda," signaling the unity of these two friends by fusing their coterie names together; and Jeremy Taylor praises Philips as "you who are so eminent in Friendships" in his *Discourse of the Nature and Offices of Friendship* (35). Weary of civil strife, Philips's audience of like-minded royalists was clearly amenable to her depiction of harmonious unity between women.

This unity is erotic as well as political, and Philips employs not only the rhetoric of ideal male friendship but also, as Andreadis observes, the language of metaphysical love poetry to describe her connection to her female friends. Critics have recognized the erotic nature of Philips's love poems to women but have differed in their attempts to reconcile what seem to us to be clearly erotic expressions of desire for other women with her contemporary reputation as "the chaste Orinda." Valerie Traub argues that Philips marks a turning point between a tradition of love between young women that was considered innocent and virtuous, which Traub terms "chaste femme love" (307), and an emerging awareness of same-sex erotic behaviors that were viewed as transgressive: "the verse of Philips functions as a symptomatic break: between the Renaissance discourse of chaste, innocuous insignificance, on the one hand, and the increasingly public discourse of illicit desire that carries with it the stigma of significance, on the other" (308). Philips, she argues, stresses the innocence of her love for her friends in order to dissociate it from this "stigma of significance." Andreadis similarly points out the ways in which Philips adapts an existing tradition—in this case, the tradition of male friendship—in her friendship poetry, arguing that Philips employs "an apparently chaste language of passionate female friendship whose veiled and shadowed subtext is inescapably erotic" (56). Both Traub and Andreadis make the important point that Philips locates her love poems to other women in established and, in the case of classical male friendship, highly esteemed traditions. But I am not entirely convinced that Philips's expressions of erotic desire for other women would have been unrecognized, "veiled and shadowed," as Andreadis suggests, or, as Traub claims, recognized but considered insignificant by her contemporaries.

In fact, I suggest the eroticism of lines such as "Our hearts are mutuall victims lay'd, / While they (such power in friendship ly's) / Are Alters, Priests, and offerings made, / And each heart which thus kindly dy's, / Grows deathless by the sacrifice" would have been both clear and significant to Philips's audience (91). In these lines, Philips uses the language of sexual passion (complete with the double-entendre "dy's") to explore the quasi-mystical properties of female friendship. While agreeing with Traub that Philips's expressions of erotic love for her female friends would not have necessarily been considered unchaste or incommensurate with her role as a virtuous married woman, I also proffer that Philips is quite deliberately engaging in what Alan Bray has identified as the eroticized, literary play of male friendship, play which did signify ethically and politically.¹⁰⁰ In pointing out that the witty ambiguity of Philips's expressions of erotic

¹⁰⁰ If the body of the (male) friend carried serious political and moral obligations, Bray argues, "the indirection (and laughter) or the language of friendship [is] a means of testing the ground before that

desire for her female friends has its roots in the tradition of male friendship, I am not suggesting that this desire is somehow unreal or purely literary; to the contrary, all of Philips's writings suggest that her friendships with women were the most intense and fulfilling relationships in her life. However, these poems were not private communications. Rather, they were circulated among Philips's circle, copied into the poetry collections of friends, set to music, and read aloud. In other words, they were written with a very specific audience in mind, and Philips's audience, composed of royalists who believed they were keeping alive a court culture under threat, might indeed have been receptive to a woman's intervention in the sophisticated and witty rhetoric of eroticized (male) friendship.

Of course, a woman's intervention in this rhetoric was necessarily more fraught than that of her male contemporaries. As Lorna Hutson argues, "for Philips, as a woman writer, the difficulty lies not in the need to distinguish ethical bodily gestures from transgressive ones, but in the very claim of writings on female friendship to signify as ethical and political at all" ("The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer" 210). But Philips's adept negotiation of her literary friendships with male friends (friendships that were, I argue, potentially more threatening to her chaste reputation than her explicitly erotic expressions of love for women), her assertion that the virtuous unity of two female friends can serve as a model to a fractured state, and the seriousness with which she was taken by the literary and political thinkers of her day suggest that she was successful in her attempt to claim this ethical and political significance.

dangerous moment when the obligations of friendship were created or called upon" (174-175). As an example of this erotic play, he offers William Shakespeare's twentieth sonnet, which both denies and reaffirms the speaker's sexual desire for his young friend: "Shakespeare's sonnet can be read both as asserting the chastity of friendship in the most transcendent of terms and as rejecting it in the most bawdy and explicit of terms" (139).

"Both Princes, and both subjects too": The Poems

We are our selves but by rebound, And all our titles shuffled so, Both Princes, and both subjects too. (Philips 91)

Philips addresses her most ardent poetry to close friends Mary Aubrey, "Rosania," and Anne Owen, "Lucasia." In these poems, she writes in the tradition of male friendship, which, as I discuss in Chapter Three, often sets itself in opposition to romantic, heterosexual love but employs a similarly affective vocabulary. In this tradition, loving male friendship offered men the opportunity to form eroticized connections with others whom they could view as virtuous equals—with, to paraphrase Cicero, other selves. The second-self trope of male friendship therefore not only indicated the equality of two friends but also carried an erotic component. By employing the language of male *amicitia* in her friendship poems, Philips places her expressions of erotic love for other women in a recognizable and esteemed tradition. Moreover, she claims for women's friendships the same political and moral importance afforded the male tradition. In doing so, she offers a significant revision to the tradition of male friendship, for women's general exclusion from classical and humanist representations of ideal friendship is in part due to the political nature of *amicitia*. Cicero locates the virtue of male friendship in its ability to bolster the state, and humanist writers such as Thomas Elyot and Francis Bacon consistently link friendship to political counsel; but, as the Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights (1632) points out, women "have no voyce in Parliament, They make no Lawes, they consent to none, they abrogate none" (6). Yet, Philips suggests that women's very distance from the political upheavals of the midseventeenth century renders them particularly suited to serve as models of amity. In her

poems to female friends, she contrasts the unity of female friendship, usually enjoyed in retirement, with the turmoil and divisions of the English civil wars. In Philips's poetry, friendship between women is an example that, if followed, has the potential to heal the rest of society.

Philips depicts eroticized female friendships experienced in seclusion and privacy, but she also insists on their public significance. As Carol Barash points out, Philips "makes repeated formal and metaphorical connections between personal and political worlds in her poems, suggesting that . . . what we now think of as separate public and private spheres were fundamentally overlapping spheres of language and experience" (62). In this project of assigning public and political significance to female friendship, Philips draws not only on her intimate friendships with women but also on her extensive network of male friends. Men may not be admitted to the intimate "bowre" of female friendship, but, as prominent royalists, artists, and writers, they circulated Philips's work and provided a sympathetic audience for her depictions of harmonious unity between women (97).¹⁰¹ Catherine Gray argues that the frequency with which Philips's love poems to women were set to music and imitated by male members of her circle "indicate[s] that the poems of love to women ... formed part of a public performance of cross-gender identification, one that helped create an elite culture of heterosocial collectivity opposed to Parliamentary rule" (108). Philips herself assigns political importance to her friendships with men and asserts that they, too, play a role in reforming

¹⁰¹ Maureen E. Mulvihill traces the extent to which Philips's male allies promoted her career: "Philips's entire literary life," she argues, "was carefully managed by influential male confidants, relatives, and literary associates" (79). While surprisingly critical of Philips's self-promotion—she defines this as "egotism" and labels Philips "strident, imposing, sometimes an out-and-out scold" (94)—Mulvihill makes the important point that Philips's participation in a network of male allies belies "the perception that insists on an adversarial relationship between men and women of letters" (74).

the state. She offers female friendship as a model of behavior, but it is the male members of her circle who helped her to promote this model. Philips's verse to her male friends therefore focuses on the important political function of their artistic and literary achievements (as well as, implicitly, their role in supporting her own). As she tells the musician Henry Lawes, who set at least three of her poems on female friendship to music, "Be it thy care our Age to new-create: / What built a world may sure repayre a state" (88).

As a female author participating in friendships with both men and women and intervening in the traditionally male discourse of ideal friendship, Philips is acutely aware of her relationship to literary tradition. She locates her poems on female friendship within the discourse of male *amicitia* by alluding to both classical and humanist texts on friendship. Her references to these texts establish her authority as one conversant in the tradition of male friendship even as she revises that tradition by presenting women as models of *amicitia*. For instance, in "Friendship's Mysterys, to my dearest Lucasia (set by Mr. Henry Lawes.)," Philips paraphrases Francis Bacon's claim that friendship "redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halfs" (393) when she tells Lucasia, "Divided Joys are tedious found, / And griefs united easyer grow" (91). She expands this concept in another poem addressed to Owen:

> Content her self best comprehends Betwixt two souls, and they two friends, Whose either Joys in both are fix'd, And multiply'd by being mix'd; Whose minds and interests are so the same,

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Their very griefs, imparted, loose that name. (93)

The similar "minds and interests" of these two female friends allows them to share both joy and grief, doubling the one and lessening the other.

Philips also alludes to the story of Cambina in Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene when she praises Francis Finch for rescuing a personified, feminine friendship in his treatise, *Friendship*. If everyone read his defense of friendship, she argues, "Sure the Litigious as amaz'd would stand, / As Fairy Knights touched with Cambina's wand. / Nations and people would let fall their armes" (84). In The Faerie Queene, the magical Cambina forces her brother Triamond and his rival Cambell to become friends by tapping them with her wand: "Wonder it is that sudden change to see: / Instead of strokes, each other kissed glad, / And louely haulst from feare of treason free, / And plighted hands for euer friends to be" (4.3.49). It is easy to see why this episode appealed to Philips. Just as Cambina ends the knights' deadly conflict, Philips's poetry presents female friendship as a virtuous alternative to war and strife. But her allusion to Cambina also offers a slight revision of Spenser. Spenser's story is about a male friendship enabled by a woman and sealed by the exchange of women when Triamond and Cambell marry each other's sisters.¹⁰² Philips thus actually performs a reversal when she praises a male friend, Finch, for publicizing and supporting female friendship.

Philips also echoes Aristotle's claim, popular with early modern writers on friendship, that friends are "one soul in two bodies" in her poem, "To my excellent Lucasia, on our friendship. 17th. July 1651":

¹⁰² This is not to oversimplify Spenser's view of friendship. Britomart, for instance, acts as a friend to both men and women, and while, in this episode, Spenser's main focus is on a male friendship enabled by the exchange of women, he also depicts a female friendship when Cambina and Cambell's sister Canacee become friends.

This Carkasse breath'd, and walk'd, and slept, So that the world believed There was a soule the motions kept; But they were all deceiv'd. For as a watch by art is wound To motion, such was mine: But never had Orinda found A Soule till she found thine. 121 ¹⁰³

As Andreadis suggests, Philips "reaches beyond the merely conventional image of 'two friends mingling souls' in the extravagant intensity of the conceit of the watch" (41). Indeed, at first glance, Philips's use of Aristotle seems oddly self-effacing: Orinda is a soulless shell who mechanically goes about the motions of life until she finds a soul in her friendship with Lucasia. Her individuality does not seem to exist outside of friendship. But this lack of individuality points toward the emptiness of a life without friendship; as Philips tells Cotterell in the quotation with which I open this chapter, earth is a "Desart" without it. Unlike Cary's Edward II, who essentially forfeits his soul when he tries to share it with his friend, Philips's soul-sharing with her friend brings her life.

This poem also employs the Ciceronian trope of the friend as a second self when Orinda tells Lucasia, "I am not Thine, but Thee" (121). Philips's use of this conceit is so common that most of her poems to Owen and Aubrey employ it in some form or another, and like male writers on friendship, she uses it to signal equality and intimacy between

¹⁰³ One of the many early modern writers who cite this quotation is Michel de Montaigne, who writes that friendship is "no other than one soule in two bodies, according to the fit definition of Aristotle" (94). Laurie Shannon points out that the poem "Of Friendship" in *Tottel's Miscellany* versifies "the much-circulated sentiments in a couplet: 'Behold thy frend, and of thy self the pattern see: / One soull, a wonder shall it seem, in bodies twain to be" (4).

friends: "Our chang'd and mingled soules are growne / To such acquaintance now, / That if each would assume their owne, / Alas! we know not how. / We have each other so ingrost, / That each is in the union lost" (146).¹⁰⁴ In this depiction, the individual identities of the friends are subsumed in the mutuality of their friendship. Again we see a point of difference from Cary: whereas Cary critiques the radical similarity implied by the Ciceronian trope of the friend as a second self, Philips wholeheartedly embraces it in her friendship poems to other women, even to the point that Orinda's identity becomes fused with that of her friends.¹⁰⁵

But Philips's revision of that trope is no less significant than Cary's. By applying this traditionally male discourse to intimate relationships among women, she assigns to female friendship the political significance typically associated with male friendship. The voluntary loss of individuality experienced within harmonious female friendship presents a counterpoint to the wars and political turmoil caused by competing interests. As Philips explains in "A retir'd friendship, to Ardelia":¹⁰⁶

Here is no quarrelling for Crowns,

Nor fear of changes in our fate;

No trembling at the Great ones frowns,

Nor any slavery of State.

¹⁰⁴ As I discuss in the Introduction, Montaigne's depiction of ideal friendship involves a similar merging of identity: "In the amitie I speake of, they entermixe and confound themselves one in the other, with so universall a commixture, that they weare-out, and can no more finde the seame that hath conjoyned them together. If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feele it can not be expressed, but by answering; Because it was he, because it was my selfe" (92).

¹⁰⁵ Here I am drawing a distinction between Philips the poet and "Orinda" as a poetic persona. While Philips does encourage us to associate the two, "Orinda" does not necessarily provide a transparent account of Philips's internal experience. Here, I concur with Traub, who argues, "Philips's production of a compelling homoerotic subjectivity . . . is not best understood as 'self-expression' at all, but rather as a 'subjectivity effect'" (297).

¹⁰⁶ Ardelia's identity is not known.

Here's no disguise, nor treachery,

Nor any deep conceal'd design;

From blood and pain this place is free,

And calme as are those looks of thine. (97)

The lack of differentiation between the two friends does not admit the possibility of deception since they, "kindly mingling Souls," entirely know each other's minds (97). Their calm assurance of each other provides a retreat from political uncertainty—the two friends are together in a secluded "bowre" (98)—but their very removal from and opposition to the "boistrous world," which Philips associates with disguises, treachery, and "deep conceal'd design," also contains an implicit criticism of those who are unable to achieve such unity.

However, the "bowre" of female friendship is not immune to internal strife. Most of Philips's poems celebrate the unity of friendship between women, but Philips also records her surprise and anger when her female friends act against her advice or without her knowledge, thus breaking the illusion of the second self. Perhaps it is because Philips imagines female friendship as a retreat from the conflicts of the outside world that she reacts so strongly when conflict arises within friendship itself. The source of this conflict is, in most cases, the marriage of her friends. Philips does not seem to have been ideologically opposed to marriage itself: she was married, and her poems to her husband, Colonel James Philips (whom she dubbed "Antenor" after the Trojan counselor who attempted to make peace between the Trojans and the Greeks¹⁰⁷), whilst lacking the ardor

¹⁰⁷ This nickname was appropriate: James Philips was a moderate Parliamentarian who, an anonymous Restoration commentator observed, was "One that had the fortune to be in with all Governts. but thrived

of her poems on female friendship, depict what seems to have been a mutually respectful relationship.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, she advocated the marriages of her friends and often played matchmaker (quite unsuccessfully, it must be noted) for members of her circle. But if Philips does not view marriage itself as an intrinsic source of discord between friends, she does bemoan the conflicts and separations it can create.

Philips's two closest friends hid their matrimonial plans from her, and no wonder: according to her poems and letters, she held them to remarkably high standards of fidelity, and she reacted with surprise and disappointment when they did not choose the suitors she preferred for them. When Anne Owen married a man Philips disliked and moved to Ireland to live with him, Philips lamented to Cotterell, "there are few Friendships in the World Marriage-proof; especially when the Person our Friend marries has not a Soul particularly capable of the Tenderness of that Endearment" (42). Mary Aubrey's secret marriage receives a similarly angry response in the poem "Injuria amici": "you appeare so much on ruine bent / Your own destruction gives you now content: / For our twin-spirits did so long agree, / You must undoe your self to ruine me" (124). Here, the second-self logic of friendship becomes destructive for both participants. As I discuss in the Introduction, the speaker in Shakespeare's sonnets clings to the fiction of the friend as a second self as a form of self-consolation when his friend betrays him for

by none" (NLW, MS, Llanstephan 145, f. 70 v., quoted in Patrick Thomas's "Introduction" to *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*). He seems to have tolerated his wife's royalist allegiances even when they were the source of attacks against him during the Interregnum. Philips's response to one of these attacks appears in her poem, "To Antenor, on a paper of mine wch J. Jones threatens to publish to his prejudice," in which she both defends her husband and asserts her political independence from him: "My love and life I must confesse are thine, / But not my errours, they are only mine" (117).

¹⁰⁸ That their relationship seems to have been respectful does not, however, indicate that it was close. Philips's letters demonstrate far more affection for her friends than for her husband, and she often complains of her loneliness in Wales. Still, she never blames her husband directly for the isolation she felt, and her letters reveal her desire to promote his interests and fulfill her "duty" to him (22).

heterosexual desire, but in Philips's poem, the second-self nature of friendship remains an all too painful reality. Philips's speaker wants to extricate herself from her devotion to her friend, but they are too entwined: the bonds of female friendship are so strong that she cannot, even in her betrayal, untie them without mutual "ruine."

In this poem, Cicero's trope of the friend as a second self takes a destructive turn when one friend tries to break that bond. But in Philips's positive friendship poems (the great majority), the similarity of the two friends is the source of their accord; they are "of one another's mind / Assur'd" (98). The influence of Cicero's characterization of the friend as an *alter idem* is evident throughout Philips's verse, but, significantly, she rarely borrows his exact formulation. Instead, Philips repeatedly uses the word "union" to describe the similarity between herself and her female friends. "Union" refers to the combination of disparate elements into a complete whole, a definition certainly evoked by Philips's soul-mingling with her female friends. This is part of what I identify as the deliberate and often playful ambiguity of Philips's expressions of homoerotic desire, since union can denote both the spiritual closeness of friends and the physical union of bodies. But without wishing to reduce the erotics of Philips's poetry to the exclusively political, I'd also point out that union is a distinctly political term that refers to the agreement of parties or countries.¹⁰⁹ We may see the political implications of Philips's use of this word when she suggests that her friendship with Lucasia not only transcends more "common" relationships but also serves as an instructive example for others: "The

¹⁰⁹ Philips's friends also used the words "union" and "unity" to express the political function of friendship. Jeremy Taylor, in his treatise on friendship dedicated to Philips, writes: "I said, Friendship is the greatest band in the world, and I had reason for it, for it is all the bands that this world hath; and there is no society, and there is no relation that is worthy, but it is made so by the communications of friendship, and by partaking some of its excellencies. For friendship is a transcendent, and signifies as much as *Unity* can mean; and every consent, every pleasure, and every benefit, and every society is the Mother or the Daughter of friendship" (44, italics added).

object will refine, and he that can / Friendship revere must be a noble man. / How much above the common rate of things / Must they be from whom this Union springs?" (129). In fact, union describes not only a state of friendship and agreement but also a process: the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides as union's tertiary definition, a "growing together ... the process of healing" (*OED s.v.*). When Philips celebrates the "Union" of friendship, the union she speaks of is both personal and political, both the union of two individuals and the potential for a larger political healing of the nation through friendship.

In Philips's poetry, individual relations both mirror and instruct the commonwealth as a whole. Philips's elegy for Owen's grandmother, Mary Lloyd, provides another example of the type of mirroring she envisions between individual relations and the state: "And if well order'd Commonwealth must be / Patterns for every private Family, / Her house, rul'd by her hand, aw'd by her Ey, / Might be a pattern for a Monarchy" (112). Evoking Robert Cleaver's claim that "A household is as it were a little commonwealth" that reproduces in miniature the workings of the realm as a whole, Philips first claims that the commonwealth provides a pattern for "every private Family," but she then turns that paradigm on its head by suggesting that the private household and the individuals who run it may also serve as models for the state. And in this case, the virtuous household offering "a pattern for a Monarchy" is run by a woman. The ostensibly private realm of women's responsibilities and women's relations thus serves a very public function.

Philips's poem "Friendship's Mysterys, to my dearest Lucasia. (set by Mr. H. Lawes)" provides another example of how intimate relationships between women expand outward to represent a political union. In this poem, Philips again emphasizes the unity of friendship: "we, whose minds are so much one, / Never, yet ever, are alone" (90). This merging of minds destabilizes individual identity: in one of the many paradoxes that Philips presents as friendship's "Mysterys," Orinda and Lucasia "are our selves but by rebound, / And all our titles shuffled so, / Both Princes, and both subjects too" (91).¹¹⁰ As we have seen, this doubling is a common element of ideal (male) friendship, but Philips goes beyond this conventional claim. In the confusion of shuffling titles, Orinda and Lucasia gain a new one: they are "Princes." This royal title works on several levels. Perhaps most obviously, it indicates their shared sympathy for the exiled Charles II and identifies them symbolically with that absent prince. ¹¹¹ But even as the poem expresses sympathy for Charles's plight, the friends' newfound power displaces his royal authority: they are "Princes" because they have the sovereign ability to choose each other as friends: "our election is as free / As Angells, who with greedy choice / Are yet determined to their joys" (90). ¹¹²

The end of the line points out that if Orinda and Lucasia are princes, they are also subjects. However, these doubled "Princes" are subject to each other instead of to the absent king. As Laurie Shannon argues, "the third term triangulating Renaissance male

¹¹⁰ Philips may also be reworking Donne's "The Sun Rising," in which he asserts that his lover is "all states, and all princes I; / Nothing else is: / Princes do but play us" (75). Donne's gendered description only claims sovereignty for the male speaker, but Philips insists on the doubled sovereignty (and doubled subjection) of her lovers.

¹¹¹ Barash argues, "The king is the absent third party in these poems, making them not only about the relationship between Orinda and Lucasia, but also about their mutual longing for the material presence of the king, who is absent both from their community and from public poetry" (92). While I diverge from Barash's following claim that, "without the absent king as a veiled political referent, women's friendship becomes a far more problematic—and potentially threatening—sign," given that Philips continued to write homoerotic verse after the Restoration, I concur that the friends' longing in the poem is both for each other and for the exiled king.

¹¹² I owe this interpretation to Laurie Shannon's discussion of friendship and sovereignty: "Insofar as friendship arrived from classical models as a fully consensual image of participation, it offered Renaissance readers a world in which there are, so to speak, two sovereigns. As a sharp counterpoint to the terms understood to hold within the hierarchical relations of monarchical society, friendship tropes comprise the era's most poetically powerful imagining of parity within a social form that is consensual" (7).

friendship . . . is most likely to be a king . . . the subject-in-friendship is more sovereign than a sovereign" (9). In fact, Charles II's absence becomes a condition for both the friendship, at least partly sustained through shared royalist allegiances, and the expression of that friendship within the poem itself. For if the two friends are subject to each other, they are also political subjects with the authority to comment on the present condition of the nation. Philips's poem, which criticizes the forced captivity of the absent monarch by opposing it to the voluntary "captivity" of friendship, is textual proof of this authority, but the absence of the monarch is what makes this authority possible in the first place (91). And certainly, while Philips's poetry bemoans Charles's exile (and, later, celebrates his return), it was in great part the upheavals of the civil wars that initially made it possible for her to gain entrée into the elite circle of royalist writers and artists who formed her audience and promoted her work.

Philips herself insists that the extraordinary nature of the era forces her to speak out in her poem, "Upon the double murther of K. Charles":

> I thinke not on the state, nor am concern'd Which way soever that great Helme is turn'd, But as that sonne whose father's danger nigh Did force his native dumbnesse, and untye The fettred organs: so here is a cause That will excuse the breach of nature's lawes. Silence were now a sin. (69)

Elaine Hobby observes that these lines contain the woman writer's obligatory apology for speaking on political matters: "Philips found it necessary to assert that, in general,

women ought to leave public issues well alone. Only with the whole world order upset by the 'murder' of the monarch . . . could the unfeminine act of commenting on affairs of state be excused" (134). But once Philips has dispensed with this cursory excuse, she is remarkably insistent on her right to speak on political matters. In "Lucasia," she asserts that "pitty does engage / My pen to rescue the declining age" (103). These lines offer no apology. Rather, Philips insists on the active efficacy of her writing—it has the power to "rescue the declining age"—and, in asserting that it is "pitty" that motivates her to write, casts her ability to comment on political matters not only as a right but also as a duty.¹¹³

Significantly, these lines appear in a poem celebrating Lucasia's virtues; hers is the "brave example" that will "check the Crimes / And both reproach and yet reform the times" (105). In her homoerotic love poems, Philips repeatedly credits the beauty and virtue of her beloved female friends—published, of course, through her verse—with the power to reform "Th'apostate world" (103). While agreeing with Kate Lilley that "Philips's love poetry addressed to women never was primarily political allegory," I offer that we can read Philips's homoerotic verse as both erotic and political without necessarily reducing it to the level of allegory (167). In other words, the erotic and political are inseparable in her verse. For instance, "Friendship's Mysterys," discussed above, figures Orinda and Lucasia as doubled sovereigns who, through friendship, enjoy more autonomy than the exiled monarch, but it also contains some of the most explicitly erotic verse in her oeuvre: "each heart which thus kindly dy's, / Grows deathless by the sacrifice" (91). The double-entendre "dy's" would have been readily understood by Philips's audience, which is why I suggest that the erotic nature of her verse, rather than

¹¹³ Philips's claim that "pitty" induces her writing also illustrates the connection she draws between personal emotion and political commentary.

remaining what Andreadis calls a "veiled and shadowed subtext," would have actually been quite evident to her readers (56). Philips's audience of like-minded writers and artists would have recognized the erotic nature of her love poems to women, but they would not have necessarily considered it transgressive because they were using the *exact same language* to describe male friendship.

In fact, two male writers who dedicated texts on friendship to Philips, Francis Finch and Jeremy Taylor, both describe friendship in highly eroticized terms. Finch, for example, applies the language of romantic heterosexual passion to friendship when he suggests that disappointments in friendship may result in "*Heartbreakings* and *dyings for Love*" (17). Jeremy Taylor's *Discourse of the Nature and Offices of Friendship* likewise recognizes an erotic component in same-sex friendship. Delineating the reasons a friendship may be broken off, he writes:

There are two things which a friend can never pardon, a treacherous blow and the revealing of a secret, because these are against the Nature of friendship; they are the adulteries of it, and dissolve the Union; and in the matters of friendship, which is the marriage of souls, these are the proper causes of divorce: and therefore I shall add this only, that secrecy is the chastity of friendship, and the publication of it is a prostitution and direct debauchery. (50)

Paralleling homosocial friendship and heterosexual marriage, Taylor equates secrecy within male friendship to sexual fidelity within marriage. This eroticized vocabulary of chastity and, its converse, prostitution and debauchery, allows him to emphasize the intimacy and devotion required by faithful friendship. Nor is this erotic language entirely metaphorical, for Taylor suggests that friendship necessitates a degree of physical intimacy: "The love of friends sometimes must be refreshed with material and low Caresses; lest by striving to be too divine it become less humane: It must be allowed its share of both" (51). Friendship, Taylor argues, is *both* divine and physical, both the sharing of souls and the enjoyment of the corporeal presence of the friend. Written in response to Philips's question, "How far a Dear and perfect Friendship is authoriz'd by the principles of Christianity," Taylor's discourse is in part an attempt to reconcile particular, intimate friendships with the more general friendship that Christianity asks its followers to show to all people (35). The erotic vocabulary of intimate male friendship, far from being in conflict with Christian principles, is the very means through which Taylor illustrates the spiritual and ethical duties of *amicitia*.

However, Taylor does condemn physical intimacy without a corresponding ethical or practical purpose: "But when his love signifies nothing but kissing my cheek, or talking kindly, and can go no further, it is a prostitution of the bravery of friendship to spend it upon impertinent people who are (it may be) loads to their families, but can never ease my loads" (Taylor 39).¹¹⁴ A friend who displays the signs of friendship but cannot "give me counsel, defend my cause, or guide me right, or relieve my need, or can and will, when I need it, do me good," Taylor argues, debases friendship (39). Thus,

¹¹⁴ As Lorna Hutson notes of this passage, "Here we have a perfect exemplification of [Alan] Bray's argument that in early modern Europe the pleasures of same-sex intimacy—two men kissing and talking 'kindly' or lovingly—were perfectly intelligible as the signs of a friendship beneficial to the families of the two friends involved. Indeed, Taylor's argument goes further and insists that unless intimacy signifies thus, it is a 'prostitution' of the 'bravery' or ostentatious signifying practice of friendship" ("The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer" 206).

intimacy without attention to the ethical duties of same-sex friendship, which consist of helpful counsel, moral guidance, and practical assistance, becomes "prostitution."

Significantly, Philips uses similar language when she bemoans Mary Aubrey's secret marriage and the ensuing strain it put on their friendship. Philips, as Orinda, chides Rosania for loving her less than before while her "passion" for her friend has not waned: "you kill me, because I worshipp'd you" (124). Since their affection is now unequal—they are no longer second selves—the previously sacred flame of friendship has been degraded: "And though it would my sacred flames pollute, / To make my Heart a scorned prostitute; / Yet I'le adore the Authour of my death, / And kiss the hand that robbs me of my breath" (125). In kissing Rosania's hand, Orinda prostrates herself in worship of her friend, but the sexual connotations of the word "prostitute" are also inescapable. Taking the position of a scorned Petrarchan lover addressing a cold mistress, Orinda is bound to continue to worship her friend even while the lack of reciprocity demeans the nature of her affection by turning her heart into a "scorned prostitute" (125).

As this example illustrates, Taylor's insistence on the ethical and spiritual significance of intimacy within friendship seems easily transferable to Philips's poems on female friendship. But there is a key point of difference between Taylor's discourse and Philips's homoerotic verse. As Hutson points out, even though Taylor is writing in response to a woman's question about friendship between women, the friendships he discusses are clearly between men ("The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer" 206). And while he does confirm that women are capable of friendship, "his examples are not of women as friends to other women, but as friends, counsellors and assistants to

men, usually husbands" (Hutson, "The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer" 206). Taylor's discourse, Hutson argues, thus implicitly denies "an ethical dimension to women's friendships," making Philips's "appropriation in writing of the ethical discourse, the witty casuistry of friendship," potentially problematic not simply because it *is* erotic but because the eroticism of female friendship traditionally did not carry ethical significance (207).

I would like to extend Hutson's reading by discussing the ways in which Philips does attempt to imbue the eroticism of her verse with spiritual and political importance. As we have seen, she juxtaposes her depictions of intimacy among women, female friendships in which the participants voluntarily sacrifice their individuality in order to achieve harmonious unity with each other, to depictions of strife and unrest within the state at large. Moreover, she fuses erotic and spiritual imagery in her poems to female friends to insist on the sacred nature of female friendship. For example, in "Friendship in Emblem, or the Seale, to my dearest Lucasia," Philips describes the symbolic significance of the emblem of her "Society of Friendship." This emblem, which, according to Philips's description, depicted two joined, flaming hearts surmounted by twin compasses, takes its symbolism from common Renaissance emblems of friendship: the compass, a single object formed from two distinct legs, was a popular symbol for the unity of two friends;¹¹⁵ and the flaming heart, "a symbol of love in both sacred and secular contexts," signified the ardent nature of friendship (Hall 146).¹¹⁶



Figure 1. George Wither, *Bona fide*, from *A Choice of Emblemes, Ancient and Modern*. London: A. Mathewes, 1635. p. 237. In this emblem, the linked hands holding a flaming heart symbolize the ardor of friendship. The bottom portion depicts two houses (and, in the background, a city) connected by a bridge, indicating the political function of friendship.

Philips elaborates on the symbol of the flaming heart to draw out its erotic and

spiritual connotations:

They flame, 'tis true, and severall ways,

But still those flames doe so much raise,

That while to either they incline

¹¹⁵ Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" uses the symbol of the compass to depict constancy within marriage. This poem of Philips's alludes to and reworks Donne's use of this metaphor. Where, as Hobby points out, Donne's poem "actually celebrate[s] women's immobility and fixity in 'the centre', and man's freedom to move and still be loved" (138), Philips depicts the friends as equals who move together: "Each follows where the other Leanes, / and what each does, the other meanes" (107).

¹¹⁶ Like the compass, the flaming heart appeared in emblems of both marriage and friendship. This overlapping signification, Ivy Schweitzer suggests, highlights "the closeness of these forms of affiliation for early modern readers" (47).

They yet are noble and divine.

From smoak or hurt those flames are free, From grosseness or mortallity: The hearts (like Moses bush presum'd) Warm'd and enlighten'd, not consum'd. (106-107)

The ardent flame of female friendship, Philips claims, "so much refines" its participants that it raises them to the "noble and divine" (106, 107). These are purifying flames that enlighten rather than consume, as Philips's reference to the Biblical burning bush illustrates. This religious reference and her assertion that, even though the friends' hearts are burning like those of Petrarchan lovers, they remain free of "hurt" and "grosseness or mortallity," highlight the spiritual nature of female friendship.

However, it would be a mistake to read this insistence on the purity and spirituality of female friendship as a rejection of physical intimacy.¹¹⁷ Instead, her description of the burning hearts of the friends, as Traub argues, "conflates rather than separates the spiritual and the bodily" (302). For instance, the interjection, "tis true," in her statement, "They flame, 'tis true, and severall ways," sounds like the answer to an accusation, and she leaves the "severall ways" in which these hearts burn intriguingly ambiguous. Like the male authors on ideal male friendship who precede her and from whose discourse she draws, Philips not only refuses to draw clear distinctions between

¹¹⁷ Here, for instance, I diverge from Mark Llewellyn's claim that "For Philips it seems one cannot exchange souls if one has mixed bodies . . . the physical reality does not matter, indeed, were it ever to become part of friendship then that union must be broken" (445). This reading of Philips's references to the "pure fire" of friendship relies on an absolute opposition between the physical and the spiritual, but, as I argue, Philips herself refuses to make such an opposition (445).

spiritual and erotic friendship but also uses the ardent vocabulary of ideal friendship to delineate friendship's spiritual properties.

Even though, as I argue, Philips is intervening in an established and respected discourse, her gender made her far more vulnerable to scandal than her male counterparts. The lines above, in which she seems to be answering an unvoiced accusation, indicate that she was aware that a woman's intervention into any erotic discourse could be attacked, and indeed, as Lilley points out, "Water Poet" John Taylor published "a violent manuscript attack on Philips" abusing her as a 'second Sapho' as early as 1653 (169).¹¹⁸ However, in most of her homoerotic love poems, Philips supposes a sympathetic audience who will not only understand the spiritual and political import of her depictions of female friendship but also admire the clever way in which she fuses the erotic and spiritual significance of those friendships. For example, in "Set by Mr. H. Lawes / A Dialogue between Lucasia and Orinda," Philips asks whether friendship can endure physical absence. Evoking the conceit of friendship as one soul in two bodies, Lucasia argues that she and Orinda cannot truly part since "Our soules, without the helpe of sense, / By wayes more noble and more free / Can meet, and hold intelligence" (94). However, Orinda remains unsatisfied, arguing that "Absence will robb us of that blisse / To which this friendship title brings: / Love's fruits and joyes are made by this / Useless as crowns to captive Kings" (94). If, in "Friendships Mysterys," Orinda and Lucasia enjoy privileges denied to the exiled king, here the pain of separation puts the friends in a similarly frustrated position. In the end, Philips refuses to settle the

¹¹⁸ Of course, Philips's admirers also called her a "second Sappho." Clearly, Sappho held dual significance in the early modern period as an example of outstanding poetic achievement by a woman and transgressive sexuality (transgressive in its voicing of a woman's sexual desire as well as that desire's same-sex orientation).

debate, as she and Lucasia simply resign themselves to parting and look forward to an afterlife in which they will "part no more for ever" (95). The spiritual comforts of agreeing souls do not, it seems, replace the physical presence of the friend.

Significantly, the poem in which this debate appears is a highly stylized dialogue set to music by Lawes. Philips would almost certainly have expected him, and those members of her circle who listened to the resulting song, to admire her artistry in balancing the spiritual and physical "fruits and joyes" of friendship. As Alan Bray suggests of Shakespeare's sonnets, one function of the "verbal pyrotechnics" of erotic friendship poetry was to display the poet's skill in negotiating ambiguous language, the "sheer audacity of the feat" (139). And while, as Lilley points out, Philips's homoerotic verse did not remain entirely free of scandal, her intended audience, an elite circle of writers and artists who aligned themselves with the sophisticated culture of the court, would have, I suggest, been more receptive than not to a talented female poet's appropriation of the witty discourse of ardent male friendship. In fact, Dianne Dugaw and Amanda Powell note that "Poems by women who lovingly address other women in erotic terms constituted a fashion in the court-oriented lyric of early modern Europe" (127). Placing Philips in this continental trend, they observe:

Poets writing in this vein call upon aristocratic networks of friendship and patronage not only to cement particular, personal advantages but, more generally, to claim a place for women in the public sphere against the encroaching bourgeois mandate of domesticity for women. Laudatory address to a woman beloved harks back to the powers and privileges of the nobility. (128) Philips's poetry repeatedly appeals to a select and understanding audience, which she terms "the knowing few" (116). And, despite her focus on female friendships, this projected audience is, more often than not, male.

Philips's poem, "To my Lucasia," illustrates the function of this projected male observer of female friendship:

. . . he

That nature's harmony entire would see, Must search agreeing soules, sit down and view How sweet the mixture is! how full! how true! By what soft touches spirits greet and kiss, And in each other can compleat their bliss: A wonder so sublime it will admit No rude spectator to contemplate it. (129)

Here, Philips claims that female friendship will display "nature's harmony entire." Harmony was, in Neo-Platonic thought, a virtue of divinity and a sign that the universe was working as it should (just as its opposite, discord, was evidence of a universe out of sync).¹¹⁹ These lines not only point toward the exemplary nature of harmonious female friendship but also illustrate the complex gender dynamics of Philips's theory of friendship. The "agreeing soules" who experience this harmony are clearly female—the poem in which they appear is, after all, simply titled "To my Lucasia"—and the physical and spiritual harmony of the two friends seems inseparable: their "soules" and "spirits"

¹¹⁹ John Smith's *A Discourse Demonstrating the Immortality of the Soul*, for example, explains that "the Divine Love is never attended with those turbulent passions, perturbations, or wrestlings within it self... But as the Divine Love is perpetually most infinitely ardent and potent, so it is always calm and serene, unchangeable" (447).

communicate, but only through sensual "touches" and kisses. The two friends seem to enjoy their friendship in private: they admit "No rude spectator" (129). But there is in fact an observer of these intimacies: the "he" who sat down to learn true harmony from these friends in the first place (129). Spectators are allowed, apparently, just not rude ones.

Just as homoerotic male friendship, which Bray terms "the body of the friend" (140), carried a series of political and moral obligations, the erotics of this "Mildly voyeuristic" poem serve a political purpose (Traub 129). Philips's elitist refusal to allow "rude" spectators to observe the rites of female friendship implies that uncultured, unsophisticated viewers would not understand the instructive nature of this example; they might interpret the touches and kisses of these two friends as merely touches and kisses rather than as the illustrations of "nature's harmony" that Philips intends them to be. But the refined, understanding observer-significantly identified as a man-will understand the spiritual and political lesson: his observation of female friendship "will refine, and he that can / Friendship revere must be a noble man" (129). This claim demonstrates that the masculine pronoun is not merely literary convention: the "he" being educated by this instructive example of female friendship is clearly male. In conclusion, Philips's homoerotic verse celebrates intimate friendship between women and suggests that it can provide an instructive example of harmony to a divided nation, but it also supposes a male reader who will observe and then promote this version of friendship.

The men in Philips's circle apparently did not disappoint: When Henry Lawes set Philips's poems on female friendship to music, he was essentially literalizing the harmony that they describe. Philips, in her poem, "To the truly noble Mr. Henry Lawes,"

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attributes to Lawes's music the ability to "asswage / The savage dullness of this sullen age" (88). Harmony, whether found in music, female friendship, or, best yet, a poem on female friendship that has been set to music, serves as a political example with the potential to tame the "savage" age. Philips also praises Finch for championing friendship in her poem, "To the noble Palemon on his incomparable discourse of Friendship." Unlike Taylor, Finch acknowledges female friendship in his doubled dedication to "Lucasia-Orinda," and he tells Philips and Owen that their "own observation hath collected more particulars of that kind then I have or can expresse ... you want no knowledge of what Friendship is, nor any allurements to it" (30). Philips returns the compliment when she praises Finch as friendship's "great deliverer" who "first discover'd, and then rescu'd her; / And raising what rude malice had flung down, / Unvayled her face, and then resor'd her Crown'' (84). Philips once again simultaneously identifies with and displaces Charles II since what is restored to its proper sovereignty here is not the king but a rejuvenated ideal of female friendship. And, significantly, it is a male writer whom Philips praises for restoring this ideal to its rightful place.

In other words, Philips's poetry celebrates women as intimate friends, but it more often praises men as friendship's "deliverers." Philips's poems to men therefore focus not on the feelings of friendship she has for them but rather on the value of their artistic and literary achievements: she praises Finch for "rescu[ing] gasping friendship" (144); Lawes for compositions that will "explate for all this age's crimes" (96); and John Berkenhead for the "charity t'uphold / The credit and the beauty of the old" (101). Her poems to male friends never engage in the exploration of intense, internal emotion so common in her friendship poems to women, and indeed, to do so would be far more injurious to her virtuous reputation than her overtly erotic verse addressed to women. Instead, Philips addresses the male members of her circle as friends engaged in a similar intellectual and political project, and she praises them both for promoting her vision of female friendship and for the role their own artistic deeds play in reforming what she calls "this sullen age" (88).

Moreover, she depicts herself as an active participant in this circle of literary and artistic activity, a circle in which reading and commenting on each other's work itself constitutes an act of friendship. As Trolander and Tenger point out, "For Philips, critical evaluation acted as one part of an effort to bind herself to her confidantes through the cultivation of mutual political, social, and literary interests" (57). Her glowing praises of Lawes's compositions and Finch's Friendship offer examples of one type of critical appraisal. Philips's response to Taylor offers another, one that shows she assumed the authority not only to praise but also to question and revise the work of her male friends. Taylor's treatise allows that women are capable of friendship but asserts that their friendship is still inferior to that of men: "A man is the best friend in trouble, but a woman may be equal to him in the days of joy; a woman can as well increase our comforts, but cannot so well lesson our sorrows" (49). In response, Philips writes, "If soules no sexes have, for men 't'exclude / Women from friendship's vast capacity, / Is a design injurious and rude, / Onely maintain'd by partiall tyranny" (166). Here, Philips protests the limited role in friendship that Taylor grants women by insisting that women are capable of "friendship's vast capacity" (166). Clearly, she did not hesitate to respond to the work of her male friends with criticism as well as praise, especially when the subject, friendship, was one on which she was an acknowledged authority.

This type of textual reciprocity, consisting of both praise and criticism, is typical of Philips's exchanges with the male members of her circle, but textual criticism is not a form of friendship in which she involves her beloved female friends. Certainly, Philips mentions receiving letters from Aubrey and Owen in her correspondence, but her poetic exchanges are only with men, and it is only men whom she addresses as fellow poets. Of course, one simple reason for the silence of Philips's Lucasia and Rosania is that they were not poets. Few early modern women were. But, as Lilley has pointed out, Philips's love poems to her female friends actually foreclose response: "Orinda' can be read as a figure of the singular female author par excellence who most strongly marks her difference and peculiarity by addressing other women whose muteness offers her a series of opportunities for self-inscription" (172). The silence of these women is a function of the language itself: the voice of the traditionally male Petrarchan lover celebrates the beauty and virtue of a beloved woman-or, just as frequently, berates her for her coldness— but does not contain a space for her to respond.¹²⁰ By adapting this voice, Philips inscribes herself as a speaking subject and her beloved female friends as her objects, objects who, as Lilley suggests, remain "eerily silent" (172).¹²¹

In this way, at least, Philips and her female friends are not second selves: she is a poet and they, the objects of her devotion, are not. This difference is all the more striking when we consider not only Philips's insistent rhetoric of similarity but also the considerable amount of political power she accords female friendship: in her poems,

¹²⁰ To be sure, Philips does grant Lucasia and Rosania a few lines of speech in her poetic dialogues, but the voice is clearly Philips speaking through the poetic personas of her friends. Even the dialogues offer nothing like the reciprocal back and forth of textual criticism and praise that Philips engages in with her male friends.

¹²¹ That this silence is a generic function of the poetry itself is made all the more clear in Philips's letters to Cotterell, in which her female friends, particularly Owen, are decidedly *not* silent. In one of the more striking examples, Philips records word-for-word an argument that she has with Owen in her letter dated 5 April, 1662 (25-27).

women have the agency to choose each other as friends, a sovereign power denied to the exiled king, and their voluntary choice presents a model of unity to a commonwealth marked by discord. Yet, as a writer who will present this ideal through her poetry, Philips also implies her own difference from her female friends. We see this difference most clearly when we compare her homoerotic verse written to female friends with the poems she addressed to male members of her circle. Philips addresses her male friends as fellow artists, and, in asking them to continue to promote their shared ideals of friendship, invites the type of active response that is missing from her poems to female friends. Philips's love verse to other women holds up an exemplary ideal, an ideal that she argues has the potential to reform the troubled age, but it is through the power of her verse and the collaboration of her male confidants that this example reaches a wider, albeit still select, audience.

Orinda to Poliarchus: The Correspondence

The best evidence of Philips's negotiation of her friendships with male allies and her own self-fashioning as an author appear in her letters to her friend Sir Charles Cotterell. The forty-eight surviving letters from Philips to Cotterell, to whom she gives the coterie name Poliarchus, offer a case study in the range and flexibility of early modern friendship. In these letters, Philips addresses Cotterell as patron, political ally, teacher, confidant, literary editor and executor, and potential extended family member. Philips made Cotterell's acquaintance shortly after the Restoration through her friendship with Mary Montagu, née Aubrey, the "Rosania" of the poems and Cotterell's neighbor. The connection proved to be a valuable one: Cotterell, who was master of Ceremonies to the king, helped extricate James Philips from the political difficulties he faced after the Restoration, and his promotion of Katherine Philips's poetry exposed her work to high court circles that she would not have been able to access on her own. Philips and her husband returned the favor by promoting Cotterell's suit of her friend Anne Owen, "Lucasia," and by helping him to win political office in Wales. Thus, what seems on the surface an unlikely friendship between an important court functionary and a female poet whose literary reputation had not yet expanded far beyond her own circle of friends was actually a mutually beneficial relationship based on intersecting political, literary, and personal ties. In these letters, we see not only the important role that male friends, with their access to the still overwhelmingly masculine world of letters, played in promoting Philips's work but also an example of a woman writer negotiating the politics of male-female friendship to craft an authorial identity of her own.

Friendship between a married woman and male friends other than her husband required careful negotiation because, as we have seen, cross-gender friendship rarely escaped the suspicion of sexual impropriety. The other women writers I discuss in this dissertation were well aware of this threat: Isabella Whitney's poetry reveals a sharp awareness of the scandal and slander that friendships between men and women can provoke; and Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* suggests that private speech alone between a married woman and her male friend is enough to endanger her reputation (as well as, in the play, her life). By contrast, friendship verse written by women to other women, such as Philips's love poems or Aemilia Lanyer's epideictic verse, seems to have posed less danger to a woman's virtuous reputation. As Traub argues, intimate friendship between women who conformed to traditionally feminine behavior was not necessarily viewed as a threat to marriage and legitimate reproduction (182), whereas male-female friendship posed exactly this threat. Of course, as I discuss above, Philips's homoerotic verse did not remain entirely free from attack, and Lilley and " both identify in Jeremy Taylor's refusal to discuss friendships between women an implicit uneasiness with Philips's same-sex focus.¹²² However, what has received less critical attention is that Taylor's only explicit warning to Philips about the propriety and impropriety of certain friendships concerns not friendships between women but friendships between men and women.

In answer to Philips's inquiry, "*How friendships are to be conducted*? that is, *What are the duties in presence and in absence; whether the friend may not desire to enjoy his friend as well as his friendship*?," Taylor affirms that the physical presence of the friend may be enjoyed as well as his friendship since friendship is "for material comforts and noble treatments and usages, this is no peradventure, but that if I buy land, I may eat the fruits, and if I take a house I may dwell in it; and if I love a worthy person, I may please my self in his society" (49). He goes on to assert:

and in this there is no exception, unless the friendship be between persons of a different sex: for then not only the interest of their religion, and the care of their honour, but the worthiness of their friendship requires that their entercourse be prudent and free from suspicion and reproach. (49)

Cross-gender friendship, according to Taylor, stands apart as the *only* instance in which two friends cannot freely enjoy each other's company. Moreover, he makes it clear that

¹²² Lilley writes, "It is hard not to find in [Taylor's examples of rivalry between women], so close to the dedication to Philips, some pointed intimation of the disordering threat and uselessness of the excessive 'interest' of women in each other, most copiously enacted in Philips's love elegies where marriage is habitually figured as the death of friendship" (170). Hutson similarly argues that "Jeremy Taylor's implicit denial of an ethical dimension to women's friendships and John Taylor's abuse of Philips as a "a second Sapho" both point clearly to a sense of scandal generated by Philips's writing" ("The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer" 207). I do not disagree with these readings, but I would like to extend them by analyzing Taylor's explicit warning against overly affectionate friendships between men and women.

the "honour" at stake in such friendships is clearly that of the woman, asserting that a virtuous male friend "shall rather lose much of *his own comfort*, than she any thing of *her honour*; and in this case the noises of people are so to be regarded, that next to innocence they are the principal" (49). Like Cary, Taylor is aware that the mere appearance of sexual transgression within an otherwise innocent friendship is as damaging to a woman's honor as sexual transgression itself.

However, while Taylor holds friendship between men and women to a code of careful behavior not required by same-sex friendship, he also confirms that virtuous friendship between men and women may exist as long as it is characterized by "caution and prudence and severe conduct" (49). He even takes a surprisingly intimate tone when, in conclusion of his discussion of male-female friendship, he tells Philips that, once all of the proper precautions have been taken, the talk of others "must not fright us from our friendships, nor from her fairest entercourses" (49). This shift into the first person plural includes Philips in Taylor's endorsement of friendship between the gendersappropriately enough, for what inspired Taylor's treatise on friendship in the first place was his friendship with Philips. The way in which he structures the text, quoting one by one each of Philips's questions and then answering them, produces a textual record of this friendship. Moreover, as I discuss in the previous section, this dialogue does not end with Taylor's text, for Philips responds to and revises Taylor's discourse in a poem of her own. What this ongoing exchange illustrates is the textual nature of this friendship, a textual nature that we also see in Philips's other friendships with men. If Philips's love poems to female friends are characterized by a single voice, that of the author, her poems and letters to and from male friends are almost always dialogic. And that dialogue is

primarily carried out not through personal interaction—the "enjoyment" of the friend that Philips deems so important in female friendship—but through textual exchange.

This difference is due not only to the simple fact that the literary world was still overwhelmingly dominated by men, although this, of course, was a major factor in Philips's friendships with male writers. Her letters to Cotterell reveal an acute awareness of her exceptional position as a woman writer, and she, like Whitney before her, often deliberately characterizes herself as a rare female participant in the masculine world of literary production. Philips's friendships with prominent men were akin to what we today call "networking," and she was quite savvy about utilizing these connections to further her literary career. But the overwhelmingly literary focus of her poems to male friends and her letters to Cotterell also contribute to what Taylor calls the "caution and prudence and severe conduct" required by male-female friendship (49). While Philips's letters to Cotterell are not void of emotion—to the contrary, they are filled with effusive expressions of gratitude for his friendship and assistance—her focus in these letters is primarily intellectual, literary, and career-minded. If Rosania and Lucasia are beloveds, Poliarchus is more akin to a colleague.

Philips's friendship with Cotterell was largely carried out through correspondence and textual exchange: although the two did meet occasionally at the homes of mutual friends such as Aubrey, Philips for the most part remained in Wales with her husband. She and Cotterell therefore demonstrate their regard for each other by exchanging literary works, both their own and those of other authors. One of Philips's early letters to Cotterell thanks him for sending an elegy by Henriette de Coligny, Comtesse de la Suze, which she declares "one of the finest Poems of that nature I ever read," along with an English text that she did not like nearly as much: "But you will expect I should give you my Thoughts of your Present. I had not read the English half through, but I was ready to say of it as LUCASIA did t'other day of a Harper, who play'd horridly out of Tune, *Will not this honest Man go to Dinner*?" (21). Philips's assumption that Cotterell will expect to hear her judgment of these works demonstrates that one of the functions of this textual exchange was to carry on a long-distance literary conversation. Cotterell by and large comes across as the educator in these exchanges, introducing Philips to new languages as well as authors, but she also sends him texts that she thinks he should read: *"The Apology for Women* is so obliging to our Sex, that I could do no less than to send it to POLIARCHUS, who has so great a Value for us; and, I doubt not, will have a particular regard for this Paper" (28). By sending Cotterell this defense of women, she brings his attention to a topic in which her own poems on female friendship are deeply invested.

The letters that accompany these gifts of literature are perhaps even more important signs of friendship. Philips frequently contrasts the pleasure she receives from Cotterell's correspondence with the loneliness and isolation she experiences in Wales:

I could never, without the Relief your Letters bring me, have been able to reconcile my self to a place which deprives me of so desirable a Conversation as yours. Nor could my beloved Rocks and Rivers, which were formerly my best Entertainments, have given me any Satisfaction without hearing from you. But now I can much better content my self in that Solitude, which you are so generously pleas'd to sweeten, by assuring me that I still have so considerable a Share in your Friendship. (25) Unlike Philips's poems on female friendship, in which she insists that friendship cannot be enjoyed completely except in the physical presence of the friend, this letter suggests that friendship can be carried out through correspondence. Cotterell's letters replace his "Conversation" and alleviate Philips's loneliness amongst the rural "Rocks and Rivers" of Wales.

Of course, Philips's stated "Relief" at hearing "that I still have so considerable a Share in your Friendship" demonstrates her anxiety that her absence might lessen Cotterell's affection for her. Letters and gifts may sustain friendship, but they apparently don't completely replace personal interaction. Philips particularly worries when an unusual period of time passes between letters. In one such case, she begs Cotterell "not to discontinue me the Favour of your Correspondence; of which I know my self to be so unworthy, that every little Omission on your part, alarms me with the Apprehension of having utterly lost it" (40). Refusing to interpret his silence as a lack of interest in continuing the friendship, she tells him (a little passive-aggressively), "I will always rather chuse to think it proceeds from my own Misfortune, than from your Forgetfulness of me, whenever I was disappointed in my Expectation of receiving a Letter from you" (50). In the same vein, she worries that Cotterell might be annoyed by the frequency of her own letters, apologizing "lest my Letters should be as troublesome to you as my personal Conversation" (23). These repeated reservations point toward Philips's very real concern that her friends might forget her in her absence, for Cotterell's letters represent not only his friendship for her but also her ties to a wider circle of friends remaining in London: his duty, she tells him, is "to keep me alive in the Memory of all our Friends" (20).

One of the ways Cotterell might have done so is by sharing her letters. Philips's circle of friends clearly did not think of the letters they wrote to one another as private; rather, Philips assumes that Cotterell will share the letters that she writes to him with others and that her friends will expect to see his letters to her. Trolander and Tenger note that this was common coterie practice: "exchanges between individuals in a coterie group were often shared with other members of the same group, either in private exchanges or during meetings of several of its members" (370). We see this process in action in the letters themselves when Philips lets Cotterell know that his courtship of Anne Owen is going poorly by showing him letters that Owen wrote to her. In fact, the shared nature of correspondence in Philips's circle becomes somewhat delicate when she and Cotterell do wish to communicate privately. Knowing that Owen would expect to see Cotterell's letters to her, Philips tells him not to write "any thing that concerns CALANTHE [another coterie name for Owen], except in Italian," since Owen could not read that language (85). But if the openness of these letters poses a problem in matters of courtship, it also helps to maintain connections and demonstrate continued membership in a scattered group of friends.

In fact, Philips uses this practice to her advantage when defending her literary reputation. She was outraged and embarrassed when, in November 1663, a London bookseller printed an unauthorized collection of her poems. Philips, who had deliberately addressed her poems of intimate female friendship only to the elite, "knowing few" of her circle and who had exercised tight control over the printing of her translation of Corneille's *Pompey*,¹²³ held a scornful view of the reading public: "I am that unfortunate

¹²³ Philips only allowed *Pompey* to be printed without her name: "I consent to whatever you think fit to do about printing it, but conjure you by all our mutual Friendship, not to put my Name to it, nay, no so much

person that cannot so much as think in private, that must have my imaginations rifled and exposed to play the Mountebanks, and dance upon the Ropes to entertain all the rabble" (129). But, according to the letter Philips wrote to Cotterell in the wake of this incident, what troubled her more than the social stigma of print was her lack of control in the process. According to Philips, "some infernal Spirits or other have catch'd those rags of Paper, and what the careless blotted writing kept them from understanding, they have supplied by conjecture, till they put them into the shape wherein you saw them" (130). An author who was particularly careful in the management of her literary career, Philips was horrified by the "abominably transcrib'd" nature of the text $(130)^{124}$, and she asks Cotterell to show her letter to anyone who believed that she might have secretly approved it: "I have sent you inclos'd my true Thoughts on that Occasion . . . to the end that you may, if you please, shew it to any body that suspects my Ignorance and Innocence of that false Edition of my Verses" (125). This letter, which Philips addresses to Cotterell but expects others to see, is intended to demonstrate not only her own sincerity but also Cotterell's continued friendship and support, since he would presumably only show it to others in her defense.

Philips's confidence that Cotterell *will* defend her points toward one of the most important elements of their friendship: his promotion and patronage of her work. Her

as the least mark or hint whereby the Publick may guess from whence it came" (90). Members of the aristocratic and literary circles that Philips cared about would have known that the translation was hers, but the anonymity protected her identity from the "Publick" at large.

¹²⁴ This letter in particular supported Philips's early reputation as a modest woman writer who avoided the attention of the public. However, her other letters to Cotterell show that she did in fact desire recognition for her writing, and she participated actively in the printing of *Pompey*. What seems to have disturbed her about the *Poems* is not so much that they were printed but that she had no opportunity to approve or revise them before they reached the press. As Mulvihill points out, "it would appear to be an amusing blunder of literary history that Philips's 'sharp Fit of Sickness' over a so-called pirated edition of her poems . . . long construed by 'Orinda' devotées as hard evidence of her modesty and authorial reticence, was more likely an acute anxiety attack, resulting from Philips's frustration at not being able to *control* the printing of the first public appearance of her work" (92).

letters to him, particularly the early ones, adopt the humble tone of an artist addressing an important patron, and she describes his support of her work in highly gendered terms. Philips asserts that Cotterell is "bound either to suppress or support and protect [her songs from *Pompey*] like a true Knight Errant, against all the Pyrates you wot of" (74); and after the unauthorized copy of her poems was printed, she writes, "I know what a Champion I have in you, and that I am sure your credit in the World will gain me a belief from all that are knowing and civil, that I am so innocent of that wretched Artifice of a secret consent" (129). By referring to Cotterell as her "Knight Errant" and "Champion," Philips invokes the chivalrous duty of a man to protect and defend a more vulnerable woman.¹²⁵ But Cotterell's higher social class also plays a role in his patronage of Philips's work. When Philips claims that Cotterell's "credit in the World" will help her to gain credence amongst the "knowing and civil," she is relying on what Bray calls "the appearance of friendship in the public eye that was itself a kind of currency" (54). Some might suspect that she secretly authorized the printing of her *Poems*, but Philips seems sure that Cotterell's continued support—demonstrated through the textual proof of their correspondence—will vindicate her in the eyes of those who matter.

Cotterell certainly lived up to Philips's praise of him as her "Champion." Philips had been recognized for her poetry since her teenage years, but it was her translation of *Pompey* that accelerated her career and gained her widespread recognition. Staying in Ireland with the (much to Philips's chagrin) newly-married Owen, Philips made a useful friend in Roger Boyle, Lord Orrery, who persuaded her to continue her translation and

¹²⁵ This chivalric language is potentially problematic, given its association with courtly love. While Philips for the most part avoids the more overtly erotic connotations of friendship (such as Cicero's trope of the friend as another self) in her letters to Cotterell, her playful tone also reveals less concern about misinterpretation than we have seen in other women writer's representations of male-female friendship.

financed the subsequent stage production in Dublin. But, as Mulvihill notes, "When the time was most propitious, it was Cotterell who brought Katherine Philips's success in Dublin to the attention of the English court and its prestigious literary circles" (85). Cotterell introduced Philips's poetry to the highest court circles, presenting her work to the Duchess of York, the king, and the queen, and Philips sought his advice on courtly etiquette, worrying in one instance that her prose dedication to the Duchess was too casual.¹²⁶ In her letters, Philips seems confident that Cotterell will execute her wishes faithfully: "I have sent you a Packet of printed POMPEY's to dispose of as you think fit. Be pleas'd to get one bound and present it to the Duchess; and if you think the King would allow such a Trifle a Place in his Closet, let him have another" (77). Philips did not enjoy personal access to the English court, but her friendship with Cotterell demonstrates how an untitled woman writer could exploit informal connections in order to promote her career and introduce her work to elevated social circles.

Cotterell also acted as Philips's editor, reviewing and correcting her poems before passing them on to her aristocratic dedicatees. Philips describes his criticism of her work as an act of friendship: "The Friendship that you profess and I expect, ought to engage you to lay aside the Courtier, and tell me frankly your real Thoughts of my weak Performances" (75). If she casts his duty to protect her writing in the gendered imagery of a knight errant protecting a vulnerable lady, here she asks him to lay aside the "Courtier" who would politely flatter the efforts of a woman and, as a friend, freely share his opinion. Appealing to the duty of the friend to give honest advice, she tells him, "I

¹²⁶ Philips writes, "BELIEVE me, POLIARCHUS, I writ the Letter to the Dutchess in Prose, neither out of Laziness nor Disrespect, but merely because I thought it would have look'd more pedantick and affected to have address'd my self to her in Verse . . . However, I have so great a Deference for your Judgment, that had you sent me word you utterly disapprov'd my accosting her in Prose, I would have attempted something or other in Verse" (66).

long to know your Opinion of [*Pompey*], which I am sure you will give me with all the Freedom and Sincerity of true Friendship" (55). Trolander and Tenger note this connection between friendship and literary editing and criticism:

In Restoration England, amendment criticism had to be initiated by the poet and performed by her trusted friends. Its goal was not merely correction, but approbation. The critic-friend pointed out errors in need of correction, undertook to correct them, or assured the poet that a text was error-free. (371)

Certainly, Philips relied on Cotterell to validate her efforts, telling him that she "can entertain none but distrustful Thoughts" of her writing "before it had pass'd your File" (60).

In most cases, Philips defers to Cotterell's judgment in literary matters. He was older, occupied a more elevated social milieu, and as a man, had received a more extensive education. Therefore, the emotional second-self imagery of Philips's poems to female friends would, if addressed to Cotterell, have been not only inappropriate but also untrue. While Philips attempts to deny difference in her friendships with women, she both acknowledges and relies upon difference in her friendship with Cotterell. Particularly in the early letters of their correspondence, Philips's tone toward him is humble and deferential, and she respectfully addresses him as both patron and teacher. For instance, she thanks him "for the Care you take to improve me in the *Italian*, which I am the more assiduous in, because you first encourag'd me to undertake it" (37)¹²⁷; and she hopes to see him in person so "I may have the happiness of your most excellent

¹²⁷ This is not to say that Philips was an entirely docile student. When Cotterell sent her a French text that he had interlined with an English translation, she bristled at his underestimation of her language abilities: "I much more freely forgive your sending me the English, than your interlining the French Paper, which I take as the far greater Affront" (21).

conversation, which I sweare I think at once a Court & an Academy; & to have all in it, than can either oblige, or improve me" (110). Philips's lack of a title excludes her from court, and her gender excludes her from the academies, but Cotterell, in his dual role as social patron and teacher, gives her vicarious access to both.

Yet, if the early letters adopt the humble tone of a student addressing a teacher (or, perhaps more aptly, a writer addressing a socially superior patron), the ensuing correspondence reveals Philips's increasing confidence in her own work. Her success in Dublin either bolstered her estimation of her own abilities-as Mulvihill points out, the letters from this time clearly demonstrate Philips's "pride of authorship and explicit desire for fame" (94)—or the length of her acquaintance with Cotterell eventually allowed her to drop the *humilitas* topos and frankly state the extent of her ambition. Both of these factors could explain the increasingly confident tone of her letters. In a letter dated 10 January, 1663, Philips boasts to Cotterell, "if I may be allow'd to say any thing of my own Compositions, I do think them not inferior to any thing I ever writ" (69); and when she and her literary rival Edmund Waller both wrote occasional poems celebrating the queen's recovery from an illness, she appears confident in the superiority of her own efforts: "Mr. WALLER has, it may be, contributed not a little to encourage me in this Vanity, by writing on the same Subject the worst Verses that ever fell from his Pen" (119).¹²⁸ This increasing confidence in her own judgment is perhaps nowhere more evident than when she actually rejects one of Cotterell's corrections. After some

¹²⁸ Philips's disdain for Waller is twofold, arising not only from their competition for the queen's favor but also from his discourteous treatment of a fellow woman writer, Margaret Cavendish. Philips tells Cotterell, "I remember I have been told that he once said, he would have given all his own Poems to have been the Author of that which my Lady NEWCASTLE writ of a Stag. And that being tax'd for this Insincerity by one of his Friends, he answer'd, that he could do no less in Gallantry than be willing to devote all his own Papers to save the Reputation of a Lady, and keep her from the Disgrace of having written any thing so ill. Some such Repartee I expected he would make upon this occasion" (119-120).

uncertainty concerning the word "Effort" in her translation of *Pompey*, Philips eventually leaves it in against Cotterell's advice: "I would fain have made use of your Correction, and thrown away the word *Effort*, but my Lord ORRERY would absolutely have it continu'd; and so it is, to please his Humour, tho' against my Will and Judgment too" (77). To be sure, Philips handles this issue delicately, pitting Cotterell's opinion not against her own but against that of the aristocratic Lord Orrery, but the decision was clearly hers to make in the end.

Philips also feels free to offer Cotterell her own advice, particularly in matters of courtship. Her promotion of Cotterell's suit to Owen was an attempt to requite Cotterell for his political intervention in James Philips's affairs as well as draw him closer into her own circle of friends and family. Philips defined her close friendship with Owen in terms of kinship—she regularly refers to Owen's uncle, Trevor Lloyd, as "my Uncle" (15)— and while Cotterell was already distantly related to Philips,¹²⁹ his marriage to her best friend would have cemented his place in her network of relations and drawn both him and Owen closer to her, their matchmaker. Unfortunately, Philips was singularly unsuccessful in arranging the matches of her friends, and Owen rejected Cotterell's suit, much to his and Philips's dismay. In fact, the only time Philips employs the likeness topos of friendship in her letters to Cotterell is in reference to their shared grief at Owen's loss: "Methinks, as much we resemble each other in our Losses, so we differ not much in our supporting them" (38).¹³⁰ Her attempt to act as a friend to Cotterell by promoting his

¹²⁹ Mulvihill notes, "as a cousin of Sir Thomas Phillipps's sister, Cotterell was related by marriage to Katherine Philips's Welsh relatives" (85).

¹³⁰ Harriette Andreadis similarly argues that "The letters, then, can be read as a documentary account of Philips's efforts to enhance her friendships in an expanding, increasingly enriched web of kinship; she displaces and reroutes through Sir Charles her own longings for proximity to female friends and patrons" (531).

marriage to her close friend having backfired, she performs another function of friendship by acting as his counselor, advising him to "exert all the Powers of Reason with which your excellent Judgment abounds, to shake off your Sorrows" (17) and to "Leave, then, the unavailing Sighs, Complaints, and Tears to me, who am of the tender Sex" (39).

Philips's assumption that she, as a member of the "tender Sex," may more fully indulge her grief may seem surprising in a woman who not only sought recognition in the masculine world of letters but also seemed interested in the proto-feminist project of raising the general estimation of women's abilities.¹³¹ But the Neo-Platonic association of women with courtly love also rendered her, as a woman, uniquely suited to proffer advice on love. After Owen's marriage, Philips does not give up on her attempt to more closely connect Cotterell with one of her female friends: "Rosania would fain have you her neighbor in Northamptonshire by marrying a handsom rich widdow there, & a Cousin of Lucasia's, she will tell you more of it; & really Sr I canot approve the austerity of your resolutions against it, if a convenient fortune, & agreeable person may be had" (115). Cotterell's marriage to this "handsom rich widdow" would connect him more closely to both Rosania and Lucasia (as well as raise his own fortunes) and Philips seems surprised at his reluctance. The indignant tone of this letter illustrates Philips's confidence in her own ability to give Cotterell marital advice as well as her disapproval when he chooses not to follow it.

Similarly, she reacts with dismay with she hears rumors that he is courting a woman without first telling her about it:

¹³¹ Philips's defense of women's ability to engage in virtuous friendship, her praise of the Comtesse de la Suze's elegy, her circulation of Sir Roger L'Estrange's *Apology for Women*, and her disapproval of Waller's criticism of Cavendish all point toward an identification with (upper-class and aristocratic) women as a group and a desire to promote works that depict them favorably.

But now I am boasting of a Friend, I fear you will give me no cause to do so of you, if after all your Obligements you conceal your Amour from a Person so interested as my self in all that concerns you . . . I beg of you to be free with me, and make me your Confident; perhaps my Friendship may stand you in some other stead than hitherto it has done: But were I as little able to serve you in this, as in any other Affair, would it be no Ease to you, to give a share in the Knowledge of your Concerns to a Person who you know will be so ready to serve

you in any thing, and keep your Counsel with so much Faithfulness? (65) In the same manner with which she scolds Cotterell for not writing more often, she chides him for concealing his romantic interests from her. Philips urges Cotterell to share his "Amour" with her not only because, after his failure with Owen, she still desires to requite him for his services to her and her husband but also because she wishes to act as his confidant and counselor. As we have seen, traditional friendship discourses define counsel as one of the principal duties of the friend. This friendship between a middleaged man and a younger married woman does not conform to the likeness topos of ideal friendship, but Philips hopes to fulfill one of that ideal's most important functions by providing Cotterell with a sympathetic ear and honest counsel.

This quotation also illustrates Philips's increasing informality with Cotterell. While the early letters largely consist of effusive protestations of gratitude and apologies for her own inability to deserve or return his favors—"if you oblige so like a God, you cannot be surpriz'd, if you find no other Requital than Thanks, and even these too but very imperfect" is a typical example (13)—Philips's tone gradually becomes more casual and playful. For example, she teasingly chides him for the brevity of his letters when she concludes one of hers with, "I wish a short Letter pleas'd you as little as it does me; for then I should now be reveng'd on you for your last" (67). This teasing is deliberate, for Philips tells Cotterell early on, "I intend to banish all Ceremony" (24), and she repeatedly invokes the liberty of friendship to justify the frankness of her speech: "You see, Sir, how plain I am with you, and I hope you will by this Freedom measure the Friendship I have for you, and the Confidence I repose in you" (126). Their friendship never really deviates from the prudence advocated by Taylor, and Philips certainly avoids the fervent, emotional language of traditional friendship discourse that she freely employs in her poems and letters to female friends. But the anxiety over misinterpretation that accompanies earlier representations of male-female friendship is strikingly absent from Philips's exchanges with Cotterell.

For instance, she playfully tells Cotterell that he is her "Valentine" after drawing his name on Valentine's Day (132). Even more daringly, she enlists him in a secret campaign to persuade her husband to allow her to return to London:

I hope you will use your Endeavours to facilitate my coming to London if you continue in the same Mind that you have often so kindly express'd to me in your Letters. You must contrive some plausible Pretence to make him believe, that by being there I might be very useful to his Affairs by the means of your Friendship, and by the Assistance of my other Friends. (99)

As Barbara J. Harris has demonstrated, early modern men often expected their wives to play an active role in managing their affairs and promoting their careers (64). Philips plays to that expectation when she seeks an excuse to return to London and the sophisticated, literary culture that she missed. She does seem to have actually intended to promote her husband's interests while there, insisting, "I could not propose to my self any way to recover the Happiness of your Company, unless I had a Prospect at the same time of doing him some Service," but her primary motivation was clearly the desire to visit Cotterell and her other friends (102). In an attempt to conceal her true reasons for going, she urges Cotterell to "Answer me to this Particular in Italian" (99).

In Cary's world, this is how women get their heads cut off, but Philips's other friends willingly participated in her secret plan. In fact, one of the most active conspirators in Philips's deception of her husband was his brother, Hector Philips (whose name earned him the sobriquet "The Trojan"): "I refer myself wholly to you and my Brother PHILIPS, whom ANTENOR has desir'd to look out for something that might deserve our Endeavors to get it . . . if you three, together with my Brother, will consult of the Measures proper to be taken in this matter, I'm sure it may be effected" (102-103). Philips, like her contemporary Margaret Cavendish, had clearly found a close friend in her brother-in-law, a friendship whose closeness was made all the more respectable because it was bound together with kinship. That Philips was able to enlist male confidents in a (relatively benign) deception of her husband, that her husband's brother and her other friends clearly saw nothing untoward in this plan, and that her letters to Cotterell were later celebrated as a model of virtuous cross-gender friendship all demonstrate that, in the environment of the Restoration, friendship between men and women was a socially legible and respected form of affiliation. These letters thus illustrate a significant shift in the types of friendship available to women. Philips represents new ground, not only in her assertion that women's friendships may carry the moral and political significance traditionally afforded the male tradition, but also in her

successful friendships with men, friendships that played an important role in her selfformation as a poet. All of the women writers I discuss in this dissertation protest the exclusion of women from the classical tradition of male *amicitia*, a tradition that held great social, political, and moral importance in the lives of men. Philips's work, which cultivates virtuous ties between friends of all genders, carves for women a socially recognizable place in this rich tradition.

Epilogue Others and Selves: Margaret Cavendish

"It is said, that True Friendship of Men is an Union of Spirits; so as it is our Minds that make Friendship." —*Margaret Cavendish, "Of Friendship"(X4v)*

In writing this dissertation, I have returned to the above quotation again and again. It in many ways exemplifies what the women writers I discuss all assert: that friendships of the mind, based on common intellectual, literary, and political interests as well as common virtue, have the ability to transcend—or at least to bridge—such differences as gender and class. And while I have not devoted a chapter to Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, she provides an excellent example of an early modern woman who not only formulated her own theories of friendship, as the above quotation indicates, but also engaged in intellectual friendships with male relatives, scholars, and writers. In this conclusion, I will briefly discuss some Cavendish's friendships that did not fit the ideal paradigm offered by the classical tradition. Her friendships demonstrate the simple fact that the rhetoric of ideal friendship was just that, rhetoric. And while one of my central points in this dissertation is that the tradition of ideal male friendship held great significance in early modern society and that women's bid for inclusion in this tradition was, therefore, also a bid for a form of social and political enfranchisement, I would also suggest that early modern people recognized that their own, lived experiences of friendship did not necessarily conform to the ideal held up by this tradition. Rather, the tradition of ideal male friendship provided individuals with an adaptable vocabulary and framework on which to build their own friendships. Cavendish endowed her friendships with male relatives, scholars, and writers with

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political and social significance, indicating that, in her life at least, gender difference was not an insurmountable barrier to participation in this important tradition.

Margaret Cavendish had much in common with Katherine Philips. While they differed in class—Cavendish was an aristocrat, securely established in the upper levels of society to which Philips had only tangential access—both women were associated with the royalist cause, both were recognized authors in their own lifetime, and both were married women who established intellectual friendships with men other than their husbands. It is even possible that the two met: Philips was a member of Henry Lawes's circle, and Cavendish and her brother-in-law Sir Charles Cavendish frequented Lawes's house when they were in London. At the very least, Philips knew of and sympathetically identified with "my Lady NEWCASTLE" when, as I discuss in the previous chapter, Edmund Waller ridiculed one of Cavendish's poems (although Philips's comment might also reveal some pride that her poem had not inspired such disparagement) (119). Like Philips, Cavendish negotiated her associations with male friends to further her literary career and intellectual reputation. Due to her higher social station, she had no need for the type of court patronage that Cotterell provided Philips, but she did desire fame, claiming "tis a part of honour to aspire towards a fame. For it cannot be an infamy to seek or run after glory, to love perfection, to desire praise" (Poems and Fancies A4). One of the ways she sought this renown was by distributing her books to and cultivating friendships with male scholars. And while Cavendish, who addressed several pieces of her writing to other women,¹³² certainly did not write only for men, it was male friends who gave her work recognition from the universities, translated it into the scholarly

¹³² For instance, Cavendish claims that she issued the separate volume of *The Blazing World* especially for ladies who would not otherwise be concerned with philosophical debates, and she includes a dedication "To All Noble, and Worthy Ladies" in *Poems and Fancies*.

language of Latin, and provided her access to such all-male institutions as the Royal Society. Both Cavendish and Philips provide examples of women who skillfully negotiated male friendships to gain recognition for their own intellectual accomplishments.

Another point of similarity between Philips and Cavendish is that both formed close friendships with their husband's brothers. Cross-gender friendships that were not legitimized by such ties of kinship could create discord within marriage and endanger a woman's chaste reputation, as Cavendish well recognized:

of the society of men and women comes many great inconveniencies, as defamations of womens honours, and begets great jealousies, from fathers, brothers, and husbands, those jealousies beget quarrels, murthers, and at the best discontent, and unhappinesse, it confirmes the apt inclined to bad: and tempts the vertues, and defames the chast. (*The World's Olio* F3)¹³³

However, friendship with male relatives gave women the opportunity to form affectionate relationships with men that did not necessarily create these "inconveniencies" since they were not considered threats to marriage and the family. Cavendish's friendship for William Cavendish's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, was commensurate with her duty to her husband as a wife and her allegiance to his family. In fact, Cavendish and Sir Charles became close in the process of acting together in William's interest, as they travelled to

¹³³ One of Cavendish's associations with a male friend produced exactly such an "inconveniency" when three of her husband's former servants accused her of adultery with her lady in waiting's husband, Sir Francis Topp (Whitaker 332). William Cavendish apparently did not believe the accusations, but the fact that they were made demonstrates the dangers cross-gender friendship posed to women's reputations.

London in an attempt to regain a portion of his estates that had been confiscated by Parliament.¹³⁴

Cavendish was grateful to Sir Charles for the companionship and support he provided to her during the often disappointing fifteen months she spent in London, asserting in her autobiography that he was "the preserver of my life" during this time (A *True Relation* 166). She also casts Sir Charles in this protector role when she dedicates to him her collection of poetry, Poems and Fancies, and charges him with the responsibility of protecting this example of a woman's writing: "I Do here dedicate this my Work unto you, not that I think my Book is worthy such a Patron, but that such a Patron may gaine my Book a Respect, and Esteeme in the World, by the favour of your Protection" (2). In the previous chapter, we saw Philips ask Cotterell to take on the chivalrous duty of protecting her work; similarly, Cavendish asserts that Sir Charles's approval of her book will protect it from the disparagement any early modern woman, even an aristocratic one such as Cavendish, might face when printing her works. Cavendish tells Sir Charles, "your Noble minde is above petty Interest, and such a Courage, as you dare not onely look Misfortunes in the Face, but grapple with them in the defence of your Friend" (3). Here, he is a "Friend" not only as her companion but also, in the earlier sense of the word, as her kinsman. Essentially, his seal of approval, represented in the dedication, demonstrates that Cavendish's family approves of her foray into print.

¹³⁴ William Cavendish's estates in England had been confiscated by Parliament in July 1951, so Margaret Cavendish attempted to petition for "the one-fifth proportion to which all delinquents' wives—judged by English law to be innocent, politically inactive dependents of their evil-doing husbands—were entitled" (Katie Whitaker 131). Parliament rejected her request since she had married William after he became a delinquent and also because they considered him, a Civil War captain and close servant of the royal family, "the greatest traitor to the State" (Whitaker 134).

Written and published during the time in London that Cavendish spent with her brother-in-law, Poems and Fancies refers to Sir Charles in several places and depicts what seems to have been an informal and friendly relationship. In one example, Cavendish begins a poem on fairies with the lines, "Sir *Charles* into my chamber coming in, / When I was writing of my Faery Queen; / I pray, said he, when Queen Mab you doe see, / Present my service to her Majesty" (213). Here, Cavendish paints a friendly domestic scene, associating Sir Charles positively with her writing process and demonstrating his gentlemanly manner as he wittily extends his courtesies to her fairy queen. In a more somber example, the poem "A Dialogue between a Bountiful Knight and a Castle ruin'd in War" depicts Sir Charles's dismay at the state of his family's Bolsover Castle, which had been seriously damaged by the Parliamentarian army. Actually, this poem somewhat undermines Cavendish's initial praise of Sir Charles as a protector since the knight can do little to remedy the situation of the ravaged, feminized castle. Yet, the knight remains a sympathetic figure as he mourns the fate of the castle and offers to "supply thy former spring" with the tears of his heart (148). In fact, if this poem presents Sir Charles in a powerless situation, it was very much the same situation that Cavendish found herself in during the writing of these poems, as Parliament had just rejected her bid for a portion of William's estates. Cavendish and her brother-in-law clearly identified with each other and found comfort in each other's friendship in the face of these political and material setbacks.

The friendship between Cavendish and Sir Charles was also an intellectual one, based on their shared interest in philosophy and natural science.¹³⁵ Katie Whitaker

¹³⁵ For an extended discussion of Sir Charles Cavendish and Margaret Cavendish's converging intellectual interests, see Whitaker, 113-116.

observes that Cavendish's "knowledge of philosophy and the sciences was inevitably dependent on the men in her life—and especially on Sir Charles Cavendish" (116). Cavendish herself alludes to their intellectual conversations when she praises Sir Charles for "the delightfull conversation of your Company" (3). Yet, Cavendish's interests in science and philosophy engendered several other friendships with male scholars to whom she was not related, demonstrating that, while kinship enabled greater freedom and familiarity within cross-gender friendships, the lack of such ties did not prove an absolute barrier to friendships between men and women. For instance, Cavendish formed a scholarly friendship with her doctor, Walter Charleton. This friendship, based on shared interests in philosophical ideas, was a mutually beneficial one: Cavendish acted as a patroness for the physician, asking him in 1668 to translate her biography of her husband into Latin, and Charleton "seconded [George] Berkeley's motion to invite Cavendish to the Royal Society; he and Berkeley conveyed the invitation to Cavendish and attended her to the meeting" (Suzuki, "Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist" 198). This invitation to the all-male institution of the Royal Society, facilitated by Cavendish's friends, represented their recognition of her accomplishments in the traditionally masculine field of natural sciences and signaled that at least some of its members took her ideas seriously.

This recognition was hard won. As Mihoko Suzuki points out, many of the letters of thanks that Cavendish received from the scholars to whom she sent her works actually "problematize Cavendish's pursuit of scholarship and writing through the gendered and sexualized language conventionally used to describe those activities," either downplaying the scholarly effort she put into her work or asserting that, as a woman, she enjoyed special access to Nature ("Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist" 197). By contrast, Charleton's letters in many ways treat Cavendish as an equal: his long epistles dissect her writing with a critical eye, and he is not afraid to express his doubts about some of her theories. In response to her *Natural Philosophy*, he writes:

it is ingenious and free, and may be, for ought I know, Excellent: but give me leave, *Madam*, to confess, I have not yet been so happy, as to discover much therein that's Apodictical, or wherein I think myself much obliged to acquiesce . . . The ROYAL SOCIETY it self (the Tribunal of Philosophical Doctrines) is of a constitution exceedingly strict and rigid in the examination of Theories concerning Nature; no respecter of Persons or Authorities, where Verity is concerned; seldom, or never yielding assent without full conviction. (111)

Here, Charleton voices his skepticism about Cavendish's propositions since they are not "Apodictical," or demonstrable, but he also softens this criticism by asserting that the Royal Society, as "no respecter of Persons or Authorities," applies such skepticism to all scientific theories. By treating Cavendish as a fellow scholar whose theories are subject to criticism and review, Charleton actually demonstrates more respect for her ideas than others who merely praise her for engaging in such studies at all.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Thomas Barlow's praise of Cavendish demonstrates the double-edged nature of many of the ostensibly flattering missives she received. He asserts that her talents "are not (in a tedious way acquired, but infused; not got by Study, or a laborious industry, but given by the immediate and propitious Hand of Heaven, and therefore more Divine, like that first principle from whence they flow. We have a Manuscript Author in *Bodlies* Library, who endeavors to shew, *That Women excell Men*: Your Excellency has proved what he proposed, has done what he indeavored, and given a demonstrative argument to convince the otherwise unbelieving World. Your Works will be a just foundation of a lasting and immortal Honour to your self; (but I fear) a reproach to our Sex and us, when Posterity shall consider, how little we have done with all our Reading and Industry, and how much your Excellency without them" (69). Barlow praises Cavendish by suggesting that her "Divine" work demonstrates women's superiority, but this claim also minimizes her scholarly efforts; she seems to be a mere vessel for supernaturally-provided knowledge while male scholars attain their knowledge by "Reading and Industry."

Cavendish in fact desired such serious criticism and philosophical debate, and she worried that her gender might bar serious scholars from arguing with her: "I cannot conceive why it should be a disgrace to any man to maintain his own or others' opinions against a woman, so it be done with respect and civility" (*Philosophical Letters* C1). One male scholar in addition to Charleton who was not afraid to engage in such debate with Cavendish was Joseph Glanvill, who took issue with "the animist materialism of her natural philosophy" and introduced himself by sending her his book, *Philosophical Considerations touching Witches and Witchcraft* (Whitaker 316). Thus began an active exchange of ideas in which both writers read, challenged, and offered advice on each other's work. Glanvill justified his challenges to Cavendish's philosophies by invoking the liberty of friendship—in this case, a friendship that seems to have been carried out entirely through correspondence:

whereas your Grace is pleased to Excuse the liberty of Arguings; 'tis Madam with me that which least of all things needs to be excused. For I profess the largest freedom of Discourse and Inquiry . . . But for free and ingenious exchange of the Reasons of our particular Sentiments, 'tis that which discovers Truth, improves Knowledge, and may be so managed as to be no disinterest to Charity. (105)

This "free and ingenious exchange" is, of course, one of the celebrated functions of ideal friendship. As Suzuki writes, "Despite their disagreements, [Glanvill] clearly valued the candid exchange of views with Cavendish" ("Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist" 200). This exchange went two ways, as Glanvill not only challenged Cavendish's work but also asked for and followed her advice: of the expanded edition of his book, he asserts, "I have in it answered some of your Grace's objections."

Cavendish's friendships with both Charleton and Glanvill—friendships based on active scholarly debate as well as common scientific and philosophical interests—were in many ways, despite differences in gender and class, friendships of intellectual equality.

I have attempted to demonstrate in this dissertation that friendship between men and women in early modern England was possible, as long as it was handled with care. But I have not yet discussed the man Cavendish termed her "best friend," her husband, William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle (*The World's Olio* D1v).¹³⁷ An extensive discussion of their marriage is not within the scope of this brief conclusion, but it is worth noting that Cavendish deliberately presents herself as happily married to a man who supports and shares her intellectual and literary interests. William Cavendish, thirty years older than his wife and also a writer, acted as an intellectual mentor and encouraged Cavendish's literary endeavors. As Whitaker notes, William's commendatory verse in *Philosophical Letters* "[reverses] the normal relation of the sexes" in his prediction that "it would be his wife, not he, who would gain 'eternal fame' as a writer: 'You conquer death, in a perpetual life; / And make me famous too in such a wife'" (279). Margaret Cavendish also depicts her marriage positively in *The World's Olio* when she describes marriage as the most perfect form of friendship:

for Nature, there is no such relation betwixt any of her Works, as to make a perfect Friendship, as between Man and Wife; all other Friendships are as it were

¹³⁷ The context of this reference is somewhat problematic, as it appears in a debate between Cavendish and her husband on "why women are so apt to talk too much" (D1v). Cavendish offers the more charitable explanation by arguing that women, barred from official avenues of gaining knowledge, are "striving to take off that blemish from their sex of knowing little, by speaking much, as thinking many words have the same weight of much knowledge" (D1v). William, however, argues for women's natural inabilities: "my best friend sayes he is not of my opinion, for he saies women talk, because they cannot hold their tongues" (D1v). That Cavendish refers to her husband as her best friend and records a rather misogynistic opinion of his in the same breath illustrates that friendships within marriage were not, in this period, necessarily friendships of equality. However, one of my central points in this dissertation is that friendships *not* involving perfect equality still held great significance in the lives of early modern women.

Forced, or Artificial, and not Natural; for Man and Wife are like one Root, or Body, that whatsoever toucheth the one, is truly sensible to the other; nay, so as it is the same Joy and Grief. (M4v)

This is the language of companionate marriage, but it is also the language of perfect friendship. In Cavendish's description, man and wife are essentially other selves, two individuals joined together as "one Root" who feel each other's joys and griefs.

Yet, while Cavendish's husband supported her literary endeavors, what seems to have been a relatively friendly marriage did not prevent her from frequently satirizing marriage in her closet dramas. In The Convent of Pleasure, for instance, Lady Happy and her followers, who have renounced marriage and the company of men, put on a masque that demonstrates the many dangers that married women face, from violent, profligate, and unfaithful husbands to the perils of childbirth. The play concludes, "Marriage is a curse we find, / Especially to women kind: / From the cobbler's wife we see, / To ladies, they unhappy be" (273). Cavendish thus juxtaposes these "unhappy" ladies with Lady Happy's pleasurable single life, and although the play ends with Lady Happy's marriage to the Prince, this comedic ending seems compromised by the very real dangers of marriage presented earlier. Suzuki suggests that Cavendish's satire of marriage within comedies that, by formula, end in marriage mirrors "the constraint under which she wrote as the wife of the duke of Newcastle" ("Margaret Cavendish and the Female Satirist" 495). William Cavendish supported his wife's authorial activities, but "the duke's prefaces and commendatory verses—as well as pasted-in slips announcing that sections of the plays were 'Written by my Lord Duke'-mark the inescapable presence of the authorizing figure of aristocratic husband and patron" (Suzuki "Margaret Cavendish and

the Female Satirist" 495-496). Cavendish's satiric representations of marriage, as well as her husband's presence in the texts in which such satire appears, demonstrate that her views of marriage were more problematic and ambiguous than *The World's Olio*'s description of marriage as perfect friendship may first indicate.

All of the women I discuss in this dissertation explore the dynamics of marriage, and some such as Cary and Lanyer discuss marriage in terms of friendship, but none of these writers unambiguously portray marriage as a friendship as perfect equality. Whitney, the only single woman, distances herself from marital roles and expresses skepticism about women's intellectual independence within marriage. Cary is deeply interested in the politics of marriage: her opening sonnet in The Tragedy of Mariam portrays marriage as a type of friendship, but the play itself demonstrates how disparities of power between husband and wife foreclose possibilities of friendship within marriage.¹³⁸ Alphonso Lanyer's name appears on the cover of his wife's book, a sign that he approved of Aemilia Lanyer's poetic venture, but the only ideal friendship within marriage Salve Deus portrays is a spiritual one between pious women and Christ. Philips used her friendships to aid her husband's career, and he, in turn, appears to have tolerated her different political views, yet her idealized, passionate friendships are with other women: she most commonly describes her relationship to "Antenor" in terms of "duty" rather than love or friendship. The ideal of companionate marriage as a form of friendship gained currency over the period I discuss in this dissertation, but legal and cultural precepts that gave husbands authority over their wives created an imbalance of power that did not necessarily lend itself to the type of perfect equality envisioned by the

¹³⁸ Of course, the very fact that Cary explores this issue in such depth demonstrates that she believed friendship within marriage was an attainable and desirable possibility.

homosocial ideal of *amicitia*. The marital expectations and experiences of five women do not provide enough evidence to reach a sweeping conclusion about friendship within marriage in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England—such a conclusion would require further study—but within the bounds of this dissertation, Cavendish's portrayal of marriage as perfect friendship, which her own plays often undermine, stands apart as a possibility rather than a standard experience.

But that it was a conceivable possibility at all demonstrates that women had a far larger stake in friendship practices than dominant classical and early modern discourses of friendship might suggest. Indeed, it is the possibilities of early modern friendship, rather than its restrictions and limitations, which truly shine through in the works of the women writers I discuss in this dissertation. Certainly, in their project of carving a place for women's participation in the lauded tradition of ideal male friendship, these writers highlight the restrictions of a discourse that either ignores them, declares them unfit for friendship, or, at worst, paints them as the antithesis of virtuous male friendship. But that the classical and early modern discourse of ideal male friendship was exclusive and often misogynistic probably surprises no one. What is surprising are the many ways in which these women writers confidently adapted this tradition to claim social, political, and moral importance for their own friendships.

Whitney demonstrates that a woman—a single woman of the serving classes, no less—may serve as a virtuous counselor to both men and women and, by situating herself in a textual community of friends and kin, demonstrates her own virtue and good sense by fulfilling this important function of ideal friendship. Lanyer rewrites the tradition of *amicitia* as she rewrites scripture, portraying an ambiguously gendered Christ as the perfect friend and promoting spiritual friendships between women as a means of overcoming class differences. Cary's work lays bare the misogyny on which the classical tradition of male friendship rests, but even more importantly, she offers a new version of friendship in its place, one based not on gender but on moral and political virtue. Finally, Philips's poems of love for her female friends claim for women's friendships the same ethical and political significance long invested in the male tradition. Her friendships with both men and women and the serious respect she received within her lifetime demonstrate that women's friendships were recognized as socially and politically significant in seventeenth-century England. The friendships these women writers depict are not perfect or even unproblematic: even Philips's beloved female friends sometimes fail to act like Cicero's idealized other selves. But that the friends in this dissertation are not other selves is exactly my point: they are instead others and selves, bound together not by similarity in gender or class but by common virtue. Such a view opens wide the possibilities of friendship not only for women but, to use Lanyer's phrase, for all of "virtue's friends." I hope this dissertation has in some way expanded our understanding of these possibilities.

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